

2483425

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

During the inspection, a variation visit was conducted in relation to the provider's request to increase the number of families that they can accommodate in the centre. Ofsted has now registered the centre to accommodate up to six families.

The residential family centre is privately owned. Families access the centre at the direction of the family court or the local authority for the purpose of assessment. Parenting assessments are completed over a 12-week period, but may be extended if agreed with the referring local authority and/or following court instruction.

There is a qualified and appropriately experienced manager in post. She registered with Ofsted in April 2021.

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 August 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 requires improvement to be good

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

Date of previous inspection: 20 August 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: good

Families are cared for by a nurturing and supportive staff team. Overall, parents are responsive to the guidance from the staff team. Most parents make progress and children thrive at the centre. Social workers are complimentary about the level of support provided to families and how this helps parents to adapt to their parenting role.

When parents move into the centre, a contract of expectations is discussed with them in a pre-placement meeting. The staff team works closely with placing authorities to ensure that parents understand the purpose of the assessment and to help families to settle. When families move out of the centre, where possible, their transitions are planned and carefully considered.

The staff team has families' best interests at heart and understands their individual circumstances. Staff make themselves readily available to parents, should they require reassurance or guidance with specific daily tasks. The staff team works closely with health visitors and additional services to ensure that the health needs of children and their parents are met.

Parenting assessments are of good quality. They highlight the progress made, strengths and weaknesses, the current parental capacity, and any areas of safeguarding to consider. Parents' views are listened to and evidenced in the work that they undertake with their key workers. The assessing social worker monitors this work to ensure that the sessions address key areas of the assessment thoroughly.

Placement plans are comprehensive and kept up to date. The staff team communicates effectively with local authorities to ensure that each family's placements and progress are regularly reviewed. However, there is not a robust system to ensure that letters of instruction are obtained from placing authorities prior to families moving into the centre. This reduces opportunities to ensure that assessments of parents are guided by the expectations from court.

Champions are identified in the staff team. They specialise in key areas of support for families, and deliver parent and baby sessions. They also identify external groups for parents to provide them with access to training and parenting classes both in the centre and the local community.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: good

Most families have positive experiences of living together. This is because the matching of families is carefully considered and effectively planned. Impact risk assessments consider any shared risks by parents and the potential impact on other families when a new family moves into the centre.

Risks for parents and their children are appropriately identified. Staff are provided with clear strategies to follow to support parents to reduce risk-taking behaviour. Risk assessments inform the level of supervision that is necessary for parents, and this is kept under review throughout the placement. Consequently, staff have a good understanding of risks for families, and they help parents to keep themselves and their children safe.

The use of closed-circuit television and monitoring is needs-led and based on risk levels for individual families. Parents are informed about its purpose on admission, any changes required to the level of monitoring, and the reasons for these changes.

Parents are helped to access mental health services and support systems. The staff team has direct links to external agencies, which work with parents to reduce risks, such as substance misuse and vulnerability to abusive relationships. In addition, the senior leadership team has undertaken training in mental health first aid to provide an extra layer of support to families.

Key-work sessions and direct work are planned and meaningful. They help to improve parents' understanding of routines and safety, and develop skills in parenting their child. Staff praise parents when they make progress and provide honest feedback about areas of their parenting that needs to be developed.

A good practice recommendation has been made as there are some gaps in safer recruitment processes. Clear pre-employment records and discussions with employees about expected professional conduct are not always evidenced. Although this has not had an impact on the safety of families, it does mean that employment checks are not entirely robust.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

When an allegation or complaint is made by a parent, leaders and managers have failed to evidence that they speak to parents about the outcome of the investigation into their concerns. In addition, the related records do not include clear or dated chronologies of the action that has been taken and when placing authorities have been notified.

Leaders and managers do not always work effectively with relevant safeguarding agencies. On one occasion, they failed to notify the local authority designated officer (LADO) when an allegation was made by a parent. This has not compromised the safety of families as leaders and managers acted swiftly. However, the failure to notify the LADO does not promote effective working together practice. Therefore, a good practice recommendation has been made.

The manager has a good understanding of parents' needs, risks and the progress they are making. She is realistic in her expectations and works hard to support parents to achieve positive outcomes. This is also reflected in the staff team's

approach with families. The manager is honest and transparent about the strengths and weaknesses of the service and has a clear vision of where the service needs to progress.

Staff say that the management team is approachable, and they feel well supported by them. The staff enjoy their roles. Staff told inspectors that there has been an improvement in staff morale and that, despite a substantial number of staff changes in the last few years, the staff team is the most effective it has been.

Staff are supported to develop and progress in their roles by undertaking additional qualifications. Mandatory training is overseen by the manager, who ensures that staff attend regular refresher courses. Training that is specific to the needs of the families is accessed internally and from a range of external professionals who are trained to deliver the specialised courses.

Staff receive monthly supervisions to support them in their roles. They are reflective sessions and are beneficial to promoting positive practice. The manager demonstrates that she identifies and addresses any practice concerns promptly and effectively. Team meetings are regular, well attended, and keep staff up to date on relevant issues for families and the operation of the centre.

The manager's review of the quality of care report does not provide a clear evaluation of the impact that the service has on the progress and assessment outcomes for families. There is also no evidence of the reports having been shared with or made available to the families. In addition, there is a significant delay in the independent visitor's reports being submitted to Ofsted. This means that the regulator is unable to monitor the progress of the centre at regular intervals.

What does the residential family centre need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Residential Family Centre Regulations 2002 and the national minimum standards. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The registered person shall maintain in respect of each family accommodated in the residential family centre a record which—</p> <p>includes the information, documents and other records specified in Schedule 3 relating to the members of the family. (Regulation 19 (1)(a))</p> <p>Specifically, ensure that letters of instruction are obtained from each family’s placing authority.</p>	<p>15 September 2023</p>
<p>The registered manager must ensure a written record is made of any complaint or representation, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation. (Regulation 20 (6))</p> <p>This requirement has not been met from the previous inspection and so has been restated.</p>	<p>15 September 2023</p>
<p>The registered person shall establish and maintain a system for improving the quality of care provided at the residential family centre. The registered person shall make a copy of the report available to residents. (Regulation 23 (1)(b) (2))</p> <p>This requirement has not been met from the previous inspection and so has been restated.</p>	<p>15 September 2023</p>
<p>The registered provider shall supply a copy of the report required to be made under paragraph (4)(c) to—</p> <p>the [Chief Inspector]. (Regulation 5 (a))</p> <p>Specifically, the register manager should ensure that the independent visitor’s report is sent to Ofsted without delay.</p>	<p>15 September 2023</p>

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they work effectively in partnership with other agencies concerned with child and adult protection. Specifically, that they make referrals to the local authority designated officer as and when required. (Residential family centres national minimum standards, page 12, and paragraph 5.9)
- The registered person should ensure that they can demonstrate, including from written and electronic records, that they consistently follow good recruitment practice, and all applicable current statutory requirements and guidance, in staff recruitment. This includes Disclosure and Barring Service checks and all requirements in Schedule 2 of the Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002, as amended. (Residential family centres national minimum standards, page 22, and paragraph 14.2)

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: 2483425

Responsible individual: Deborah Scott

Registered manager: Kathleen Stott

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Inspectors

Cheryl Field, Social Care Inspector

Claire Deary, Regulatory Inspection Manager

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