

OneOneCoCo

Inspection report for residential family centre

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Inspector	Sandra Jacobs-Walls
Type of inspection	Full

Setting address	46 Britannia Road, ILFORD, Essex, IG1 2EQ
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Responsible individual	Suzanne Bailey
Date of last inspection	N/A

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Service information

Brief description of the service

The service is a privately owned company which specialises in providing independent parenting capacity and risk assessment support. This residential family centre is registered to provide care and accommodation for two families. Families have their own rooms within a residential property. Families also have access to additional professional support from a health visitor, family therapist and a psychologist. Alongside residential family assessments, the organisation offers families day assessments, community based assessments and semi-independent family and outreach support.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: a service of exceptional quality that significantly exceeds minimum requirements

Good: a service of high quality that exceeds minimum requirements

Adequate: a service that only meets minimum requirements

Inadequate: a service that does not meet minimum requirements

Overall effectiveness

The overall effectiveness is judged to be **good**.

The overall effectiveness of the residential family centre is good. This is the centre's first inspection following registration with Ofsted and the service has made a very promising start. There were no family resident at the centre at the time of this inspection.

Assessments are thorough and relevant to individual families' experiences. Assessments reports are comprehensive and prepared in accordance to court and local authority instructions. They provide clear analysis of family dynamics and parents' ability of offer safe care to their children. Families attending the centre understand the purpose of the service and existing concerns for their children's welfare. Families are proactively engaged with the centre's activities and receive appropriate support and supervision.

The well-being of children and adults is central to the work of the centre. Staff provide consistent, quality care to children and families and parents are highly appreciative of staff efforts. Feedback from parents and other stakeholders is very positive. Families are safe and feel safe while in placement and staff demonstrate a good understanding of safe working practices.

The provider has insight to the strengths and weaknesses of the service. There are adequate monitoring systems in place which support the continual improvement of service provision. Managers continue to develop effective working partnerships with external professionals to help ensure children and parents are kept safe.

Shortfalls however, were noted in the leadership and management of the centre, and this outcome area is judged as being adequate. Identified shortfalls include the lack of regular supervision and comprehensive vetting of some staff members, inconsistent recording of some key information and the lack of some required policies. These issues however not impact negatively on the quality of care offered to children and families and the centre's overall effectiveness is sound.

Areas for improvement

Statutory Requirements

This section sets out the actions which must be taken so that the registered person/s meets the Care Standards Act 2000, Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002 and the National Minimum Standards. The registered person(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg.	Requirement	Due date
16 (2002)	obtain documentary evidence of any relevant qualifications of staff (Regulation 16(5)(a))	01/11/2013
4 (2002)	keep under review and where appropriate, revise the statement of purpose (Regulation 4(4)(a))	01/11/2013
17 (2002)	provide all employees with a job description outlining their responsibilities (Regulation 17(1)(b))	01/11/2013
17 (2002)	ensure that persons employed receive appropriate supervision. (17(5)(a))	01/11/2013

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that the centre provides a comfortable and homely environment. In particular that consideration is given to the further decoration of the lounge area and erecting net curtains throughout the house (NMS 11.2)
- ensure that telephone enquiries are made as well as obtaining written references (NMS 14.1)
- consider developing a working partnership with the local police team (NMS 5.9)
- develop written guidance about the searching of rooms (NMS 4.7)
- develop a recording policy and a system to monitor the quality and adequacy of

record keeping. In particular to ensure the consistent completion of the centre's referral form and the update of contact plans. (NMS 20.1 & 20.2)

Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment is **good**.

The quality of the service's assessments is good. Assessment reports are analytical and demonstrate a clear understanding of families' case histories and any risks. Staff ensure they prior to and during the early stages of placement negotiations, comprehensive information about families are obtained from placing authorities. This assists to inform from the outset key family issues and risk factors in relation to parents' safe care of their children. This also helps identify key lines of enquiry to be explored during the assessment.

The service's assessment process continually evaluates the nature and level of risk. Progress, or the lack of progress is well documented throughout the assessment. Staff ensure that assessments are compliant with local authority and court requirements. Reports are clearly linked to the overall plan for the child and family placement plans. Families are well informed of the purpose, the nature and scope of the assessment process to be undertaken and receive clear and well-written information about the service, usually prior to admission. Assessment reports give a clear account of recommendations following families stay at the centre. This routinely includes the centre's five day support package designed to support families upon their immediate departure from the unit.

Staff make excellent use of key theoretical models throughout the assessment process and this knowledge and application of theory in practice is well evidenced in assessment reports. For example staff routinely make reference to relevant research with regards to attachment theory, child development and utilise established assessment models such as Graded Care Profiles and the Parental Assessment Manual. Staff ensure that assessments are comprehensive and consistent with the Framework for the Assessment Children in Need and their Families. Assessment reports are strongly evidenced based and contain extensive factual examples to support findings. Staff proactively encourage families to review what has been written about them, throughout the process and this is true also of assessment reports. Parents confirm that they had ample opportunity to review the assessment report especially at the midway point and prior to the report being finalised.

Parents comment that they regularly received feedback on the progress of the assessment; weekly planners evidence formal opportunities for parents to receive and provide feedback of the week prior. Parents feel fully involved in the process and that their views are taken seriously by staff. As a result, in some cases adjustments were made to the nature of staff intervention with the family. A former resident said of his opportunities to obtain feedback, 'You could talk with staff about anything. We had formal feedback sessions once or twice a week.' Parents are able to challenge elements of the assessment, one former resident commented about the staff, 'We

had some arguments, but staff listened, they explained the rules and allowed us to start afresh.' Another former resident spoke about how their feedback to staff led to negotiation about the positioning of CCTV in their private room.

Families receive clear information about the centre's use of surveillance. The centre's surveillance methods include visual, audio and strategically placed sensors to assist monitor and supervise parents' care of their children. This is essential if the assessment is to effectively evaluate the parenting capacity of adult family members. Information about the centre's use of surveillance is available in the residents' handbook and features in the placement agreement. One former resident says of the centre's surveillance methods, ' We knew about the cameras as soon as we walked in - staff were upfront. In the beginning, we hated it, but after a while you forget it's there. We understood why they needed to be there.'

Staff are suitably trained to complete comprehensive assessments. The core staff group largely comprises qualified social workers and other staff who suitably qualified in their field of expertise. The lead social worker, responsible for authoring assessment reports, has extensive social work and counselling experience. Families also benefit from the input of professionals from differing disciplines such as psychology and health; the service employs the services of a clinical psychologist and a health visitor who both contribute significantly to the assessment process. Other involved professionals in the recent past have included speech and language therapists and a play therapist.

Staff pay good attention to equality and diversity issues of families throughout the assessment process. Case files evidence clear information about the specific identity needs of families. This includes exploration of the impact of disability, language, culture, religion, gender and sexuality. Managers ensure that the needs of individual family members are taken fully into account as the assessment progresses. For example, for individuals who have learning difficulties, assessment models and tools are modified to promote full participation of those concerned. More specifically, in one case written information was made available in simpler, 'plain English' at the request of the parent and parenting sessions were tailored to suit the parent's preferred learning style. The service facilitates groups, specifically for fathers; can provide written information in community languages and as required, will support religious practices such as providing private space for prayer.

Staff are consistent and effective in their communication and partnership work with representatives of the local authority and other professionals such as court appointed guardians. All parties are kept fully apprised of developments throughout the assessment and staff offer external partners good opportunities to share their views and opinions. A social worker commented, 'The staff were co-operative and provided weekly updates as agreed at the placement meeting. A comprehensive mid-way meeting and report was provided clearly discussing the progress made by this stage and the staff there maintained regular contact with me by phone and email.'

Quality of care, support and guidance

The quality of the care, support and guidance is **good**.

The quality of care support and guidance provided by the centre is good; the needs of children and families are central to the centre's function. This is well demonstrated in the wide scope of activities available to families as a feature of the assessment process, tailored to meet families' particular needs. A former parent of the centre commented, 'The staff were brilliant and supportive. They helped me with my son's care, they are brilliant at what they do.'

The service has clear and effective policies and procedures that relate to the admission of families to the centre. Parents report that staff are welcoming upon their admission to the unit and that this approach is essential in the development of positive relationships with staff throughout their stay. The service encourages pre-admission visits by families. One parent commented, 'We received the handbook in the post and we visited for a day before we moved in. Staff were really good, I felt welcomed and was treated really well.' The service has clear written guidance in place with regards to families leaving the centre and the termination of placement. This process is understood and agreed by all parties at the outset of placement negotiations. Where families leave the centre prematurely, managers ensure the circumstances surrounding the departure are explored fully so that the service can learn from the experience. Parents who have left the centre under these circumstances report that staff managed presenting issues sensitively and professionally. A social worker reports, 'The family that I worked with has been placed at (the centre) for three weeks. The placement broke down and the family had to leave the unit. At the time the family had to leave, the staff was supportive and they worked closely with the department to ensure that this was done in an appropriate way.'

Families have access to services and support that meet their needs and the unit has clear plans in place to expand its partnership working with relevant agencies. The service is relatively new and has already established useful working partnerships with for example, the local children's centre and health visiting services. As a result families have access to a good range of support intervention, such as practical caring skills groups, support to monitor and develop healthy outcomes for children and access to community based parenting support groups. The service enlists the services of a clinical psychologist, available to offer staff support and guidance in working with family dynamics within the assessment process. The service's lead social worker is also a trained and experienced counsellor and offers parents an opportunity to explore relationship issues in a safe environment. The service offers families a range of creative activities, which include baby massage, play therapy, specialist support around domestic violence and access to a fathers support group.

Staff pay very good attention to equality and diversity issues and families' specific needs are well catered for. This is well demonstrated in staff's work with parents who have learning difficulties and in addressing the particular needs of male parents. The service has access to interpreting and translation services to ensure effective communication with those for whom English is not their primary language. Assessments take into consideration the impact of key factors including racism,

sexism, disability and socio-economic issues. Staff develop a diversity plan for each individual family member which explores particular issues relating to their identity and life experiences.

The service offers parents effective parenting support through a series of planned sessions, tailored to address the safe care of children. Typically these include play sessions, the use of observation and modelling techniques, practical parenting sessions, feeding and bathing techniques to identify a few. It is clear that families appreciate the nature and level of support the service offers. One parent commented, 'You could learn anything - I learnt to bathe my baby, I could not do that before.' Another former resident said 'The parenting sessions were useful and made sense, even though sometimes I thought my questions were silly, it was ok to ask.'

The service's assessment process is effective in exploring relationship issues between parents and the impact the experience is having on their children. Staff are skilled in exploring issues such as anger management, emotional abuse and domestic violence amongst adults. The service offers consistent guidance and support that promote effective conflict resolution. Written assessments are explicit in detailing family relationship issues and the impact of any relevant work completed by the centre.

Families share sound relationships with the staff group. This clearly enhances the working relationship between the two parties and helps establish and achieve placement objectives. Feedback from parents about the staff is overwhelmingly positive. One former resident commented, 'The staff were brilliant and supportive. I didn't have a single problem at all.' Another parent, who left the service prior to the completion of the assessment said of staff 'I liked all of them I had no complaints. If you needed help, someone would be there. It was really good.'

The service has received no complaints since its registration with Ofsted. There are clear policies and procedures in place that address making complaints. These are highlighted both in the Statement of Purpose and residents' handbook. Parents and other stakeholders are very aware of these procedures and staff encourage families to express any concerns they may have about the service. Managers ensure that families have access to an independent advocate on site to help them resolve any issues they may be experiencing. Staff embrace dialogue centred around improving the centre's services and families have planned feedback sessions which focus on placement development and issues. Families have very good opportunities to share their views and opinions about the centre and have an influence on how the service operates.

Families and stakeholders receive comprehensive information about the centre, its function and operation. The centre's Statement of Purpose and residents' handbook is available on site and is also available via a dedicated website for parents. Former residents confirm receipt of the handbook prior to admission or soon after placement start. The information is well written and is available in 'easy read' format to promote accessibility. In most cases, staff go through the contents of the residents' handbook with parents.

Families are involved in the planning and review of support to be offered, which is agreed as a feature of the placement planning process. As the placement progresses, staff review the nature and activities identified to support the assessment. Where necessary, adjustments are made to promote preferred parenting styles. So for example, information was made available in 'easy format' for a parent who was identified as having difficulty reading. On the request of the parent, staff adopted a learning style where safe infant bathing practices were first demonstrated by staff and then repeated by the parent.

Managers and staff have very good insight into the impact of the residential experience and tailor services to minimise families' distress and discomfort. Staff diligently ensure that families understand the purpose of placements and are involved in placement planning. Staff effectively and consistently seek feedback from families about their experiences. Where it is appropriate and safe to do so, staff alter placement activity to reflect parents developing capacity to care for their children safely. This is best illustrated by the changing levels of staff supervision and surveillance in line with assessed parenting ability.

The centre's premises are well-designed, comfortable and equipped with appropriate play and learning materials. The building is undistinguishable from other homes in the area. Parents enjoy their surroundings and feel it meets their families' needs well. The lounge however is a large room and families will benefit from more homely and creative use of its somewhat sparse walls. The use of net curtains throughout the home will increase families' privacy from the public.

The service promotes positive health, education and employment outcomes for families. Key work sessions support parents' plans to enrol on relevant educational courses or pursue employment. The health of children is well monitored by the service, and staff are attentive to the health care needs of parents also. For example, staff encourage parents to enrol on smoking cessation courses if they so wish and the service assists parents to address alcohol and substance misuse issues.

Safeguarding children and parents

The service is **good** at keeping children and parents safe and feeling safe.

Managers and staff ensure that the safety and protection of children is central to the centre's ethos, practice and function. Children and their parents are well protected from harm, neglect, abuse and exploitation. Staff do not tolerate bullying and this is made clear to all who access the service. Families feel safe at the centre.

The service has comprehensive and clear policies and procedures in place that promote the protection of children and adults. These have been shared with relevant local authorities and include guidance with regards to the management of allegations. No allegations made against the service since its registration with Ofsted. Staff have access to good training opportunities that support and enhance safe caring practices. Staff induction include comprehensive review of child and adult

protection procedures and protocols. The centre's team meetings frequently explore issues of child and adult protection; the welfare of children and families is a very high priority for the service.

Case files evidence effective updated individual risk assessments which help identify risks to children and adults and offer strategies to combat and minimise risk. Family placement plans also highlight known and anticipated risks and how the centre will support parents improve their parenting skills in order to keep children safe. For example, placement plans include strategies and support services available to assist parents address anger management, emotional abuse and issues of domestic violence. The centre has clear protocols and practices in place to tackle any discrimination or oppressive behaviour.

Staff working at the centre are subject to a vetting and selection process. There are clear procedures in place that ensure those employed are suitable to work with vulnerable children and adults. Personnel files evidence information as specified in the regulations, with the exception, in some cases, of documented evidence of formal qualifications. Staff files contained Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, written references and identity checks. However, not all staff personnel files confirm that follow up telephone calls have been made to referees providing written references. This is important to verify the validity of references received. Staff files also do not consistently reflect changes in staff roles. For example, contracts of employment are not routinely updated when staff roles change or staff are promoted. This is important to ensure that staff are clear about their new roles and that any changes to the conditions of employment are confirmed in writing.

There have been no accidents at the centre and staff have access to clear written guidance in relation to the management of accidents. All staff have received training in paediatric first aid and medication. Staff's administration of medication is safe, practice is supported by a comprehensive medications policy.

Staff manage undesired incidents appropriately. Staff records are comprehensive and outline de-briefing sessions, any intended action to be taken and implications for the placement. Staff have access to training that address aggressive behaviour and are shortly due to participate in training focused on conflict management and physical intervention. There have been no incidents of anyone being retained at the centre. Staff have access to clear policies and procedures that address missing persons. Where this has occurred, staff have taken effective action to safeguard all those involved. Managers however, are yet to establish a working partnership with the local police team. This is important to support and promote the safety of children and parents.

The building premises are physically safe and appropriately secure. Staff address well general health and safety issues and there are good fire precautionary measures in place. There are appropriate service contracts in place for fire, gas and electrical equipment. Staff conduct routine building checks regularly to ensure the home remains a safe environment. Strategically placed CCTV external to the building offers families an increased level of security.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the residential family centre are **adequate**.

The residential family centre is efficiently managed. The provider, who is also the Registered Manager, has extensive experience of working effectively with vulnerable children and families and holds post graduate qualifications in management. The provider also has good previous experience of working in a residential family centre and so has sound insight to service function and operation. The provider and staff group demonstrate a keen commitment for the centre to develop, expand and improve the quality of its service to children and families. Parents and professionals feel the service is very well run. A social worker says of the service ' We placed a family at (the centre). I would say that for the duration of my involvement I was very satisfied with the centre and I found the centre to be appropriately operational and functional.'

The service has a detailed Statement of Purpose, which outlines the centre's services, facilities and the manner in which the centre functions. The Statement of Purpose; however is not fully compliant with the regulations because it does not include information about surveillance techniques, emergency procedures or information about drug and alcohol use on the premises. The centre's Statement of Purpose is readily available to interested parties. Families have access to the residents' handbook which is specifically geared towards the use of prospective residents. The handbook contains useful information including guidance about the assessment process, house rules, the centre's surveillance techniques, making complaints and advocacy. The residents' handbook is available in 'easy read' format so that parents can readily access key information. Staff spend time with families going through the contents of the handbook to ensure families have a clear understanding about the purpose and operation of the centre. Managers deliver the service in line with the objectives outlined in the Statement of Purpose.

The provider has insight into the centre's strengths and weaknesses. The service's quality assurance systems are generally effective. The provider completes regular visits under Regulation 25, which assists provide an overview of the centre's functioning and highlights areas for improvement. Additionally, the provider periodically completes quality of care monitoring reports which provides an overview of varying aspects of the home's operation. This contributes to centre's ambition to offer a service of excellence to children and families.

The centre's detailed development plan outlines action to be taken to ensure the centre's continual development and improvement of service provision. However, a number of key policies are yet to be developed and implemented; in particular the centre has no written guidance with regard to case recording and room searches. The staff disciplinary procedure does not make reference and links to implications for staff in the event of an allegation of a child protection nature. Further policy development will support and enhance staff practices in these identified areas of the centre's work.

The service has sound financial systems in place and is financially viable. The centre is well resourced and employs a sufficient number of staff to meet aims and objectives of the service.

The staff group are well qualified and experienced to meet the needs of children and families at the centre. The core staff team are largely qualified social workers, other staff are experienced in other fields such as psychology and play. Additional contracted staff include a clinical psychologist and children's health professional. The staff group work effectively together. A staff member commented 'The staff here are great and we are all very supportive of each other. It's great teamwork, we have a great manager and lead social worker. It's a great environment to work in. I feel safe, supported and comfortable. I have everything I need to be as good as I can be in my role.'

Staff are well supported and they relish the opportunity to contribute to the development of the service. Staff supervision is meaningful and of high quality. However not all staff receive formal supervision on a regular basis. This is important staff have formal opportunities to explore their practice and individual performances to ensure this is of a high standard.

Staff receive relevant training that promotes effective working with children and families. The centre has a comprehensive, wide ranging training plan in place that offers staff training in key aspects of the centre's purpose. This includes safeguarding training facilitated by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, training in the Care Index model and workshops focused on adult attachment, domestic violence and substance misuse. Managers and staff are suitably trained in data protection and in the use of surveillance methods used in the centre.

The service continues to develop collaborative working relationships with community providers such as the local children's centre and an advocacy project to enhance the range and quality of support service available to children and families. Work is on-going to develop a similar working partnership with other agencies such as the local police team.

Staff maintain case files records well. Confidential written information is securely stored in the staff office, while electronic information is also very secure. Recorded entries are current, clear and comprehensively written. Assessment tools and reports in particular are very well written. Staff however do not ensure that the service's referral form is consistently completed. This is important to ensure that full information is obtained to assist managers with referral decision-making. Staff also do not consistently update contact plans, to reflect changes in contact arrangements. This helps establish with all parties plans in place to facilitate safe contact between family members and significant others.

Managers are clear about which events are must be notified to relevant statutory bodies. One notification has been recently forwarded to Ofsted; the incident was managed appropriately and in accordance with the centre's policies and procedures.

The service demonstrates a desire and the capacity to improve service provision. The leadership and management of the centre is adequate. The shortfalls identified however do not impact negatively on the quality of care offered to children and families and the centre's overall effectiveness is good.

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against the inspection framework and the evaluation schedule for the inspection of residential family centres.