

2638338

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential family centre

This residential family centre is registered for up to five families at any one time. The centre is privately owned.

Families access the centre at the direction of the family court or the local authority for the purposes of assessment.

The manager registered with Ofsted in February 2023.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 August 2025

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: 6 July 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and parents: good

Families have positive relationships with staff. Staff are nurturing and the work they complete with families is helpful and consistently good quality. Parents are supported to learn required parenting skills and staff provide a good balance of guidance and support. Children and parents are offered daily opportunities to take part a range of activities and groups which promote children's well-being and support parental education.

The centre is spacious, clean, tidy and well-furnished. It has all amenities for families to live comfortably in the setting alongside each other. The centre is on an enclosed site, which enables families to enjoy appropriate outdoor space safely.

Staff understand the health needs of children and their families. All families are supported to access local health services quickly when they move in. Arrangements for managing medication are safe and effective. Staff monitor children's health needs and step in when needed to ensure children stay healthy.

A qualified and experienced social worker assesses families. Assessments are completed within court determined timescales and families have experienced timely decision making. Assessments provide a thorough analysis of practical parenting skills, however consideration of external risk factors, such as domestic abuse or substance misuse sometimes lacks the same depth. The assessments are reviewed by the manager and the responsible individual but are not discussed in detail with the social worker's external, professionally qualified supervisor. A recommendation is been made in relation to this.

Families are supported to understand how the assessment process works and know the expectations of the assessment. Parents contribute to their plans and are offered regular opportunities to provide feedback. Records and assessments are clear on the family's views, evidencing their learning and perspectives.

Staff support parents to maintain employment whilst living at the centre. One parent engaged with a positive parenting assessment whilst also working part time. Staff understood and monitored the risks associated with the increased time away from the centre. This helps families to successfully transition back into their community.

Families know how to complain, and the centre's complaints policy is accessible and easy to understand. However, there is no written record of the investigation or outcome of some complaints. This is a missed opportunity to evidence that parent's views are listened to and taken seriously. A requirement has been made in relation to this.

How well children and parents are helped and protected: good

Families feel safe in the centre and serious incidents are rare. The environment is safe and secure. Families and children do not go missing from the centre.

The managers and staff have effective working relationships with the multi-agency partners involved with the families. Partner agencies report good communication and responsiveness of managers and staff.

The manager takes allegations about staff seriously. They take immediate action to ensure the safety of families and children and investigate concerns promptly and thoroughly.

Surveillance and electronic monitoring in the centre are used appropriately, in line with regulations and the centre's published policy. The families are aware of the monitoring and are clear about where and when it will be used. This promotes their privacy and dignity whilst living in the centre.

Risk assessments contain historical risks, and relevant current information, such as supervision levels in the centre. However, they lack detail in relation to the risks and clear strategies for staff to follow. Therefore, there has been inconsistency in the way signals of increasing risk have been responded to in the centre. Some families have had timely increased monitoring and reviews of CCTV, and some have not.

The risk assessments undertaken prior to families joining the centre lack detail and full consideration of the risks of families living together. Some of the risk assessments lack professional curiosity regarding the information provided by the placing authorities. A requirement in relation to risk assessments is made.

Two staff have been able to start in the centre prior to having an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. The manager placed restrictions around these staff to mitigate the risk. However, this is not in line with regulation. Staff recruitment files evidence that staff have DBS checks when these are received, but do not demonstrate that original checks have been seen by managers and when. A requirement is made in relation to this.

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

The manager has been in post and registered since February 2023. The responsible individual has been in post since 2022. There have been several staff changes over the inspection period. However, staffing has been stable over the last year. Staff come to the role with relevant skills and experience. Therefore, there are consistent management and staffing arrangements for the centre.

Management oversight and monitoring does not always recognise when there are shortfalls within the service. The information provided within inspection was sometimes inaccurate, some complaints and incidents had not been recorded as

such or lacked sufficient detail, and manager's audits did not always reflect the current position of the service. A requirement is made in relation to this.

The manager does not ensure that clear court directions are on file for each family assessment. The manager requests these for all families from the placing authority but does not escalate this when they are not received. The assessing social worker has relied on gathering information about the aims and structure of assessments from the local authority social workers, however for one family, information given to the centre about the length of placement was not accurate to the direction of the court. A requirement has been made in relation to this.

The centre has recruited an independent visitor to complete regular monitoring visits. This allows for external scrutiny of the centre. The visits are timely and the manager responds to the recommendations made. However, the visits do not always identify shortfalls in practice.

Serious incidents have not been notified to the regulator, nor have any updates to the Statement of Purpose and Resident's Guide been provided. This has limited the regulator's ability to have prompt oversight of any safeguarding concerns and have thorough understanding of the service. Requirements have been made in relation to these matters.

Staff report a supportive and positive work environment. The manager ensures that staff feel valued and motivated to work at the centre. Staff have regular supervision with the manager or another senior leader within the centre. All those who provide supervision to other staff have training to do so. Managers and leaders provide strong support to staff and focus on developing practice.

There are staff working in the centre who are related. However, appropriate supervision arrangements have been made for these staff, and other staff are aware of the relationships and arrangements, and how to report concerns in a safe way.

Staff have access to a wide range of training, including child development and attachment. Training is delivered to staff both face to face and online. Staff complete the training allocated to them and are well prepared for their roles.

Most staff have the relevant qualification or are enrolled to undertake this in timescale. Some staff are not qualified or enrolled, although they have other relevant qualifications, including social work degrees. A requirement is made in relation to this.

Since the last inspection, the manager has increased the frequency at which they undertake reviews of the quality of the service. The review reports are timely, include feedback from families and other stakeholders, and focus on the experiences of families in the centre.

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 not—</p> <p>employ a person to work at the residential family centre unless that person is fit to work at a residential family centre;</p> <p>or</p> <p>allow a person to whom paragraph (2) applies, to work at the residential family centre unless that person is fit to work at a residential family centre.</p> <p>This paragraph applies to any person who is employed by a person other than the registered person in a position in which he may in the course of his duties have regular contact with residents.</p> <p>For the purposes of paragraph (1), a person is not fit to work at a residential family centre unless—</p> <p>he has the qualifications, skills and experience necessary for the work he is to perform and;</p> <p>full and satisfactory information is available in relation to him in respect of each of the matters specified in Schedule 2. (Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b) (2) (3)(b)(d))</p> <p>Specifically, that staff should not be allowed to commence work until their enhanced Disclosure and Barring checks have been received. Staff should also complete their level 3 Children and Young People’s Workforce Diploma or be working towards the relevant qualifications within six months of confirmation of employment.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	<p>29 October 2025</p>
<p>The registered provider and the registered manager shall, having regard to the size of the residential family centre, the</p>	<p>29 October 2025</p>

<p>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>Specifically, there should be clear and effective procedures for monitoring and controlling the activities of the centre.</p>	
<p>If, in relation to a residential family centre, any of the events listed in column 1 of the table in Schedule 5 takes place, the registered person shall without delay notify the persons indicated in respect of the event in column 2 of the table. (Regulation 26 (1))</p> <p>Specifically, that all serious events in the centre should be notified without delay to Ofsted.</p>	29 October 2025
<p>The registered person shall, before providing a family with accommodation in the residential family centre, or if that is not reasonably practicable, as soon as possible thereafter, draw up in consultation with the placing authority a written plan (in these Regulations referred to as "the placement plan") setting out, in particular—</p> <p>an assessment of the risks, if any, which a resident at the residential family centre may present to their own health, safety and welfare or that of other residents or staff at the centre. (Regulation 13 (1)(c))</p> <p>Specifically, that thorough risk assessments should be completed prior to a family moving into the centre that consider the safety and welfare of other residents. All risk assessments should contain detail regarding risk factors and have clear strategies to manage risk for staff to follow.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	29 October 2025
<p>The registered person must ensure that 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>	29 October 2025
<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>	29 October 2025

<p>(Regulation 19 (1)(a))</p> <p>Specifically, the registered manager should ensure that a letter of instruction from the court is on all families' case files.</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p>	
<p>The registered person shall—</p> <p>keep under review and where appropriate revise the statement of purpose and resident's guide; and</p> <p>notify the [Chief Inspector] within 28 days of any such revision. (Regulation 4 (4)(a)(b))</p>	<p>29 October 2025</p>

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the assessments are carried out by a registered social worker in a manner consistent with guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children. Working Together to Safeguard Children says that the analysis and decision-making should be a collaborative process between the lead practitioner and the multi-agency team working with the family, including the social work qualified practice supervisor or manager. (Residential family centres: NMS 1.2)

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: 2638338

Registered provider: The Laurels Family Assessment Limited

Responsible individual: Tracy Hartland

Registered manager: Hazel Wilkinson

Telephone number: 01706 298188

Email address: info@thelaurelsfamily.co.uk

Inspectors

Sarah Huntbatch, Social Care Inspector

Nicola Shaw, Social Care Inspector

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