

Falcon Grove Family Centre

Inspection report for residential family centre

Unique reference number SC031779
Inspection date 15/06/2015
Inspector Ms Jacobs-Walls
Type of inspection Full

Setting address 10 FALCON GROVE, LONDON, SW11 2ST

Telephone number 020 7228 0836
Email
Registered person Wandsworth Borough Council
Registered manager Mrs Nicola Meza
Responsible individual Ms Belinda Burt
Date of last inspection 28/09/2010

© Crown copyright 2015

Website: www.gov.uk/ofsted

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Service information

Brief description of the service

Falcon Grove Family Centre is run by the London Borough of Wandsworth. The centre provides assessment of parenting, primarily for families with children under 5 years old, on a residential basis and in the community. In the case of residential assessments, families may be asked to stay at Falcon Grove for three months. More often, assessments are a combination of a shorter residential period followed by a community-based element in the family home. Falcon Grove can accommodate up to five families; four in self-contained flats and one in a self-contained bedsit. The building is staffed 24 hours a day. The centre is located in a residential area close to Clapham Junction mainline station. Local shops, amenities and transport are easily accessible. Falcon Grove Family Centre is part of Wandsworth's Children's Services Department, within its Children's Specialist Service division. Referrals come to the centre from social work teams, particularly the St George's Hospital team.

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 **Outstanding**

Parents and children are kept safe. Parents feel that they and their children are extremely well protected from harm, abuse, neglect and in particular, violence from individuals known to them.

The quality of care provided by the staff team is excellent. Support and guidance is expertly tailored to meet families' individual assessment needs and work with families incorporate a range of assessment tools and techniques that promote highly positive experiences and improved outcomes for children.

Staff are especially skilled in effectively, yet sensitively supporting parents to understand their own capacity to change and the impact of their behaviour on children. This is one of the many clear strengths of this service. One parent says of their assessment experience, 'Now I feel good. I'm not walking on egg-shells anymore. I'm more relaxed and I can see the improvement for myself'.

Staff encourage families to provide feedback about the quality of their care, support and guidance, which they do. Families are actively engaged in planning and are clear about placement objectives and how these are to

be achieved.

Families understand how to complain, and infrequently make use of the boroughs corporate complaints procedure. Parents rarely make complaints against the service. When complaints are made, these are managed **appropriately and to parents' satisfaction.**

Staff's collaborative working with internal and external partners is consistently effective in ensuring placement goals are achieved. Placing social workers appreciate the high level of feedback they receive from staff at the centre..

Centre leaders and managers have excellent insight into the centre's strengths and identified areas for improvement. They continually strive to improve the quality of the service. There are realistic and ambitious plans in place to support the improvement agenda, whilst ensuring that the protection, safety and well-being of children remain central to service development and delivery.

Quality of assessment

The quality of assessment is **Outstanding**

Children benefit from assessments and final reports that are of exceptionally high quality. Staff are committed to and complete relevant, comprehensive assessments that are creative and wide-ranging in methodology. These carefully examine parenting capacity, family dynamics and the individualistic needs of children and their parents. This is to determine whether or not parents are able to care for their children safely.

Assessments are expertly child focussed, analytical and very clearly based on triangulated evidence. They provide **excellent insight and understanding of families'** histories, identified difficulties and risks, and how the assessment intends to address poor or unsafe parenting. Staff complete assessments in full compliance with court or local authority instructions. A local **authority social worker's feedback of a recent final report, presented at family court states, 'I thought I would pass to you the very good commendation from the judge on X case which concluded today. The judge commended your good work and report and was impressed by it. I appreciate all your hard work on this case'.**

Staff regularly review family plans. This ensures that any changing needs are accounted for during the assessment period. Staff promptly identify, facilitate discussion and action planning to address emerging or changing needs and how best these issues are to be explored. A social worker makes the following comments **about the quality of assessments, 'The staff constantly consider the impact of every decision with respect to how this will affect the children – the observations I have seen are thorough and analytical'. The centre ensures completed assessments include the views and contribution of partner agencies. Staff work successfully with other involved professionals to ensure assessments are conducted using a multi-disciplinary approach. This is especially important if the parties share a differing view. A local authority representative comments, 'Staff have a good understanding of parents and children, especially in getting to grips with the relationship between X and Y. My perception of mum was wrong. Staff helped me see things from another perspective'. Mum managed to maintain a good relationship with staff despite the outcome for the children following the assessment'.**

Families are very much engaged throughout the entire assessments process; A **parent told the inspector, 'Yes, I suppose looking back now, it all did make sense'.** There is a strong expectation from managers that parents receive frequent feedback about assessment issues and progress. Staff provide families with regular feedback, but this is not consistently documented on file. This is despite there being very good feedback recording tools available. The systematic recording of feedback provided to parents is useful to convey fully discussions held with families, especially where there is potential for challenge.

The staff team receive excellent training and support which enhance their skills and knowledge in completing robust and comprehensive assessments. This is clearly to the benefit of children and parents. Staff training opportunities are relevant to the task and wide ranging in scope. For example training includes Parenting Assessment

Manual Software (PAMS), and NVQ level 4 training in Working with Parents with Multiple Complex Needs. Staff have access to and attend key training courses run by the host local authority. Typically, these include workshops such as **Understanding Children's Development and the impact of parental substance misuse on parenting.**

Senior staff responsible for completing assessment reports are qualified social workers. They have specialist skills and extensive experience in assessing parenting capacity, attachment theory, child development and child protection. These specialist skills and practices enhance the quality of assessments in successfully meeting placement objectives.

Quality of care, support and guidance

The quality of care, support and guidance is **Outstanding**

Staff are extremely effective in working successfully with other professionals involved with families undergoing assessment. This results in high quality support, care and protection of children and parents. Routinely partner agencies include locality based social workers, health visitors and adult mental health workers. Partner agencies proactively contribute toward assessments and play an important role in ensuring **families' holistic needs are well considered throughout the assessment period and beyond.**

Staff's collaborative working with internal and external partners is essential in ensuring placement goals are achieved. Partner agencies are consistently positive about their experience of working with staff. They are appreciative of the keen level of communication and careful co-ordination of assessments that is successful in **including all parties. For example, a social worker says of centre staff, 'I very much appreciate the way that you as a team are working with this family and keeping me updated. It is very evident that the children's interests are central to all your thinking and that you are working to progress this assessment in the best way for them. I would also note that as a team/centre you have been very flexible in enabling me to do my job, which again is most helpful'.**

Many professionals share this view. Another **children's social worker says of the service, 'Since the placement, (staff) have gone out of their way to communicate with me – ensuring that I am given all relevant information, helping me pass on information and holding planning meetings which include me appropriately. Their level of communication in my view is outstanding'.**

Safeguarding children and parents

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

The support and safeguarding of children and parents is **exceptional. Children's welfare and protection is central to the centre's focus of work. A social worker**

comments 'The professionalism to safeguarding in such a nurturing environment was something that astounded me'. Families benefit from comprehensive, robust child and adult protection procedures that support staff practices. For example centre protocols to manage missing persons or unauthorised absences are clear and robust. This is also the case for policies and procedures with regard to the management of allegations. Unauthorised absences are extremely rare and there have been no allegations made against the service since the last inspection in 2010.

Parents feel safe. A parent comments, 'This is a safe place to be in. I have moved forward and the children are coming on nicely – good routines. It's like normal, it wasn't normal before'. Parents are supported to make sense of past trauma, its impact on their children and how to recognise and protect against similar experiences.

Staff devise family care plans that are tailored to meet the needs of individual families. Plans are explicit in outlining concerns, known and anticipated risks and how **the assessment intends to explore and address these identified risks.** Staff's documentation of risk assessments are comprehensive; these are regularly reviewed and amended as required.

Staff pay good attention to issues of equality and diversity. For example, they are highly experienced and skilled in working effectively with families where learning difficulties are a feature. Family plans and assessment techniques fully take into **account parents' learning needs. As a result, assessment approaches are modified** to ensure the effective learning of safer care. In such instances, staff make extensive use of modelling as an approach, creative visual aids, and ensure information provided verbally is conveyed in simple language.

Further illustration of the centre's ability to embrace difference include support to families who may wish to attend places of worship. The centre's literature and play materials are reflective of positive multi-cultural images and families have good access to translation and interpreting services.

Children's learning and health needs are highly promoted by the service. Parents receive consistent support and advice to help them recognise the importance of healthy child development. This is important as many of the children within the families have experienced significant neglect or abuse. As a consequence, their overall development has been poor. Parents and children are able to lead healthy lives with improved health outcomes. Children experience improved nutritious diets, their personal hygiene needs are better attended to and primary and specialist health care services are more readily accessed. Parents, as appropriate, are supported to access mental health and substance misuse services to help promote their own well-being. Staff receive training in first aid and are due shortly to be trained in paediatric first aid. This is to promote safety and better healthcare outcomes for children. There are no identified issues in relation to the safe administration of medication.

Children's learning and education are enhanced as a result of their experiences. Their attendance at school and play provision is more consistent and for some, significant improvement is noted in their educational and social development. Parents more willingly engage with educational professionals; now attending school meetings,

parents' evenings and other key school events. This supports the educational achievements of children.

Staff ensure that work with families has a keen focus on individual family relationships, family dynamics and attachment issues. Parents receive useful guidance and staff offer sound practical and emotional strategies to help improve family relationships and promote positive attachments. One parent says of this process, 'The girls are better together. X's behaviour has improved with her sister and her nightmares have stopped. Y is now very independent, more alert'. The parent confirms that this was not the case prior to the family's admission to the centre.

Families generally share positive relationships with each other. On occasion, friendships develop. Staff's keen supervision and vigilance ensures that undesired incidents or anti-social behaviour is rare within the centre.

Children and parents enjoy and are comfortable in their surroundings. The centre in recent years has undergone major refurbishment which has resulted in a safe, homely and secure environment. Parents are complimentary about their accommodation, particularly of their self-contained private space. The design of the building promotes privacy and offers families a flexible approach in timetabling assessment tasks.

Families make good use of communal areas as well as their private space. The centre is well equipped to meet the service objectives as outlined in the statement of purpose. There are clear and effective health and safety measures in place and the safety and security of the premises is regularly reviewed. Fire precautions are sound. In 2013 the service has increased its maximum occupancy from four to five families. The additional family room is designed to accommodate individuals living with physical disability, including wheelchair users. The additional self-contained flat is located on the ground floor and key equipment has been appropriately adapted. This is a unique feature of the service and demonstrates the organisation's commitment to offer a quality residential experience to families who have a diverse range of need.

Leadership and management

The leadership and management of the residential family centre are **Good**

Leaders and managers of the service have a clear vision and ambition for the development and improvement of the family centre. The previous inspection judged the service's overall effectiveness as being outstanding. Since the last inspection, further improvements have been made by the service to enhance the existing high quality care provided. For example, The staff team are able to access a high quality, creative training programme to enhance existing skills and knowledge base. This is also the case for developments in staff clinical supervision and reflective practice which has had a significant impact on the quality of the service and the experiences of families in particular.

The major refurbishment of the service in recent years has meant the

accommodation provided to families promotes assessment and learning that is not hampered by the communal sharing of facilities. This promotes a flexible approach **to assessment that attends to the individual needs of families. The organisation's** investment in the growth and development of this service is significant. This is widely recognised as the service now attracts and accepts referrals from other local authorities.

The centre is managed efficiently and effectively. The organisation has clear and robust systems in place that facilitate the effective review of service provision and delivery. This is a key feature of **the service's improvement agenda.** The **organisation's divisional service plan, the centre's team plans and annual review** reports are explicit in outlining areas identified for improvement and how these objectives are to be achieved. Monthly regulation 25 monitoring visits provide good insight into the operation and function of the service. These visits include the views of residents and staff. Feedback helps shape and inform service improvement. Leaders and managers keenly demonstrate and communicate their high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement and this is fully embraced by the staff team.

The service's statement of purpose is a comprehensive document that outlines well the aims and objectives of the service and nature of services offered. The document however requires revision as it is not fully in compliance with Schedule 1 of the regulations. Some of the staffing information is not current and there is no **information about charges and fees as required. The centre produces a residents'** guide which is made available to families prior to or soon after admission. The guide, produced in consultation with former residents is an easy read booklet that outlines the aims and practices of the centre and the services families can expect.

Staff manage admissions in a well-co-ordinated and sensitive manner, which acknowledges some of the difficulties posed to families in participating in a residentially based assessment. Staff ensure where placements are planned that comprehensive background information is sought and that families have introductory visits to the centre initially to help settle them in. When emergency admissions happen, staff work hard to ensure the transition is managed as sensitively as possible.

The centre is well staffed and resourced to achieve its objectives. The Registered Manager is currently on extended leave; during this period, an interim manager has been appointed. The post holder is in the process of completing their registration with Ofsted.

The staff team is comprised of skilled permanent staff who benefit from excellent **support and supervision via senior staff. The centre's principal social workers have** strong, relevant work histories and qualifications appropriate to the roles they fulfil. The work of senior staff is child focussed with a very strong emphasis on safeguarding. They have extensive experience of co-ordinating, managing and conducting assessments that are of an exceedingly high standard.

The staff team are well supported by line managers. They also have access to regular consultation sessions from a Clinical Psychologist. This is to further support

and enhance the practice and reflective thinking of the staff team beyond line management support. Team meetings are regular and line management case consultation is also a frequent feature in reviewing the progress of assessments. A **locality based social worker says of the team, 'Staff are very competent, professional – the service is very effective. They present empathetic, but boundaried'**.

The organisation's **vetting and recruitment process are good. Managers undertake** checks to test the suitability of prospective staff. These include DBS checks, a shortlisting and interview process and obtaining at least two written references. However, the service does not routinely speak with referees to verify written references received and so the vetting process is not as robust as it could be.

Unexpected and critical events are rare. When these occur, they are managed appropriately and promptly. Relevant bodies, including Ofsted are routinely notified.

The family centre provides an exemplary residential assessment service and meets well its stated aims and objectives. Children and parents are kept safe, the quality of care and the experiences of families are extremely positive. Leaders and managers have an ambitious vision for service development and continually strive to improve **service provision. Families benefit significantly from the organisation's commitment** to the centre and the expertise of the staff team.

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.