

Browning House Family Assessment Centre

Inspection report for residential family centre

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Inspector	Debbie Foster
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Registered person	Browning House Family Assessment Centre
Registered manager	
Responsible individual	Barry Graham
Date of last inspection	23/02/2009

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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.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

This service is registered as a residential family centre.

The service provides independent, comprehensive child protection assessments, the emphasis is on the needs of the children.

The main activities of the service are focussed on child protection and risk assessment. This is balanced with working to assist parents to acquire the insight and the nurturing skills required to care adequately for and protect their children.

Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This was an unannounced full inspection to assess key standards and related regulations.

This is a good service with an outstanding feature.

Families benefit from their health needs being met. Strong procedures and practice safeguard the welfare of the parents and children. The service works closely with other services to meet the wide range of family's needs including those that may arise out of diversity. Family assessments and placement plans are specific and robustly undertaken, supported by detailed recordings and regular reviewing to assist in supporting parents and children well. Staff are sufficient in number and they are experienced, well trained and competent.

Shortfalls are evident in the areas of privacy, fire safety checks, reviewing the Statement of Purpose and monitoring systems.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous actions have been implemented by the service;

Bathroom door locks are in place and working to ensure that the residential family centre is conducted in a manner which respects the privacy and dignity of residents.

A written record is kept of all complaints, the action taken in response, and the outcome of the investigation.

Full and satisfactory information is obtained in relation to the matters specified in Regulation 16 before staff start work in the centre, which relate to safe recruitment practices.

Fire drills are conducted at suitable intervals, to ensure 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.

The service has established and maintained a system for reviewing aspects of the quality of the service provided at quarterly intervals as set in the national minimum standards.

Visits to the centre are conducted at least once a month to monitor the conduct of the centre. Written reports are made and kept of these monitoring visits.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Parents benefit from their health needs being individually identified. The staff demonstrate a good awareness of their individual needs. Each parent and child's placement plan and case file detail in full their health needs. Both parents and children have regular appointments with health care professionals including health visitors and doctors. There are continued good links with health visitors. Therefore, families have good access to health care services and activities, which actively promote their health and well-being.

There is a good understanding of different needs that arise from diversity. Parents confirm that their differences are recognised and promoted by the staff team.

Medication is safely stored, administered and recorded well through the implementation of a thorough medication policy and procedure. A good monitoring system supports the maintenance of good practices. The records kept clearly indicate where staff or the parent have administered medication. Appropriate permission is obtained from parents to enable staff to administer first aid and medication to children where needed. Staff have received training in first aid and the safe administration, storage and recording of medication.

Where identified, education and leisure activities to develop parent confidence and skills are supported and pursued. A parent said they are planning to attend a local IT class. Other parents explain they have regular opportunities to see their families. Free time is allocated to parents weekly and can be used for leisure or social activities. This assists in improving family links, social connexions and building on employment skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

The service explains clearly the boundaries, acceptable behaviour and the expected

conduct of families whilst living in the residential family centre prior or on taking up a placement. Both the staff and parents show that they have a good understanding of these expectations. This assists in promoting a safe and secure environment within the centre for families.

There are clear policies and procedures on the standard of behaviour expected, respecting the differences of individuals and setting out the circumstances when physical intervention will be used. Training in de-escalation and physical intervention training has been provided to the staff. Staff said they have not restrained a parent or a child. Although, they have used de-escalation techniques to manage difficult and more challenging behaviour.

Parents and staff are clear on the rules for visitors, which ensures the welfare and safety of all those using the centre.

Family information is confidentially handled. Records are securely stored. Parents and children have access to a pay phone where calls can be made in private. They have a key to their own flat or room. Some family visits take place in private. However, some parents said although staff knock on their room doors, they do not always wait before entering. This issue has been raised at the residents meeting previously, but has continued to arise periodically. Therefore, respecting privacy is not always upheld.

Families and staff are aware of the complaints procedure. They all expressed confidence that any formal complaint made, will be investigated. There has been one complaint in the last twelve months. The recording system shows the action is taken and the outcome. The complainant has been kept informed and satisfied with the outcome. Therefore, this indicates complaints and concerns are taken seriously.

Good policies and procedures are in place to protect parents and children from abuse. Staff receive comprehensive child protection training. They understand the procedures well. Established link with the local safeguarding board exist. The staff have access to, and can readily refer to, the safeguarding procedures for children and adults at all times. Families' welfare in the centre is strongly promoted and monitored. Risks are identified, assessed and measures are put in place to keep families safe. However, not all staff are clear on when they last had adult protection training.

The recruitment of staff is given importance. There are substantial vetting and recruitment procedures ensuring families are being supported by suitably fit staff. Staff recruitment files contain the required information and relevant checks are undertaken, including Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks and references. However, references do not ask the referee if the person is suitable to work with children.

The safety of families continues to be given high priority within the service. Detailed risk assessments are undertaken for all families. These cover the relevant areas and specific supporting safety measures which staff must implement to keep children and

their families safe. These are reviewed on a regular basis and updated where necessary. Staff have received training in food hygiene, first aid, health and safety.

Fire records indicate that appropriate fire instruction, drills and training have taken place with staff and parents. Health and safety matters are monitored by the manager. However, weekly fire checks have not been recorded and the manager's monitoring has not detected these omissions. This could impact on the safety of families and the staff.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

The admission of parents and children to the centre is carried out in a planned way through assessment. Staff said they are sensitive in their approach and in explaining the rules and expectations of the service. Information is explained to the parent at the earliest opportunity including the purpose of their placement and such areas as methods of supervision, observation, assessment, behaviour towards staff and visitors, smoking, privacy and confidentiality. Parents said a wealth of information is given to them in writing and verbally on arrival and at the beginning of their stay. Most said this gave them a clear understanding, whilst others found this overwhelming and unable to digest all the information presented. The staff did recognise that there is a lot of information to go through with parents and said if parents are not clear then they do revisit this with them.

Parents and children have their needs assessed in specific detail and reviews take place on a frequent basis. These include the progress being made during the placement and areas where work and support are still to take place. Parents are actively involved in this process and have read their placement plans and reports. The placement plans clearly set out the objectives and how on a day-to-day basis they will be implemented. They include the support staff will provide along with other relevant professionals and the work case managers are undertaking. Plans are overseen and monitored by a qualified social worker.

Overall, parents feel well informed and have good relationships with the staff. Most commented that they are given positive feedback and are informed about areas they need to develop further. Some raised issues they have already brought to the manager's attention through the residents meetings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Parents and children have access to accommodation, which is decorated and furnished to a good standard. This assists in providing them with suitable facilities that cater for the daily living of a family.

Families share a number of communal rooms and facilities. These include a kitchen, dining room, lounge, indoor play facilities, bathrooms and toilets. The site has a number of offices and meeting rooms. There is internet access for families as well as an area for private phone calls. All families have their own bedrooms of which some have en-suite facilities. The service also has two flats. The grounds have an outside and indoor play area for children.

Parents said the accommodation has good facilities and is comfortable. They commented most things are repaired promptly. On the inspection the outside play area was dirty and unkempt. The manager said this area has been cleaned recently but this has been affected by the building work currently underway in the grounds.

The service has a clear policy and procedure for the use of audio surveillance. It is used in all rooms at all times picking up on high frequency sound. CCTV is used in the grounds only. Parents are fully aware of the surveillance in place and its purpose.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There is a clear statement of how the centre operates and the manner in which care and support is to be provided. The Statement of Purpose contains the required information set out in Schedule 1 of the regulations. However, not all information is current. For example, the changes in the arrangements in place for health visitor appointments and there is no detail of the staffing levels provided to the ratio and needs of the families.

Parents stated that on admission to the centre they received written information about the service and how the centre operates. Staff also discuss this with them.

Staff are well supported, competent and are provided with an array of suitable and relevant training to meet the needs of families.

There is a staffing structure in place with clear lines of accountability. The family assessment co-ordinator's take charge in the absence of the manager. There is always an on-call manager to support the staff team. The team are well qualified and have a number of years experience in working with parents and their children. However, an interim manager has been in place for several months. The provider has agreed to address this and inform Ofsted of the arrangements to be made to register a manager.

Staff have good opportunities to undertake mandatory and other training in areas; such as safeguarding, attachment and loss, children's legislation, mental health, child development, drugs awareness, sex offending and cultural sensitivity. The target of 80% of the work force being trained in the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People or equivalent has been exceeded by the staff group.

Families receive an individual service which is tailored to meet their personal needs. The staff have a good knowledge of the family they are currently working with ensuring the right support and assessments are being undertaken. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This is evidenced through practice, supporting policies, procedures and the individual placement plans.

There are monitoring systems in place to assist the provision to adapt and develop the quality of the service provided at the centre. Monthly monitoring of the service takes place by nominated persons. The required areas are covered in suitable detail. The manager is carrying out monitoring of the service on a quarterly basis. However, the monitoring system did not identify omissions in fire safety checks nor is it clearly evidenced that the manager is monitoring the case managers work with families.

What must be done to secure future 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 Provider(s) must comply with the given timescales.

Reg	Statutory Requirement	Due date
10 (2002)	ensure that the registered persons make suitable arrangements that the residential family centre is conducted in a manner which respects the privacy and dignity of residents. In particular knocking and waiting before entering their rooms (Regulation 10 (3) (a))	24/06/2011
22 (2002)	ensure that the testing of the fire system is undertaken at suitable intervals and is recorded (Regulation 22)	15/06/2011

Recommendations

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

- ensure that staff have adult protection refresher training at suitable and regular intervals (NMS 12)
- ensure that the reference requests ask if the person is suitable to work with children in line with good practice guidance (NMS 15)

- ensure the Statement of Purpose is updated when changes occur to reflect the current service provided (NMS1)
- build further on the monitoring systems of the service to be able to pick up on all omissions, deficiencies and meet National Minimum Standards (NMS 3 & 24)
- ensure a Registered Manager is in post within the next 3 months (NMS 23)