

Crown House

Keys Family assessment Centre Limited

10 Abbey Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 3HG

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

A large national private company operates this residential family centre. It is registered to provide a service to eight families. Families usually stay at the centre between 12 and 16 weeks for their assessment. A range of assessment methods are used. The service can undertake community-based assessments if families are within travelling distance.

The manager registered with Ofsted in March 2022 and has a level 5 diploma in leadership and management.

Inspection dates: 4 to 6 December 2023

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents, taking into account	requires improvement to be good
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How well children and parents are helped and protected	requires improvement to be good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	requires improvement to be good
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The residential family centre is not yet delivering good assessments, help and care for children and parents. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of previous inspection: 14 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: requires improvement to be good

Ofsted brought this inspection forward due to specific concerns received about safeguarding practice.

At the time of the inspection, five families were living at the centre. The centre's response to safeguarding concerns is inconsistent. In addition, the quality of some families risk assessments requires improvement. These shortfalls have led to an overall judgement of requires improvement to be good. However, in the main, there is a well-planned and structured approach to parenting assessments. Professionals have commented favourably on the assessment process and the support parents receive.

The environment in the centre is unkempt in places. This does provide a homely feel for families. Some refurbishment has taken place such as the families' bathrooms. However, plans for repairs and decoration remain outstanding. The registered manager has escalated long delay in respect of this. Conversely, staff provide families with everything they need to live comfortably. Parents spoke positively about feeling welcome when arriving at the centre. One parent told the inspector that 'staff take time out to talk to you' and described them as 'such kind people'.

Some impact risk assessments do not consider pertinent information. Such as families' individual needs and risks. Managers are not always curious. They do not always seek to obtain further information from placing authorities. In particular when there are unknowns about family members or acquaintances. As a result, staff are not always provided with clear guidance to respond to and manage difficult situations.

The ending of assessments are not always well planned and considered. As a result, there has been delays in families moving on from the centre. The registered manager has not escalated this delay in a timely manner and to the highest level. As a result, families have remained at the centre in excess of final recommendations. This has led to more than one parent feeling frustrated and uncertain about their future.

The centre has embedded a new model of assessment. This has improved the quality of assessments for parents who have learning disabilities and the quality of individualised care and support for families. Managers and staff identify parent's learning needs early. They modify the assessment process to ensure that parents receive the appropriate support. This is despite delays in a formal diagnosis. This inevitably prevents further delay in care planning for children.

Assessments are overseen by qualified social workers who write the final assessment reports. Reports are well written and incorporate thorough evidence-

based methods. They also provide the detail of a reliable and transparent process. Reports identify strengths, areas of progress and any areas of vulnerability moving forward. They demonstrate well the rationale for final recommendations.

Managers and staff develop good methods of communication during assessments. Skilled key workers adapt their communication to meet the learning needs of parents. They use excellent resources to help parents progress. The use of personalised pictorial aids are evident throughout the assessment process. Staff are passionate and committed to ensuring that the assessment process is accessible, regardless of any learning needs parents may have. As a result, some parents make good progress and achieve positive outcomes.

Managers and staff form positive relationships with children and their families. Parents are able to identify key staff members who they trust. This supports parents to feel listened to and share any concerns they may have. This has had a significant impact on some parents. For example, one family had experienced multiple placements before moving into the centre. Staff have formed positive relationships with the parent. This has helped them to achieve stability for the first time. They are engaging well in their assessment and making good progress.

The centre has introduced 'pods' which are a team around the child. Case managers, a qualified social worker, each lead a small team of key workers. They are responsible for assessing and supporting their allocated families. This promotes consistency, joined up and cohesive working. As a result, managers and staff understand the needs of children and their families well. This helps to ensure that assessments are thorough and evidenced based.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Managers and staff do not consistently fulfil their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Responses to safeguarding incidents are not always proactive or effective. During the early stages of one families assessment, management decision making was unclear. Important information was not shared with senior management or the family's placing authority. This led to delayed intervention when risks emerged. Risks around domestic abuse and the impact on children were not thoroughly considered. This had the potential to impact on the safety of the child and their parent.

Managers do not always ensure that there is clear safety planning. For example, one parent's partner was able to access the centre. This was despite there being concerns about their behaviour towards the parent. There was no clear plan in place in relation to the partner's visits. This had the potential to compromise the safety of the parent and their child.

Some families' risk assessments require improvement. They do not always outline risks pertinent to children and their parents. Measures to keep children and to support parent's safety are not always clear. Supervision levels are not always

proportionate to the risks. When some incidents have occurred, managers have not always implemented the necessary safeguards, or the teaching to enable parents to progress.

Since the previous inspection, one parent with their child absconded from the centre. This was an isolated incident. Managers had not considered several factors after the parent received difficult information. Managers did not use their professional curiosity. They did not risk assess and identify potential risks, such as the family going missing. This left the child and the parent vulnerable. The provider has undertaken a learning review of significant incidents which have occurred. They have identified learning outcomes and implemented measures to prevent similar incidents reoccurring.

The centre has good and effective relationships with external agencies. This has had a significant impact for parents who have been subject to domestic abuse. As a result of this specialist support, one parent has now been able to disclose historic events. This has empowered them to be successful in their assessment and enabling their family to remain together.

Parents receive good support to develop their insight into their own vulnerabilities. In particular, how their vulnerabilities may impact on their parenting capacity. For example, staff have worked creatively to support one parent's mental health. Staff provide parents with sensory tools to help them manage their emotions. This has had a significant impact on one parent's progress. Consequently, the quality of care they are now providing their child has improved.

The provider has a specialist service to support parents who display self-injurious behaviours. When incidents occur, staff are proactive. They ensure that parents receive the right support. Staff are nurturing in their approach and access additional specialist services when required.

The provider ensures that safe recruitment practice is in place. This ensures that staff are suitable to work with vulnerable families.

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

The centre has a suitably qualified and experienced manager. The centre is well staffed and most residential care workers are suitably qualified. This brings a variety of skills and knowledge, which benefits children and families. However, there has been recent failures in effective managerial monitoring and information-sharing. This has resulted in the safeguarding shortfalls identified at this inspection.

The quality of families' placement plans, and assessment plans vary. Some of these are good and clearly outline the objectives of assessments. However, some placement plans do not include a health plan for all family members. Some assessment plans are not reviewed or updated regularly. In addition, there is not enough management oversight of how assessments are progressing. The manager

has recently increased consultation with case managers and staff. This will help them to remain up to date with families progress and any concerns.

The quality of the centre's records vary. Some documents were not updated with pertinent changes to family dynamics. Some documents contain spelling errors and inaccurate information.

Managers and staff receive adequate supervision. This provides opportunities for staff to reflect and develop their practice. Staff attend social work practice forums facilitated by the registered manager. The forums encourage staff to explore different topics of practice. For example, families subject to recurrent care proceedings and children's experiences. The forums also explore assessment outcomes which help staff relate research to practice. This helps them to reflect on their own practice and how they can improve outcomes for families.

Staff receive a wide range of training. This includes specific training in the model of assessments. Staff have recently received training about domestic abuse and the impact on children. Team meetings regularly take place. They provide staff with opportunities to explore families' progress. In addition, to the overall function of the centre.

The staff team is stable. This provides continuity for families throughout their parenting assessments. Staff say that they feel well supported. They receive regular supervision. This provides them with opportunity to develop their practice.

Professionals spoken to confirmed good partnership working and positive communication. Professionals commented on the quality of the assessments and reports. They also referred to families receiving 'tailored' support and that assessments are flexible. In addition, that they provide families with the best opportunity to remain together if safe to do so.

Managers are already implementing measures to address the shortfalls identified at this inspection. There is a plan in place to improve the service and the overall running of the centre. This includes the monitoring and oversight of assessments.

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 provider and the registered manager shall, having regard to the size of the residential family centre, the statement of purpose, and the number and needs of the residents, carry on or manage the centre (as the case may be) with sufficient care, competence and skill. (Regulation 8 (1))</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that leaders and managers have effective monitoring systems in place. Monitoring systems should be implemented at regular intervals and should effectively evaluate the quality of families assessments. This should include the quality of admission processes and risk assessments.</p>	27 February 2024
<p>The registered person shall ensure that the residential family centre is conducted so as to— promote and make proper provision for the health [(including physical, mental and emotional health)] and welfare of residents; (Regulation 10 (1)(a))</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children and their parents safe. This includes liaising with and sharing pertinent information with placing authorities.</p>	27 February 2024
<p>The registered person shall prepare and implement a written child protection policy which—</p> <p>is intended to safeguard children accommodated in the residential family centre from abuse or neglect; and</p> <p>sets out the procedure to be followed in the event of any allegation of abuse or neglect.</p>	27 February 2024

<p>consideration to be given in each case to the measures which may be necessary to protect children in the residential family centre following an allegation of abuse or neglect; (Regulation 12 (1)(a)(b) (2)(e))</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that full and detailed risk assessments are undertaken prior to and during assessments. Risk assessments should contain all known and potential risks to children and parents. This includes consideration of contextual risks such as relationships with partners who do not live at the Centre.</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that risk assessments contain clear guidance for staff when responding to any concerns about the safety of children or/and their parents.</p>	
<p>The registered person shall keep under review and revise the placement plan, as necessary.</p> <p>In preparing or reviewing the placement plan the registered person shall, so far as practicable—</p> <p>seek and take account of the views of the members of the family;</p> <p>take account of any relevant assessment or other report relating to any member of the family which may be provided by the placing authority.</p> <p>The registered person shall supply a copy of the placement plan and any revision of it to the placing authority and to the parent within the family to which it relates. (Regulation (2) (3)(a)(b) (4))</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that placement plans are reviewed and updated. In particular when there are changes to family dynamics.</p>	27 February 2024
<p>Subject to regulation 4(6), the registered person shall provide facilities and services to residents in accordance with the statement of purpose.</p> <p>The registered person shall having regard to the size of the residential family centre and the number and needs of residents—</p> <p>provide adequate facilities for recreation and leisure;</p>	27 February 2024

<p>The registered person shall provide suitable washing, cleaning, kitchen and laundry facilities for use by residents accommodated in the home.</p> <p>The registered person shall ensure the residential family centre is suitably furnished with adequate living, storage and communal space to—</p> <p>meet the needs of the residents; and</p> <p>achieve the aims and objectives set out in the statement of purpose]. (Regulation 14 (1)(2)(i)[(j)(k)(i)(ii)])</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that the necessary improvements to the building are undertaken in a timely manner. This includes ensuring that the centres decor provides a welcoming environment for families. Any repairs should be undertaken promptly.</p>	
<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;</p> <p>is kept up to date;</p> <p>[The records mentioned in paragraphs (1) and (3) may be kept in electronic form, provided the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in a legible form.] (Regulation 19 (1)(a)(b) (5))</p> <p>The registered person should ensure that records such as risk assessments should clearly record the rationale for decision-making. Records should also be detailed, accurate and eligible.</p>	<p>27 February 2024</p>

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that they escalate any concern with placing authorities in relation to drift and delay in care planning for children. They must do so at the earliest opportunity, to the highest level and with tenacity. Leaders and managers should ensure they have effective systems to monitor the progress

of families assessments and transition planning ('Residential family centres NMS', 1.13).

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: SC051886

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Inspectors

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