

Inspections of residential family centres

The inspection framework, evaluation schedule and grade descriptors

This document outlines the framework for the inspections of residential family centres and outlines the areas that inspectors will evaluate in order to make their judgements.

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Introduction

1. This document sets out the framework, the evaluation schedule and the grade descriptors for inspections of residential family centres that Ofsted inspects. It explains:
 - how we apply the principles and processes underlying all our inspections
 - the statutory basis for inspection
 - the main features of the inspection process.
2. The evaluation schedule outlines the main aspects of the service and outcomes against which inspectors will make judgements. It also outlines the grade descriptors that inspectors will use in arriving at their judgements.
3. Ofsted's general principles of inspection and regulation are to:
 - support and promote improvement
 - be proportionate
 - focus on the needs of service users
 - focus on the needs of providers
 - be transparent and consistent
 - be accountable
 - demonstrate value for money.
4. The framework and the inspection judgements are underpinned by the regulations and the national minimum standards.^{1,2} The inspections are intended not only to test compliance, but also to help raise standards and drive improvement in the sector. This requires a focus on how the residential family centre undertakes effective assessments, the support and guidance it provides to help parents protect their children and to promote their welfare, and the impact the centre has on outcomes for children. Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which the service contributes to delivering these improved outcomes.
5. More detailed guidance about the inspection is included in *Conducting inspections of residential family centres*.³

¹ The Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002, as amended;
www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/3213/contents/made.

² *Residential family centres: national minimum standards*, Department for Education, 2013;
www.gov.uk/government/publications/residential-family-centres-national-minimum-standards.

³ This link will be provided in October 2014.

Legal basis for inspection

6. The Care Standards Act 2000, including regulations made under section 22 of the Act, sets out the legal basis for regulating residential family centres.⁴ It sets out Ofsted's powers to register, inspect and, where necessary, enforce compliance with the Act and relevant regulations.
7. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, when Ofsted is carrying out its function of regulating and inspecting residential family centres, it must do so with the purpose of encouraging the services it inspects and regulates to:
 - improve
 - focus on the experiences of those who use the service
 - be efficient and effective in the use of resources.
8. A residential family centre is any establishment that provides residential services for parents and their children in order to assess the parents' capacity and potential to respond to their children's needs and to safeguard and promote their children's welfare. The residential family centre can also provide advice, guidance and counselling to the parents. All residential family centres must register with Ofsted before they can operate.
9. When inspecting residential family centres, Ofsted gives consideration to knowledge and understanding gained from previous inspections, and to relevant legislation, including:
 - The Care Standards Act 2000
 - The Children Act 1989⁵
 - The Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002 (as amended)
 - Residential family centres: national minimum standards (2013)
 - The Care Standards Act 2000 (Registration)(England) Regulations 2010⁶
 - The Equality Act 2010⁷
 - Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.⁸

⁴ Care Standards Act 2000, Part II, Section 22; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/14/section/22.

⁵ The Children Act 1989; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents.

⁶ The Care Standards Act 2000 (Registration)(England) Regulations 2010; www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/2130/contents/made.

⁷ The Equality Act 2010; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents.

⁸ Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, Department for Education, 2013; www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children.

Frequency of inspection

10. The frequency of inspections is set out in regulations.⁹ All residential family centres must have at least one inspection during each three-year inspection cycle.
11. The timing of an inspection will be influenced by an assessment of:
 - the outcomes of previous inspections
 - any current complaints or enforcement action
 - notifications received from a residential family centre
 - other relevant information, including complaints and allegations, received by Ofsted.
12. When Ofsted judges a residential family centre to be inadequate for overall experiences of children and parents, the next inspection will normally take place within 12 months.

Types of inspection

13. The following types of inspection may be carried out by Ofsted in residential family centres.
 - A **full inspection** is carried out at least once during each three-year cycle. This inspection is conducted against the evaluation schedule and will result in a set of graded judgements and a published report.
 - A **monitoring inspection** may be carried out if there is an incident, complaint or concern regarding the residential family centre, or to follow up on enforcement action.

Notice given for inspection

14. Full inspections are always unannounced. Monitoring inspections will usually be unannounced.

Inspectors

15. Residential family centres are usually inspected by one social care inspector.

⁹ The Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (Fees and Frequency of Inspections) (Children's Homes etc.) Regulations 2007, as amended; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/694/contents/made.

Inspection activity

16. In preparation for inspection, inspectors consider the information that Ofsted has about the service. This includes:
 - the results of the annual online questionnaires completed by service users, staff, commissioners and partner organisations
 - previous inspection reports
 - the statement of purpose and the residents' guide
 - concerns and complaints received
 - notifications of significant events received
 - regulation 25 reports received¹⁰
 - any changes to registration, including change of manager
 - any current or recent enforcement activity.

17. On arrival at the residential family centre, inspectors will request specific information from the registered manager or person in charge (see Annex A of *Conducting inspections*).

18. Inspection activities, where possible, include:
 - examining a sample of assessments submitted to the court
 - listening to and talking with children and parents, subject to their permission
 - observing staff interactions with children and parents
 - observing key activities, such as handovers of information between staff
 - gathering views from partners and stakeholders, such as: representatives of the local authorities that have made placements; social workers; Independent Reviewing Officers; Cafcass; school staff; local police; the Local Authority Designated Officer; relevant health professionals; children's guardians; independent visitors
 - sampling case files and records
 - inspecting premises, facilities, surveillance methods and health and safety arrangements
 - discussions with managers and staff.

¹⁰ The Residential Family Centre Regulations 2002, as amended, www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2002/3213/contents/made.

19. A maximum of four and a half inspector days will be allocated to each residential family centre inspection. This includes time for preparation, fieldwork and report writing. This may vary in exceptional circumstances.
20. The inspection specifically focuses on gathering evidence against the evaluation schedule. The detail of activities undertaken and discussions held may vary depending on the lines of enquiry for each individual inspection.

Making judgements and using the grade descriptors

21. The experiences and progress of children and parents are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect.
22. In all residential family centre inspections, we will examine the extent to which the service fulfils its main purpose and responsibility, which is to assess parental capacity to respond to their children's needs, to promote their welfare and to protect them from harm. The quality and accuracy of these assessments are not only fundamental to the protection of the children, but will significantly affect their futures and those of their families.
23. Inspectors will make their judgements on a four-point scale:
 - outstanding
 - good
 - requires improvement
 - inadequate.
24. Inspectors will use the descriptors of good as the benchmark against which to grade and judge performance. Inspectors are required to weigh up the evidence in a particular area and to consider it against the evaluation criteria for outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate before making a judgement at a full inspection. A judgement of good will be made where the inspector concludes that the evidence overall sits most appropriately with a finding of good. This is what Ofsted describes as 'best fit'.
25. In addition, inspectors will identify areas of outstanding practice and priorities for improvement. For all children and parents, the expectation is that care and practice are sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation.
26. Residential family centres must comply with the relevant regulations and, where they do not, inspectors will clearly identify what they must do in the form of 'requirements'. The Department for Education also publishes national minimum standards. Where providers do not take account of the national minimum standards, this may indicate a failure to comply with the regulations and is likely to indicate poor practice. This will influence the inspection

judgement and may result in 'requirements' being imposed. Where appropriate we will always make recommendations for improvement.

27. On making a judgement of inadequate for a residential family centre, the inspector must always consult with a Social Care Compliance Inspector, who must instigate a case discussion, where:
 - there is evidence of any immediate risk of harm to children and/or parents, breach of regulations that constitutes an offence, or breach of any conditions placed on the registration
 - the last inspection resulted in a judgement of inadequate for overall experiences.
28. The inspector should also consider consulting with a Social Care Compliance Inspector, where there is any history of:
 - complaints against the residential family centre that have not been dealt with in a satisfactory way
 - failure to comply with regulations and/or national minimum standards that have not been dealt with in a satisfactory way
 - failure to take satisfactory action to meet requirements/actions and recommendations that call into question the suitability of the registered person.
29. The purpose of the case discussion is to consider whether any enforcement action should be taken. The *Social care compliance handbook* contains detailed information about the criteria for instigating a case discussion, the enforcement options available, and the arrangements for following up enforcement activity.¹¹
30. Ofsted inspection frameworks operate on the basis that only good is good enough for children and young people whether that is in respect of their care or education. The concept of a 'minimum' standard, therefore, is not applied in the evaluation criteria. This framework sets out what good looks like as the expectation for the experiences of children and parents who stay at residential family centres. When a centre is not yet good, we will judge it as requires improvement and set out where we believe it needs to improve. Those improvements will be aligned with the relevant regulations and standards.
31. Meeting all regulatory requirements will not necessarily result in a judgement of good or outstanding. Meeting the requirements must equate to high-quality care, good planning, a safe and protective environment, and positive experiences for children and parents. Nevertheless, the seriousness of any failure to meet regulations and the potential impact on the experiences of

¹¹ *Social care compliance handbook* (140136), Ofsted, 2014; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140136.

children and parents will be considered carefully to determine how this should influence the judgements and the outcome of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to assess the impact of any breach on the lives of children and parents and the quality of care afforded to them.

Limiting judgements

32. When inspectors judge 'how well children and parents are helped and protected' as inadequate, the 'overall experiences' judgement will always be inadequate.
33. A judgement of inadequate for either 'the effectiveness of leaders and managers' or 'working in partnership with others to improve outcomes' will be likely to lead to a judgement of inadequate for the 'overall experiences', and always no more than requires improvement. When making that judgement, inspectors will take into account the impact of the shortfalls on the experiences of children and young people.

Summary of the evaluation schedule criteria for inspections

34. The judgements for inspections are:
 - The overall experiences of children and parents, taking into account:
 - quality of assessment
 - how well children and parents are protected and helped
 - working with partners to improve outcomes
 - the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The overall experiences of children and parents

Good

35. The judgement on the overall experiences of children and parents is likely to be good, if:
 - children and adults report that they feel safe at the centre and are protected, as far as possible, from accidents, abuse, neglect, violence and self-harm.
 - staff provide consistently high-quality care, support and guidance that leads to constructive, challenging and progressive experiences for parents, and to positive experiences and improved outcomes for children.
 - parents are professionally supported to understand their own capacity to change and the impact of their behaviour on children.

- children and parents confirm that challenging behaviours are managed well, and that boundaries and expectations about group living are consistently followed.
- children and parents live in a welcoming and homely physical environment.
- staff and parents work together to meet children's day-to-day needs for routine, privacy, personal space, nutritious meals, enjoyable mealtimes and a safe and secure attachment with an adult who knows them well.
- children, where possible, and parents are actively engaged in plans that are made and they understand what is happening to them. They enjoy sound relationships with staff, which are based on honesty and respect.
- children and parents are welcomed into, and leave, the centre in a planned and sensitive manner.
- care planning, support and guidance are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of each child and parent, and are underpinned by effective, high quality support from staff.
- the views and wishes of children and parents, whether individually or collectively, significantly influence the running of the centre and the delivery of care, guidance and support.
- collaborative working with social workers, family courts and other professionals is well embedded with the operation of the centre.
- children and parents understand how to complain, and have access to and are actively encouraged to involve, an advocate and independent visitor. Children and parents understand what has happened because of their complaint. Their complaints are treated seriously and result in a clear response, urgent action and improved practice and/or services where that is required.

Outstanding

36. The judgement on the overall experiences of children and parents is likely to be judged outstanding, if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement, there is evidence that:
- professional practice consistently exceeds the standard of good. There is significant evidence of change and improvement for children and parents because of the actions of the staff working at the home.
 - research-informed practice, some of which may be innovative, makes an exceptional difference to the lives and experiences of children and parents.
 - children and parents give consistently positive feedback about the quality of their care, support and guidance in the centre and their relationships with staff.

Requires improvement

37. The quality of the overall experiences of children and parents is likely to require improvement, if:
- there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall experiences of children and parents are not yet good.

Inadequate

38. The judgement on the overall experiences of children and parents is likely to be inadequate, if:
- there are serious and widespread failures that result in the safety and welfare of children not being protected or in poor experiences for children and parents.

The approach following a judgement of inadequate for overall experiences

39. A judgement of inadequate for the overall experiences of children and parents is made when there are serious and widespread failures in assessment resulting in children's safety and welfare not being protected.
40. Where a residential family centre is judged inadequate, inspectors set requirements, clearly identifying the regulatory failures under the Care Standards Act 2000 or the Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002 as amended (2012). The registered person/s must meet these requirements as set out in regulation.
41. Inspectors may also make recommendations to help the registered person/s to further improve the quality and standards of care. Recommendations always relate to the national minimum standards.
42. On making a judgement of inadequate for a residential family centre, the inspector must always consult with a Social Care Compliance Inspector, who must instigate a case discussion, when:
 - there is evidence of any immediate risk of harm to children and/or parents, breach of regulations that constitutes an offence, or breach of any conditions placed on the registration
 - the last inspection resulted in a judgement of inadequate for overall effectiveness.
43. The inspector should also consider consulting with a Social Care Compliance Inspector when there is any history of:
 - complaints against the residential family centre that have not been dealt with in a satisfactory way
 - failure to comply with regulations and/or national minimum standards that have not been dealt with in a satisfactory way
 - failure to take satisfactory action to meet requirements/actions and recommendations that call into question the suitability of the registered person.
44. The purpose of the case discussion is to consider whether any enforcement action should be taken. The *Social care compliance handbook* contains detailed information about the criteria for instigating a case discussion, the enforcement options available, and the arrangements for following up enforcement activity.¹²

¹² *Social care compliance handbook* (140136), Ofsted, 2014; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140136.

45. When Ofsted judges a residential family centre to be inadequate for overall experiences of children and parents, the next inspection will normally take place within 12 months.

Quality of assessment

Good

46. The judgement on the quality of assessment is likely to be good, if:

- assessments are focused on the needs of children, are analytical and show a clear understanding of case history, risk and the capacity of the parents to protect and promote their children's welfare. The assessments are evidence based, include a chronology and give a clear account of how the assessments were completed.
- assessments take full account of the placing authority and court requirements.
- assessments are realistic about parental capacity for change and the extent to which parents understand the impact of their behaviour on their children.
- assessments include strong evidence, where available, of the child's journey to a safe and nurturing family life. The assessment demonstrates how support can reduce or increase, reflecting the needs of children and parents as the assessment progresses. Assessments include a clear account of recommended next steps in the child's best interests. Recommendations about children's futures are based on their best interests and comprehensive evidence.
- parents are assessed in accordance with their family placement plan and in a manner consistent with assessment guidance contained within Chapter One of *Working together to safeguard children*.¹³
- plans are regularly reviewed and updated in line with changing circumstances.
- parents are proactively engaged at every stage of the assessment. They receive ongoing and regular feedback about their parenting and plans for the future. Parents are clear about the assessment process, the elements of their parenting that are being assessed, and the emerging views of the assessors.
- parents feel able to challenge elements of the assessment process and changes, if in the interests of their children, are made as a result. Their views are clearly recorded.
- parents and, as appropriate, children know the content of the assessment report and their views and feedback are addressed fully.

¹³ *Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*, Department for Education, 2013, www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children

- use of surveillance systems for assessment is detailed in the care plan and understood by parents.
- prior to admission and during assessments, effective liaison with all relevant professionals, including the child's social worker, contributes significantly to high quality assessments and realistic recommendations about future plans.
- all professionals working with the family are able to contribute appropriately and effectively to the assessment.
- staff responsible for completing assessments are suitably trained and qualified social workers; they have a good knowledge and understanding of child development, attachment theory and models of change, and use that knowledge to support their assessments.
- staff practice follows a clear theoretical model, they are able to reflect on their practice and it results in improvements for children and parents.

Outstanding

47. The quality of assessment is likely to be judged outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement, there is evidence that:
- the quality of assessments and reports is consistently and exceptionally high.
 - the residential family centre ensures that professionals from all agencies involved with the family have a coherent understanding of the ethos of the centre and the theoretical model that underpins the assessments.
 - feedback from court professionals and partner agencies about the quality of assessments and reports is consistently positive.
 - leaders and managers continually review the effectiveness of the assessment process and adapt it accordingly, improving the quality of the assessments.

Requires improvement

48. The quality of assessment is likely to require improvement, if:
- there are no serious or widespread failures in assessment that result in children's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the quality of assessments is not yet good.

Inadequate

49. The judgement on the quality of assessment is likely to be inadequate, if
- there are serious and widespread failures in assessment resulting in children's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

How well children and parents are helped and protected

Good

50. The judgement on how well children and parents are helped and protected is likely to be good, if:

- children's welfare is paramount. They are protected from harm and kept safe while living at the residential family centre.
- care plans clearly identify the risk and impact, or likely risk and impact, of any abuse or neglect and the actions required to keep children safe. These are regularly monitored and reviewed, alongside parents' capacity to protect their children and promote their welfare.
- staff identify and respond effectively to the particular vulnerabilities and needs relating to a child or parent's cultural background and personal identity (including disability, age, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity, marital status, language, religious belief and sexual orientation).
- the diverse and individual needs of children and their families are central to the services provided by the centre and are addressed in all aspects of planning and direct work with children and their families.
- the impact on some children and families whose home area is far from the residential family centre is considered and addressed.
- parents are provided with as much information as possible about the centre prior to admission.
- staff actively promote child and parental health, education and, where relevant, employment.
- staff intervene appropriately to ensure that a child's needs are being met, including their emotional and attachment needs.
- direct work is undertaken with parents to enable them to bond and attach with their children.
- effective parenting support helps children to develop appropriate and secure attachments to their parent or parents.
- parents are consistently and actively involved in the planning and review of their guidance and support.
- staff and managers have a robust understanding of the impact of the residential experience on children and parents. This is used positively to promote the quality of practice and support provided.
- parents are supported to develop skills to build and sustain constructive relationships and resolve conflict positively.
- staff promote positive relationships between all families resident at the centre. They manage challenging behaviour well and respond appropriately to anti-social behaviour in the interests of all those at the centre.

- parents and, as appropriate, their children are able to, raise concerns about their experience of the centre. Children and parents know what action has been taken as a result of their concerns.
- the residential family centre systematically monitors and learns from allegations and the outcomes of child and adult protection investigations. Wider learning is effective, including key messages from serious case reviews and research.
- strong and proactive relationships with key partner agencies, including the police, local authorities, courts, education and health agencies, support and promote the safety of children and parents.
- procedures for dealing with allegations or suspicion of harm are compliant with *Working Together 2013* and provide effective protection and support for the child and/or vulnerable adult.
- the centre has clear procedures, and agreed arrangements with the local police and child and adult protection services which result in investigations being handled in a fair, consistent, timely and effective way.
- the centre follows clear procedures and agreed arrangements with the local police and child and adult protection services which include the actions to be taken where an adult or child is missing.
- the environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking full account of the needs and characteristics of the children and parents using the centre. The centre is well maintained and meets all health and safety requirements.
- arrangements for the management and administration of medication are safe and effective.

Outstanding

51. The judgement regarding how well children and parents are helped and protected is likely to be outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement:
- staff are highly experienced, skilled, and find creative ways to help and protect children and parents. Practice is research based and sometimes innovative, leading to demonstrable improvements to the lives of children and parents.
 - there is strong and robust evidence that the centre is minimising any unnecessary risks to the safety of children and young people. Systematic risk assessment and risk management improve the protection of children and parents. Risk assessments are reviewed and updated in response to changes to the resident group.
 - professionals consistently report that the help and protection children and parents receive is of an exceptionally high standard.

Requires improvement

52. The judgement on how well children and parents are helped and protected is likely to require improvement, if:
- there are no serious or widespread failures that leave children and parents either harmed, or at risk of harm. However, children and parents do not yet experience good help and protection.

Inadequate

53. The judgement on how well children and young people are helped and protected is likely to be inadequate, if:
- there are serious or widespread failures in the help and protection provided by the centre that leave children or parents either harmed, or at risk of harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Good

54. The judgement on the effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be good, if:
- managers have strong systems in place that prioritise the quality of practice and the difference staff make to the lives of children and their parents.
 - there is clear evidence of continuing improvement based on the track record and performance since the previous inspection. Service planning is founded on robust evidence, tackling key areas of weakness systematically and building on areas of strength.
 - the centre is managed efficiently and effectively by a permanent registered manager who is suitably experienced and qualified.
 - leaders and managers conduct a thorough review of the service at least annually and use the results to actively drive continuous improvement. They take prompt action to address weaknesses and make improvements.
 - leaders and managers are aware of and understand current legislative requirements, research and practice developments in the sector. They share these with staff to improve the quality of service and to inform training.
 - leaders and managers consistently demonstrate and communicate their high expectations to staff about sustaining improvement.
 - the home is properly staffed and resourced. Staff are effectively deployed to meet the individual needs of children and parents.
 - all staff and volunteers working at the centre are carefully selected and vetted. Robust monitoring is in place to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm children or vulnerable adults.
 - leaders and managers make family-centred decisions about admissions. Priority is given to the safety and stability of the group of families who are already resident. Admission decisions take full account of children and parents' needs. There are good plans to introduce families to the centre. There are effective contributions to plans to support families when they leave, regardless of the assessment decision.
 - the centre's statement of purpose clearly sets out the ethos and objectives of the centre. It is up-to-date and contains comprehensive information, in accordance with the requirements of the regulations.
 - all significant events relating to the welfare and protection of children and adults are notified by the registered persons to the appropriate authorities. Necessary action is taken following such events to ensure that children's needs are met and that they are safe and protected.

- managers and staff receive regular and effective supervision that is clearly recorded. Supervision offers opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice and to identify their professional developmental needs.
- staff receive relevant training to enable them to provide high quality assessments of parenting skills, to write strong and clear reports and to meet the needs of children and parents in the centre. There is an effective and relevant training plan for the team of staff working at the centre.

Outstanding

55. The judgement regarding the effectiveness of leaders and managers will be outstanding, if leaders and managers, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement:

- provide a clear, strategic direction based on a vision that takes into account the views and needs of all those involved in the life of the centre, including parents and children. They are highly influential in improving the lives of those who are resident at the centre.
- have demonstrably high aspirations for children and parents; they expect staff to provide high quality services to children and parents that result in lasting improvements to their lives.
- are innovative and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality care, support and guidance for families. Assessments are consistently managed effectively. Leaders and managers know the centre's strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of continuous improvement over a sustained period. Relationships between the centre, partner agencies and parents ensure the best possible experiences for children and their parents.

Requires improvement

56. The judgement on the effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be requires improvement, if:

- the characteristics of good are not yet in place. It, therefore, requires improvement to be good. However, there are no widespread or serious failures in leadership and management that result in children's welfare not being safeguarded and promoted. Where there are weaknesses in practice, leaders and managers have identified and remedied them.

Inadequate

57. The judgement regarding the effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be inadequate, if:

- there are widespread or serious failures in leadership and management that result in the safety and welfare of children and parents not being safeguarded or promoted.

Working with partners to improve outcomes

Good

58. The judgement on working with partners will be good, if:

- staff build effective working relationships with social workers and staff from placing authorities and with the local authority where they are located. They are active participants in reviews of progress and they effectively challenge any perceived shortfalls in support to ensure that children receive the support and protection to which they are entitled and require.
- staff collaborate positively with other agencies and professionals, including education colleagues, health agencies, housing providers and family courts to ensure good continuity of care and effective holistic support for children and parents and plans for the future.
- proactive and effective working relationships with the police help to support and protect children and parents. The adults working at the centre protect the parents living there from any unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system.
- staff work proactively to promote and develop positive relationships with neighbours and the local community that will help children and families to use local resources and promote a sense of belonging and security for children and families.
- the residential family centre has strong links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Local Authority Designated Officer and there is regular and effective communication regarding key safeguarding issues, such as allegations against staff at the centre or injuries sustained by children.

Outstanding

59. The judgement for working with partners is likely to be outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement:

- there is evidence that highly effective, well-embedded, mutually challenging and dynamic partnership arrangements bring demonstrable benefits to children and parents. The centre's consistently proactive, creative and innovative engagement with a wide range of partners contributes to high quality support, assessment, care and protection of children and parents.

Requires improvement

60. The judgement for working with partners is likely to be requires improvement, if:

- the characteristics of good partnership working are not yet in place. It, therefore, requires improvement to be good. However, there are no

widespread or serious failures in working with partners that result in children’s and parents’ welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.

Inadequate

61. The judgement for working with partners is likely to be inadequate, if:
- there are serious or widespread failures in partnership working that result in children’s welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.

Reporting findings at inspections

62. Each full inspection is followed by a report that sets out the inspection findings, using text and grades, organised under the headings below.

Report contents

Service information	Brief contextual information about the service
Overall experiences of children and parents	Grade
Areas for improvement	No grade
Quality of assessment	Grade
How well children and parents are helped and protected	Grade
The effectiveness of leaders and managers	Grade
Working with partners to improve outcomes	Grade
About this inspection	Information about the legal basis for the inspection

63. The inspection report is sent to the provider within 10 working days of the end of the inspection for a factual accuracy check. The registered provider or representatives should return the full inspection report with any comments on factual accuracy within five working days. The final report is published on the Ofsted website within 20 working days of the end of the inspection (irrespective of appeals or complaints).

The views of children, parents, professionals and stakeholders: questionnaires

64. We will gather the views of parents and other interested parties using online questionnaires. These questionnaires are available in different formats and languages on request. Hard copies will also be available for parents. The

questionnaires will be anonymous so that those completing them cannot be identified.

65. In this context, professionals and stakeholders include commissioners and professionals who support the work of the centre, for example: healthcare professionals, social workers, children's guardians and family therapists.
66. Inspectors take account of the extent to which residential family centres have asked for and acted upon the views of children and parents in reviewing and improving services and outcomes. Inspectors also consider the views of those children, parents and partners they speak to during onsite evidence gathering.

Communication and feedback

67. Inspectors provide regular opportunities for dialogue and feedback during the inspection. Oral feedback about findings, including strengths and weaknesses in practice, is given to the residential family centre at the end of the inspection. Requirements and recommendations to be made are clearly stated at this time. Judgements are indicative at this stage and may change following quality assurance checks.

Conduct during the inspection

68. Inspectors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work, and ensure that everyone they encounter during inspections is treated fairly and with respect. The code of conduct requires inspectors to:
 - evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour
 - evaluate provisions in line with frameworks, national standards or requirements
 - base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
 - have no connection with the provider that could undermine their objectivity
 - report honestly and clearly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
 - carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
 - endeavour to minimise the stress on those involved in the inspection
 - act in the best interests and well-being of service users
 - maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
 - respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
 - respond appropriately to reasonable requests

- take prompt and appropriate action on any child protection or health and safety issues.

Expectations of providers

69. For inspection and regulation to be productive and beneficial, inspectors and providers must establish and maintain a professional working environment based on courteous and professional behaviour. Inspectors are expected to uphold the code of conduct, and Ofsted also expects providers to:
- be courteous and professional
 - apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
 - allow inspectors to conduct their visit in an open and honest way
 - allow inspectors to evaluate the provision objectively against the standards and framework
 - provide evidence that enables the inspector to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
 - work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
 - ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on their premises
 - maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspector
 - draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of the inspector promptly and in a suitable manner
 - respect that inspectors need to observe practice and talk to staff and users without the presence of a manager or registered person.

Confidentiality

70. Ofsted takes all steps necessary to ensure that information provided to inspectors remains confidential where appropriate, but cannot guarantee this. Evidence gathered during inspections may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, but the identity of individuals will not be disclosed.
71. Where Ofsted considers that any information provided indicates the actual or likelihood of harm to a child or young person, we pass the necessary information to the local authority children's service for action and we would inform the manager of the centre where appropriate.

Quality assurance

72. Quality assurance describes the action that we take to ensure that an inspection is of the quality needed and expected by users, providers and Ofsted.

73. The inspector has responsibility for ensuring that all the evidence gathered is robust, reliable and secure.
74. For national consistency, some inspections include an Ofsted inspector whose role is to quality assure the inspection process. During these visits, the visiting inspector talks with managers and other staff and, where appropriate, those living at the centre. The inspector should always seek the views of staff at the residential family centre about the conduct of the inspection and sample the way that evidence is being gathered and used.
75. All inspection reports are subject to a quality assurance process. This may result in changes to provisional judgements.
76. Ofsted asks the manager of the residential family centre to complete a short evaluation form following each inspection, which is used to improve the quality of inspections.

Concerns

77. The great majority of Ofsted's work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns arise during an inspection, these should be raised with the inspector as soon as possible during the inspection visit. This provides an opportunity to resolve the matter before the inspection is completed. Any concerns about the factual accuracy of the findings in the report can be raised after the inspection and will be considered as part of the quality assurance process.

Complaints

78. If it has not been possible to resolve concerns through the process detailed in paragraph 77, a formal complaint can be raised under Ofsted's complaints procedure: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/130128.
79. Lodging a complaint does not normally delay the publication of the final inspection report.

More information

80. We hope that you find this document useful in helping you to prepare for your inspection. If you have any queries about your inspection, please discuss them with your inspector when they contact you.
81. If you have any other general queries about the inspections of residential family centres, please contact Ofsted by email at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or by telephone on 0300 123 1231.