

Chariteens Residential Family Centre

Inspection report for residential family centre

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Inspector	Sharon Payne
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Service information

Brief description of the service

Chariteens Residential Family Centre Ltd is a privately owned company, which was registered in June 2014. This residential family centre is registered to provide care and accommodation for six families. The centre is able to provide both residential and community based assessments.

The inspection judgements

Outstanding

Good

Requires improvement

Inadequate

The overall experiences of children and parents

The overall experiences of children and parents are Good

Families benefit from extensive, high-quality tailored support, within a safe and empowering environment. The strong links with safeguarding personnel ensures staff benefit from extensive training, which they use to work effectively with families. Parents learn a wide range of skills, which enables them to fulfil their potential. The strong emphasis on social inclusion allows access to a wide range of services within the community. They confidently attend children's centres, libraries and educational facilities to develop as a parent and as an individual. The proactive strategic alliance with therapeutic consultants enables families to access services in the comfort of the centre. The culmination of focused care, support and guidance is life enhancing and promotes improved outcomes for children.

Efficient admission and discharge procedures ensure a smooth transition into and out of the centre. Parents take a key role in care planning and are able to self-define their needs in their initial assessment. Throughout the assessment process, they receive ongoing feedback and share their views in a variety of forums. They know how to complain and leaders and managers effectively address their concerns.

Families are able to live respectfully alongside each other and staff manage challenging incidents in a consistent and fair manner. Parents describe staff as 'very helpful'; they find their living accommodation homely and comfortable. Children benefit from their own playroom, enjoying a range of indoor and outdoor play equipment. On leaving the centre, families benefit from a free after-care service, which helps them settle back into community life.

Leadership and management relationships are strong due to the involvement of highly experienced consultants and collaborative working with placing authorities and external agencies. The service has a good quality assurance system and rigorously complies with regulations. There is a significant awareness of the service's strengths and the areas requiring further development. Recommendations focus on the

centre's improvement agenda, which relates to making assessments more robust, employing more male staff and keeping up-to-date on professional and legal developments.

Areas for improvement

Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendations:

ensure written assessments are more robust (NMS 1.1)

provide staff with suitable assessment training (NMS 1.10)

produce a policy related to surveillance in parenting (NMS 10.1)

consider the needs of fathers in the deployment of staff (NMS 15.1)

keep staff up-to-date with professional and legal developments. (NMS 16.2)

Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment Requires improvement.

Leaders and managers recognise the need to strengthen the assessments process to produce a more robust and analytical final report for court. The appointment of new social workers and training scheduled for September contributes to their improvement agenda. Placing authorities positively comment that assessments are within timescales and they meet court requirements. However, they would like reports to be 'more focused on the analysis of facts and explaining the actions that contributed to the final conclusions of the assessment'.

Assessments are evidence based and incorporate a nationally renowned theoretical model suitable for vulnerable parents and parents with learning difficulties. As part of the assessment process parents sign their consent to the use of surveillance systems. The service has up-to-date guidance on the use of close circuit television and practice complies with good practice. However, a written surveillance policy, is not available although information is available in other documents.

Assessments are realistic about parental capacity for change and reports highlight their respective strengths. Parents understand the impact of their behaviour on their children. Placing authorities comment on the 'tremendous improvement' in the parent's ability to understand their child's care and basic needs. Staff skilfully work with parents to address cultural practices and familial norms which do not promote children's best interests. Parents state they now have a greater understanding and feel 'confident' in meeting their child's needs and are 'far better prepared'. Parents express their satisfaction with the process, describing it as 'perfect'. They attribute this to the 'very friendly' staff and their ability to make them feel 'very comfortable'.

Staff assess parents in accordance with their family placement plan and in a manner consistent with government assessment guidance. The service uses a four-phase assessment process that covers primary care tasks and routines and the emotional aspects of parenting. The latter phases focus on non-directive observations and concludes with the discharge phase. Staff use monitoring, role modelling, practical advice, demonstrations, baby monitors, verbal feedback and pictorial aids to collate their evidence. Parents state they learn 'to remain focused' and 'to think first before doing anything'.

Assessments take full account of placing authority requests. Parents are accountable through contracts and taking a key role in their weekly plans. This strengthens their self-responsibility and actively engages them in decision-making. They receive ongoing and regular feedback about their parenting and plans for the future. Structured reviews and weekly summaries enable parents and placing authorities to keep up-to-date on progress. Staff flexibly respond to changing circumstances to ensure the promotion of children's best interests. An example of this is pursuing a sole assessment with the father when the joint assessment breaks down.

Assessments detail the child's journey to a safe and nurturing family life. On admission into the centre, parents' undertake their own self-assessment. This offers an opportunity for reflection and empowers them to identify what they specifically need help with. A parent states, 'The centre is very good. It has made me a changed person and I can safely look after my baby well.' A social worker highlights that parents are 'keen to learn and open to professionals' advice'. A final report identifies the manner in which a parent is attentive to their child's needs and concludes they have 'changed completely'.

Parents know the content of the assessment report and feel it positively reflects their strengths and progress to become a 'good parent'. They are able to challenge elements of the assessment process and staff clearly record their views. Not all parents are able to adapt to the learning environment and staff receive relevant training to work with those parents who are non-engaging, have a mental health condition or who express challenging behaviour. Assessments clearly detail realistic recommendations in the child's best interests.

How well children and parents are protected and helped

The service is Good at how well children and parents are protected and helped.

Families benefit from the focused, tailored support which enables them to fulfil their potential. A parent proudly states, 'The centre is very good. It has made me a changed person and I can safely look after my baby well.' A placing authority commends the service, stating, 'Chariteens were able to ensure a safe environment where both parents could be permanently monitored and benefit from professional input.' A social worker highlights the 'significant improvement'. A health visitor states a child is now 'thriving' and 'meeting their milestones'. A parent confirms they 'had the best time with Chariteens' and staff are 'very helpful'.

The service provides a safe environment for children, which protects them from harm. Comprehensive risk assessments, 24-hour support, surveillance, competent health and safety and child protection arrangements effectively safeguard children. Parents learn that their child's welfare is paramount and they highlight that their 'wellbeing is the priority'. Parents learn the importance of safe caring and the need to minimise the risk of allegations. Staff raise parents' awareness of the impact of domestic violence on their child and the importance of internet safety. Staff also benefit from extensive training and enhancing their own knowledge of the key messages from serious case reviews and research. Child and adult protection procedures comply with regulations and the service has a copy of Working Together 2015, which informs their strong safeguarding practices.

Children and their families' diverse and individual needs form the foundation for effective interventions. Parents learn the importance of structured routines, the principles of good childcare, child development, secure attachments, play and stimulation. Staff undertake direct work with parents and they receive support from

activities and parenting classes within the community; this enables parents to effectively bond with their children. Parents enjoy attending baby massage, baby yoga and storytelling sessions. They enhance their knowledge at health and well-being events. They also participate in an internationally renowned positive parenting programme. This gives them strategies to manage their children's behaviour, prevent problems developing and build strong, healthy relationships.

Parents receive optimum support to address their holistic needs. This includes registering their child's birth, psychiatric and psychological support, relationship counselling, and support with family planning, accessing health services, budgeting, benefits, nutrition, and cooking. The service securely stores medication and effectively supervises the administration of medication.

Parents receive encouragement to aspire. They benefit from personal development work that builds on their confidence. They also receive support regarding careers, further education, employment and housing. Parents receive encouragement to participate and overcome barriers to social exclusion, the aim being to access community groups and build an effective support network. Parents appreciate the support.

Staff have a good understanding of cultural needs and the issues for some parents with expressing themselves in English. They proactively support parents where English is an additional language. For example, parents attend English classes which they find 'very helpful', and improves their confidence in communication. An example of this is being able to articulate their description of events in relation to safeguarding concerns. Parents who were born abroad learn the expectations regarding protecting children in relation to British law and customs. They also benefit from key work sessions which focus on their areas of development. They receive support to respond creatively to their children's needs, for example, thinking of safe ways to calm their baby. Meetings also provide a space for them to discuss their fears and address their children's long-term development needs.

On admission, parents receive a welcome pack that includes the resident's guide, policies and procedures and comprehensive information in relation to their assessment. They also have useful contact numbers of organisations and personnel who are able to help them.

Leaders and managers have a compassionately professional understanding of the impact of the residential experience on children and parents. They are purchasing a seven-seater vehicle to provide greater access to the local community and social activities. Staff are also available to care for children if necessary. Parents have the opportunity to feedback their reviews at resident's meetings and during regulatory visits. Leaders and managers act on their concerns, an example being the installation of a new boiler to combat heating issues.

A parent describes the accommodation as 'homely' stating it feels like 'it is my home'. The family centre consists of two terraced houses and blends easily into the residential street. Families have a choice of a single or double fully furnished room with a cot and baby equipment. They share two bathrooms and have their own washbasin within their room. They can choose to dine in the kitchen or in the lounge. Children have their own playroom, which provides a vibrant stimulating educational environment. They have a wide range of toys and books; the artificially turfed

garden also includes a slide, bikes and other play equipment. The communal lounge is a place for relaxation and learning. There are ample laundry facilities in the two utility rooms and a specialist cupboard for storing pushchairs. The environment is physically safe, secure and meets health and safety requirements.

Working with partners to improve outcomes

The service is Good at working with partners to improve outcomes.

Families benefit from the strong partnership arrangements that enhances their residential experience. The service works closely with placing authorities to meet effectively each family's needs. Staff participate in an extensive range of meetings that include core group, initial child protection and family group conferences. They contribute to effective, outcome-focused planning that safeguards children. Discharge planning encompasses a wider range of professionals, ensuring families receive multi-disciplinary support in the future. The service has registration with the regional care placements agency and actively maintains relationships with London boroughs and partner authorities. A placing authority describes the service as a 'fantastic family centre'.

The service has strong relationships with key partner agencies, including the police, solicitors, interpreters and health agencies. Staff work with the local crime reduction initiative to enrol parents on support, treatment and rehabilitation programmes. Links with the mental health community team enables them to access specialist services. Leaders and managers have a good awareness of local services in the area and their role. This includes assertive outreach, early intervention, perinatal and psychological therapies. Links also extend to the institute of psychotrauma for adults experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder.

There is a proactive, strategic alliance with a team of therapeutic consultants, which enables families to access services in the comfort of the centre. This includes child and family psychotherapy, therapeutic parenting sessions, parent and infant bonding sessions, drug and alcohol counselling, psychiatric assessment, diagnosis and treatment. This provides a prompt, highly responsive service, which effectively works within the short time frame constraints of the assessment. This enables the prompt verification or dismissal of mental health conditions and any subsequent intervention, for example a mental health assessment disclosing a personality disorder but recommending short-term therapy.

The service has collaborated with a children's centre and the manager sits on their advisory board. This partnership enables them to access a wide range of children's activities. They are also negotiating for more on-site activities. Families can access various other children's centres in the locality. One of these centre's reports that both parent and child 'engage well' and make 'good progress'. Families participate in structured daytime activities in order to achieve personal aspirations, reduce boredom, improve self-confidence and sustain social networks. They particularly

appreciate the opportunity to meet other parents and share experiences. Parent support groups enhance and reinforce their skills. Children enjoy using sensory rooms and attending music programmes.

The local safeguarding officer praises leaders and managers for 'being proactive'. There are strong links with their host borough's safeguarding personnel, which provides them with clear referral information and up-to-date government guidance. Staff are able to access an extensive range of training, which enhances their knowledge and enables them to network with social work staff. Training helps staff to develop confidence in identifying and responding to children at risk. Topics cover understanding diversity when protecting children from harm, protecting disabled children, child sexual exploitation, and the impact of parental mental health, parental substance misuse and domestic violence. Staff know the categories of abuse, signs, symptoms and referral processes and the legal framework. Their knowledge of social networking improves their confidence and enables them to support parents and children to keep safe.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is Good.

Families benefit from strong leadership and management arrangements, which effectively safeguards and their welfare and development. The service manager is in the final stages of registration with Ofsted to become the Registered Manager. This individual is the former deputy manager and has 20 years experience within social care. They have prior experience of managing a supported service for mothers and their babies. Their qualifications are of a high level and include level seven in strategic leadership and management. The service manager works closely with a consultant who has extensive experience in residential family centre management. A parent describes the manager as being 'very helpful'. A placing authority also praises their ability to facilitate a 'tremendous improvement' in a parent's capacity to care.

The service's statement of purpose is a comprehensive document, which clearly details aims and objectives. It contains all the necessary information and complies with regulations. The quality assurance system effectively meets regulatory requirements. The service routinely sends in regulatory reports which contain good analysis of the quality of care. This information links into the development plan that covers staff recruitment, training, facilities, consultation and improving the overall service.

Leaders and managers have robust plans of action to strengthen the service and build on the areas requiring further improvement. They are aware of current legislation and understand the need to keep up-to date on areas of research and practice developments.

Families benefit from the careful selection of staff, which ensures unsuitable people do not have the opportunity to work with children or vulnerable adults. The staff team includes qualified social workers and support workers with, nursery, auxiliary

nursing, and childminding backgrounds. All staff have the necessary vocational qualification or the equivalent. The staff team reflects a wide range of cultures and collectively speak various languages. This enables them to work with families from varied ethnic backgrounds. The staff team is female, which means that there are no male role models for families.

Staff receive the necessary support to fulfil their role. They benefit from regular and effective supervision and a broad range of training, which enables them to meet families' complex needs. Leaders and managers provide professional direction during staff meetings.

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.