

Amber Grove

Amber Family Limited

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

This residential family centre is registered to accommodate up to four 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 December 2023.

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 October 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: not applicable

Overall judgement at last inspection: not applicable

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: good

Children and parents moving into the centre receive information about what to expect in terms of support and levels of supervision and surveillance. Parents understand the assessment process. Families can move on with outreach support, which will identify ongoing community needs such as baby groups and befriending services.

Children and parents build trusting relationships with staff who know them well. They are supported to maintain good relationships with other families. If tensions present, staff respond promptly to prevent any escalation.

Family rooms are modern, well decorated and well furnished. There is a large outside area which can be used by the families. Family meetings take place, and parents have used this to share requests for any changes or improvements. Meetings are minuted, but these do not detail what actions are taken in response to the feedback received.

Staff care about families and want the best outcome possible for children. Parents are educated to better understand their children's needs. This includes sessions delivered in the centre and at local community groups, including messy play and baby massage. One parent said, 'I have learned about playing and giving full attention to [child's name].

Families are encouraged and supported to contribute to their assessments and understand outcomes and recommendations. Families receive clear feedback on assessment findings and know what they need to do to address any shortfalls. Evidence-based assessments are completed in line with timescales to prevent any delay in decision-making. They are analytical and use information from daily records and weekly summaries. Final reports give clear recommendations. However, the assessing social worker does not always have access to letters of instruction from the court and, therefore, cannot specifically link the assessments to the court instructions.

The health needs of children and parents are understood. Staff support behaviours that improve long-term health outcomes, including access to sexual health advice and drug and alcohol services.

Children and parents can spend time with family and friends, which is supervised in line with any restrictions.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: good

Families develop trusting relationships with staff, which enables families to share any concerns or complaints they have. The manager responds promptly to complaints and ensures that families receive a written response.

Families have individual risk assessments, which are reviewed and updated regularly to inform safeguarding action plans. Direct work and support sessions focus on areas of risks including domestic abuse, co-sleeping, and parental substance misuse. The centre has an in-house training team, and some staff are trained to deliver programmes to parents. These include a drugs and alcohol relapse prevention programme and a programme focusing on domestic abuse and strategies to support parents to keep safe, including the request for disclosure under Clare's Law.

Safe recruitment processes are in place, but one member of staff commenced work without full and satisfactory information being confirmed in respect of Schedule 2 and information about any gaps in their employment.

The home environment is safe, and families are advised of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire when they arrive. However, families are not taking part in fire drills and practices to ensure that they have understood the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Staff intervene when parents are struggling to manage their emotions and interactions to safeguard children. When necessary, parents are reminded of expectations to prevent any decision to end placements. Ultimately, when these decisions are made, it is with the child's safety at the centre.

Parents have not gone missing from the centre.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is suitably experienced and qualified. She has good knowledge of the families and their needs, risks, and progress.

Registered social workers carry out the final assessment report. The manager reads reports and all recommendations, but these are overseen, and quality assured by a qualified social worker.

The centre is well staffed by a suitably qualified team that offers training and guidance to families. The turnover of staff is low, which results in consistent care and support for families. Staff development opportunities include access to the social work apprenticeship. The whole staff team has access to training that ensures that staff understand everyone's role, and this leads to a cohesive workforce.

Local authority documents are not always held on families' files. The manager should take a more rigorous approach to obtaining these documents so they can inform the content of the assessment and support work.

Leaders and managers have systems in place for monitoring the work across the centre. They work closely with the independent person and respond to any recommendations to improve practice.

The manager ensures that any notifiable incidents are shared with the regulator and local authorities. The manager reviews incidents and considers lessons learned. These are also a mechanism for recognising good practice.

Staff feel supported by managers. They have regular supervision alongside daily access to management support. Supervisions and appraisals are an opportunity to review the progress of families, but also to reflect on practice and consider learning goals. Assessing social workers have supervision with an external independent social worker, who offers reflection and knowledge of a range of assessment tools.

Staff receive training that is bespoke to the individual roles within the centre. Court training is delivered by a barrister to assessing social workers to ensure that they have a good understanding of the requirements of evidence in court.

The manager uses team meetings to consider families and their plans. These meetings are also an opportunity to focus on learning and development, and any new information about resources in the community.

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 members of the family. (Regulation 19 (1)(a))</p> <p>In particular, the records should include placing authority looked after children documents including care and placement plans, statutory meeting minutes, and the terms of any court order under which the family is provided with accommodation at the residential family centre.</p> | <p>15 November 2024</p> |
| <p>Subject to paragraph (1A) the registered person] shall after consultation with the [fire and rescue authority]—</p> <p>ensure, by means of fire drills and practices at suitable intervals, that the persons working at the residential family centre and, so far as practicable, residents, are aware of the procedure to be followed in case of fire, including the procedure for saving life. (Regulation 1(e))</p> <p>In particular, the registered person should ensure that all families and staff members are familiar with fire evacuation procedures and have the opportunity to take part in fire drills.</p> | <p>15 November 2024</p> |

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they adhere to all applicable current statutory requirements and guidance in staff recruitment. This includes Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) checks and all requirements in Schedule 2 of the Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002, as amended. Specifically, this

includes ensuring that any gaps in employment are accounted for. ('Residential family centres: national minimum standards,' page 22, paragraph 14.2)

- The registered person should ensure that parents are encouraged to communicate their views, wishes and feelings on all aspects of their placement, assessment, and support. Staff should take account of any views, wishes and feelings and how these inform the day-to-day running and development of the centre. ('Residential family centres: national minimum standards,' page 9, paragraph 2.1)

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: 2738427

Registered provider: Amber Family Limited

Registered provider address: K A Farr & Co Chartered Accountants, 6-8 Botanic Road, Southport PR9 7NG

Responsible individual: Carol Benbow

Registered manager: Natalie Clarke

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Inspectors

Sarah Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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