

Family Ace Limited

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Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

This residential family centre is registered to accommodate up to five families at any one time. The residential family centre is privately owned. Families access the centre at the direction of the family court and/or the local authority for the purposes of assessment.

The manager registered with Ofsted in June 2019, when the residential family centre became operational. The manager was absent from the centre for the inspection.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 2024

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: 8 December 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: good

Children and parents are enabled to build trusted and secure relationships with staff at the centre. Parents feel that staff are approachable and supportive. Staff know the children and families well and listen to them. Staff stay in contact with many families irrespective of the outcome of the assessment.

There has been significant improvement in the environment since the last inspection. All rooms are modern, well decorated and well furnished. The outside area is pleasant and utilised by the families. The hallway and lounge are awaiting the refurbishment; however, this has been postponed due to the current needs of a family at the centre.

Staff seek the views of families in regular house meetings. Families are encouraged and supported to express their views. Staff listen to their suggested solutions to issues and implement them.

Staff provide families with information about the centre prior to moving in. Families are offered the opportunity to visit the centre where possible. When placement decisions are made quickly, staff ensure that families have the required information at the earliest possible opportunity. Families are well prepared to live at the centre and understand the expectations of the centre.

Staff identify the parental learning style in their initial discussions with families. This allows staff to teach parents in a way that is most suited to their needs. Staff deliver learning effectively and information is retained by the parent.

Staff clearly explain the assessment process to families. Families are aware of their progress throughout the assessment and can challenge staff evaluations. Final assessment reports are fair, balanced and make clear recommendations to inform decision-making about children's futures. However, the assessing social worker does not have access to the letters of instruction from the court and therefore cannot specifically link the assessments to the court instructions. A recommendation has been made in relation to this.

Some families stay longer than the standard assessment length. Staff work with multi-agency plans after assessments to ensure that families have the best possible transition out of the centre. Staff also identify when assessment extensions might be required and liaise with the relevant professionals to secure agreement for this at the earliest opportunity. As a result, families with additional needs and exceptional circumstances have fair and individualised assessments.

Some families stay for a shorter time in the centre. Staff are transparent with families and professionals when there are concerns and meetings are held quickly to allow for issues to be addressed. Staff identify when presenting risks are so high

that the safety of children is compromised, which allows for swift child-centred decisions to be made.

Staff communicate effectively with families who do not speak English as their first language. The residents guide has been translated, signs in the home are in both language and interpreters are booked for key meetings. Staff celebrate the cultural occasions of the families who live in the centre. Families feel welcomed and valued.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: good

Children and families are safe in the centre. Staff understand the presenting risks to children and how to manage them. Leaders and managers have appropriate oversight of incidents and ensure that any learning is used to provide a more positive experience for children and families.

Risk assessments for specific risks are clear and contain detailed strategies for staff to follow. However, risk assessments completed prior to families moving into the home do not specifically consider how a family would fit it with the other families in the centre. A recommendation has been made in relation to this.

Complaints and allegations are managed without delay. They are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Staff discuss complaints at length with families to agree actions and resolve issues. Leaders and managers are proactive in developing staff practice based on the families' experiences.

Parents and children do not go missing from the centre. Staff rarely physically intervene, however on one occasion a parent was held by staff. The incident was appropriately managed and staff used their skills to try and prevent escalation. The intervention was used as a last resort to ensure the safety and welfare of all involved.

Staff undertake prompt room searches when it is necessary to safeguard children. Leaders and managers work closely with parents and placing authorities to ensure that robust safety plans are in place and are understanding of the restrictions related to staff solely caring for children over long periods of time.

Staff address any potential conflict or bullying in the centre between residents at the earliest stage. This is openly addressed with the residents in individual and group settings. Parents are helped to keep themselves and their children safe from bullying.

The physical environment for children and parents is safe and secure and protects them from harm or risk of harm. Surveillance and electronic monitoring are appropriately used in line with regulations and the centre's published policy.

Leaders and managers make the appropriate checks on new staff. However, some records are unclear which makes it difficult to know which checks are needed. A recommendation has been made in relation to safer recruitment.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers understand parent's needs, risks and the progress they are making. They are realistic in their expectations of families and about the parent's capabilities. Leaders and managers strive for positive outcomes and their values are reflected in staff practice and approach to families.

The leaders are focused on promoting quality practice and developing the centre. They attend a providers' forum to share good practice between centres and keep up to date with legislation and relevant frameworks. They seek the views of the staff team for improving the service through supervision, team meetings and the annual staff forum. Staff are invested in the service and committed to improving it.

The registered manager is currently absent from the setting. The interim manager is the previous deputy manager, who has worked at the centre since it opened and is suitably qualified for the role. The staff have experienced a smooth transition in management arrangements. There have been no changes in operation of the centre as a result of the management changes.

There have been a number of changes in staffing, particularly the night staff. However, the core team has remained stable and therefore there has been consistency in the support of families. There are currently no staff vacancies, leaders and managers are focused on the retention of the team. Staff feel supported in their roles.

Leaders and managers provide staff with regular supervision. Senior leaders are supervised by an external person with relevant qualifications and experience. Supervisions are used to review children and families' needs, assess staff wellbeing and reflect on practice to improve the quality of service.

Most of the staff team are suitably qualified. Where staff are not qualified, they are undertaking the relevant qualifications to meet the needs of their role. This ensures that there is a skilled and experienced staff team working with families.

The leaders and managers use team meetings effectively to discuss guidance, learning and review policies and practice. The approach is innovative and encourages the staff team to be creative. Leaders and managers capture the lived experience of families and promote solution-focused practice.

Leaders and staff work proactively and positively with other agencies and professionals. They seek to build effective working relationships to secure the best outcomes for children and parents.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should have a robust process to obtain court instructions to ensure that the assessment and final report are clearly linked to these and/or local authority requirements. ('Residential family centres: national minimum standards', page 6, paragraph 1.4)
- The registered person should ensure that the risk assessment carried out prior to placement ensures that the family can fit in with other residents. ('Residential family centres: national minimum standards', page 17, paragraph 9.1)
- The registered person should demonstrate, including from written and electronic records, that it consistently follows clear and good recruitment practice. ('Residential family centres: national minimum standards', page 22, 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: 2527328

Registered provider: Family Ace Limited

Registered provider address: Maghull Business Centre, 1 Liverpool Road North,
Liverpool L31 2HB

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Inspectors

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