

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

This is a privately owned and run residential family centre. The primary purpose of the centre is to support local authorities, courts, parents and children by providing fair and evidence-based parenting assessments. The centre is registered to accommodate up to five families. At the time of the inspection, there were three families in residence.

The families have their own bedrooms and share the communal rooms. The communal space includes a large dining kitchen, a play/sensory room, a spacious lounge and two bathrooms with a bath and shower. There is a medium-sized garden and a large parking area that encloses the property.

The residential family centre registered on 20 October 2021. The registered manager has resigned. However, a new manager is in post and has submitted her application to register.

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 March 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents, taking into account good

How well children and parents are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The residential family centre provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: Not previously inspected

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: not applicable

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: good

Parents and their children experience a warm welcome when they first arrive. Often, parents are visited beforehand, and some parents are able to visit the centre to have a look round. This emphasis on admission planning goes a long way in dispelling misconceptions, helping parents to feel less apprehensive. All parents spoken to said it was a different and more positive experience than what they expected.

The environment is well maintained and decorated to a good standard. Each family has their own bedroom that they can personalise to their taste. Communal areas are spacious and well equipped with essential equipment, toys, books and sensory play items. Parents are given the basics, such as toiletries, towels, bedding and food, which helps them to settle quickly and feel at ease in their new environment.

Parenting assessments are tailored and delivered by an experienced assessing social worker. The coordinated approach and regular dialogue with family assessment practitioners ensure that assessments remain focused on the specific needs of the parents and their children. Throughout the assessment process, parents' views are considered and taken into account. This ensures that parents feel fully engaged in their assessment.

Professional practice, including the quality of direct-work sessions, parenting assessments and reports, is of an exceptionally high standard and well written. Final reports are evaluative and reflect the strengths and weaknesses of the parents and their journey of change throughout the assessment process. The assessing social worker is confident in their final recommendation based on sound evidence, objectivity and effective analysis.

Feedback from parents, past and present, and from professionals is overwhelmingly positive. The quality of assessments, children's safety and the support parents receive is consistently complimentary. Comments include:

- 'It was an absolute pleasure to have so many people truly dedicated to their job helping me and my daughter out all the way through.'
- 'You have given me the skills and knowledge to last a lifetime.'
- 'They are a hands-on provision that works restoratively to not only assess parents with their children but also support them.'
- 'Children's safety is at the heart of what they do.'

Extracurricular activities and recreational opportunities in the wider community are facilitated and encouraged. This has seen parents engage in soft play, music, baby massage and yoga. The centre engages and encourages parents in sensory play, craft activities and sewing sessions. Parents benefit from this increased social interaction.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: good

Impact risk assessments are completed at the referral stage, and this considers a number of risk factors such as the environment, location and compatibility with other residents. This informs decision-making, placement planning and assessment, and it ensures that the protection of children and parents is embedded into practice from the onset.

Staff are clear on the risks and needs of the children and their parents. The management of risk is well documented and implemented with the safety and well-being of children at the forefront. Parents understand the expectations for their behaviour, and this helps them to begin to make the necessary changes to enable them to safely look after their children.

The use of close monitoring and surveillance is clarified at the beginning of the placement, and parents are informed of the use of CCTV. There is an agreement in place that specifies the level of supervision required. This is reviewed regularly to ensure proportionality is balanced against children's safety and parents' right to privacy.

Since the centre opened, 23 families have been assessed. Not all have had positive outcomes, yet from the feedback seen, parents have appreciated the unconditional care, support and guidance from all the staff. Parents have felt listened to and consulted. This has helped many parents to understand the changes they need to make for their children to thrive, be safe and remain in their care.

The conduct of staff has been exemplary. There have been no complaints or allegations about poor or unsafe practice. All staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Accidents involving children are swiftly responded to, and actions taken by staff ensure the children's immediate safety. Managers are quick to investigate and determine any lessons learned.

The employment of staff is thorough and in accordance with safe recruitment processes. This means that all individuals are safe and fit to work with children. The manager needs to be assured that there are effective parameters in place when relatives and/or partners work together to ensure professional boundaries are maintained.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Since the centre was first registered, there has been a change in the leadership team. The registered manager has since left, and the training and development manager has stepped into the role. The new manager is awaiting registration. This has provided continuity in service delivery and minimal disruption for staff and families.

Leaders and managers are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for families to feel at home. Parents are given time to settle in and establish a routine so that they can fully engage in the assessment process.

The manager and responsible individual are highly motivated and continue to develop the service to ensure that parents and their children receive an individualised and bespoke assessment. The assessing social worker plays an integral role in the completion of evidence-based assessments both at the midway point and at the final stage of the placement. This assists the local authority and the courts in making well-informed decisions.

There is a well-established and diverse team of staff who have many skills, talents and experiences that they use in their day-to-day practice. Staff genuinely want the best for families, and parents value the positive relationships that develop during their stay. Support continues when families leave the centre, helping them to move on with their lives and sustain the positive changes they have made.

Staff receive regular and good-quality reflective supervision. In addition, staff benefit from focus sessions that provide group debriefs and thematic discussions on, for example, safeguarding and relationship-based practice. The manager's commitment to staff development and training opportunities promotes better outcomes.

The manager is on a continuous journey of improvement. A range of monitoring tools, stakeholder feedback and consultation with parents and staff are used to evaluate the service. This helps to enhance practice and develop the service.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and parents using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Residential Family Centre Regulations 2002 and the national minimum standards.

Residential family centre details

Unique reference number: 2648817

Responsible individual: Catherine Coulier

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Catherine Sikakana, Social Care Inspector

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