

Falcon Grove Family Centre

Inspection report for Residential Family Centre

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Inspector	Diane Thackrah
Type of inspection	Key

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Responsible individual	Belinda Jane Burt
Date of last inspection	25/01/2008

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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

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 four families; three 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.

Summary

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

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

At this unannounced key inspection, all key national minimum standards were assessed. This is an outstanding service with some good features.

Families using the centre are treated with respect and have their views taken into consideration throughout all stages of the assessment process. An effective risk assessment process is in place which ensures that families who use the service are protected and have their needs met effectively. There is a competent and well trained staff team who are clear about the purpose of the service. Professional development is seen as important and this helps to ensure that effective assessments are undertaken. Robust monitoring systems exist and these help to ensure that the service is run well.

Three families are currently placed in the centre. One family was met with during this inspection and their views have been taken into consideration in this report.

Improvements since the last inspection

No actions or recommendations were made at the last inspection of the service.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The family centre continues to provide an outstanding service by ensuring that families have access to a wide range of community services that enhance and promote their good health and well-being. The centre is located in an area with good transport links and this helps families to access these services. Local leisure facilities used by families include play groups, teenage parent groups, the library, park and leisure centre. Families are able to access local primary care centres. Children have their needs identified and these are clearly recorded in order to help staff promote their welfare. The centre does not administer medication, but does provide safe storage of medication for families.

Good links have been made with health professionals in order to ensure that families receive the support they need. These include links with a clinical psychologist and substance misuse worker who are available to work closely with families and are able to provide guidance to staff about working with the individual needs of families. A family therapist is employed to provide further consultation to staff and to carry out direct work with families in line with individual needs assessments. Staff work closely with families in order to enhance their parenting skills in a wide range of areas. Information packs have been developed to support this work and some of these are available in pictorial form or in a foreign language for those who have literacy difficulties or do not speak English as a first language.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Complaints are taken seriously by the service and well handled. Complaints are dealt with swiftly and often sooner than the centre's policy details. Concerns are put right where possible and information is sought from the complainant to find out if they are satisfied with the way the complaint has been handled. Information is made easily available to all relevant stakeholders about how a complaint can be made and an advocate can be allocated to translate this information into the complainant's preferred language. There are policies and procedures in place for child protection and these go some way to ensuring that young people remain safe. These include staff training and clear information being available regarding child protection. Excellent arrangements exist for helping to keep families and staff safe. There are comprehensive risk assessments that ensure staff know how to work effectively with each family. These also help to ensure that only families whose needs can be met by the centre, are placed there. All staff undergo 'keeping safe' training at least once every six months.

There are robust staff recruitment policies and procedures that help to ensure that only staff who are suitable to work at the centre do so. There are strong arrangements for checking health and safety in the centre that help to ensure that families live in a safe environment. This includes regular checks on the fire safety

equipment and regular fire drills. Other checks occur on equipment at the centre and environmental risk assessments are comprehensive and kept up to date.

Parents and children are given clear expectations about what to expect from the service and about the standards of acceptable conduct. One parent said: 'They told me all about the assessment and the rules at the start.' Information about all aspects of the service is explained during a planning meeting before an assessment commences. Staff are clear about their roles in ensuring that all families live together comfortably and understand the rules of the service. They also understand their roles in dealing with anger and de-escalation as training is provided in these areas. There are good systems for monitoring visitors to the centre and this helps to keep people living there secure. Families think that their privacy is respected and report that there are respectful arrangements for staff to enter their rooms. Clear written protocols are in place regarding this. Confidential information held about families is held securely and staff are trained in handling confidential information. Observations of parents does not intrude inappropriately.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is not judged.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

There are good arrangements in place for ensuring that families move into, and on from the centre in a positive way. All new families are invited to attend a meeting at the centre prior to moving in. This ensures that they are clear about the purpose of the placement and the expectations of them. Exit meetings also occur to help families move on in a positive way. Social workers and other relevant professionals are also invited to attend these meetings. The service has developed a comprehensive family guide that gives families lots of information about the service when they move into the centre. Families report that this guide is helpful.

Assessments are tailored to meet the needs of individual families and to give maximum opportunity to preserve family life. There are clear written guidelines about how the centre will undertake the assessment and how families will be involved in this. Families know the content of the placement plan as they are kept fully involved in the assessment process. Eight of the current staff team have been trained in parenting assessment manual software, otherwise referred to as PAMS, which has provided them with the skills to carry out assessments. This is particularly aimed at carrying out fair assessments of families where the parents have a learning disability. Each family is carefully allocated to a key worker to ensure equality and diversity, for example, a key worker may be allocated who speaks the parents first language. Religious practices are discussed during the assessment to ensure that families can continue to observe their beliefs without the assessment being intrusive

to this.

There are excellent systems in place for ensuring that children and their parents are party to decision making. There is open communication with families which is central to practice in the centre. Families are kept fully informed about the assessment process and are given opportunities to give their feedback about this on a daily basis. Feedback is sought from families at monthly monitoring visits to the service which ensures that their views are taken into consideration in the running of the service. Young people's views are taken into consideration throughout the assessment process and 'faces feelings charts' are used to help young children express their feelings.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Families enjoy homely accommodation, decorated, furnished and maintained to a good standard and have adequate facilities for their use. The centre has recently been rewired and is in the process of redecoration. A new play/assessment room is being developed. Each family is provided with a self-contained flat or bedsit that has a suitable number of bedrooms. A communal laundry is available that families have access to on a rota basis.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

There is a Statement of Purpose that is kept up to date which ensures that families and stakeholders have the information they need, and know what to expect from the service. Families are provided with a copy of a family guide which provides them with information about the day-to-day running of the service.

There are clear arrangements for the management of the centre with a team of four qualified social workers in management positions. An on-call system allows staff to contact a manager at all times. There is a strong staff team who report that they receive good line management support. Excellent arrangements exist to promote staff development and continuity in the service provided which include daily handover sessions, regular team meetings and fortnightly formal supervision. Staff have access to a family therapist and psychologist for guidance and support regarding their practice and about individual cases. Excellent arrangements also exist for staff training. Training is on-going for all staff in a wide range of areas. The minimum level of qualification for support staff is the National Vocational Qualification at level 3 in social care.

There are good systems in place for monitoring the quality of the service. This includes regular monitoring visits, document checking and team and management meetings. The views of families are sought regularly and these are taken seriously.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. The service considers equality and diversity in its staff recruitment and aims to ensure that the team reflects and supports the diversity of the families worked with. Interpreters and translation services are used when needed.