



fa&ss

family assessment & support services

Statement of Purpose 2025

Richmond House,
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Welcome



Welcome to Richmond House!

Richmond House is a residential family centre located in Somerset and is part of an organisation called Family Assessment and Support Services (FA&SS). We are an independent organisation that aim to help families stay together if safe to do so. We provide each family a bespoke programme of support, which includes many opportunities for them to learn new skills and make changes in order to keep their children safe. We offer robust, social worker led parenting assessments, alongside high levels of supervision, which ensures the child's safety always remains paramount. We have been successfully supporting families since 2010.

Richmond House is a large detached residential property in a rural location, on the outskirts of North Curry, just a few miles from the county town of Taunton. It is close to all major transport links including the M5 and National Rail.

We are linked closely with the local GP surgery and health visiting team. We provide transport to families, supporting them to attend community based activities, family time and appointments.

The main house has six residential bedrooms, two of which are on the ground floor. There are two shared bathrooms and a separate toilet. We also have a large communal kitchen, lounge and dining room. In addition to this, we have recently added two self contained bedrooms to our site, which allows us to offer more families the opportunity to undertake a residential assessment.

Our Statement of Purpose will explain the services we provide at Richmond House so that local authorities that place families in our care, can be assured that our services meet families' requirements. The document is reviewed and agreed annually by the Registered Manager and Responsible Individual.



Aims and Objectives of Richmond House



Our aims

For many parents their right to a family life is not questioned, however, for some parents who may have experienced abuse or trauma during their lives, becoming a parent can be a challenging time. As such, they may struggle to be able to keep their child safe and meet their needs consistently. We work together with families, supporting them in line with their individual needs and abilities to learn new parenting skills. Our support includes opportunities to access a variety of in-house workshops and community based services such as health agencies and voluntary organisations. We want to ensure every family has a fair and positive experience, whatever the outcome of their parenting assessment.

We continually review and develop our services to improve our assessment process and the support we provide to the families in our care.

Our objectives

- To ensure that all children residing at Richmond House remain safe.
- To provide a secure and nurturing environment for all families, which focuses on individual needs.
- We ensure our assessments remain child focused, and that children's wishes and feelings are captured throughout the process.
- For all parents to have their parenting skills assessed through a fair, comprehensive and impartial process.
- To ensure parents understand the assessment process, they are involved in their assessment and are given opportunities to make changes to the identified concerns.
- To provide robust, evidence based parenting assessments that will guide the long-term care planning of children.



What Families Can Expect from Us

Right to privacy - We recognise that surveillance methods, particularly the use of CCTV, is an invasive measure. However, it is undertaken based on the requirements of the placing authority and will be balanced appropriately with the requirement to safeguard children. The use of surveillance and monitoring methods are explained at the point of referral and forms part of the Placement Plan, Risk Assessment and other assessment requirements of the Family Court.

Surveillance methods are explained to families prior to and upon their arrival at Richmond House; their consent to surveillance is sought in the Residents' Agreement they will be required to sign. We ensure that all surveillance methods are reasonable and do not intrude unnecessarily. We will respect the rights of all parents to be intimate with their partner in private, and do not discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Right to confidentiality

Our procedures at Richmond House form the foundation of our daily working practice and we uphold the principles of The General Data Protection Regulation (2018) (GDPR) and Article 8 of The Human Rights Act (1998). The day-to-day practicalities of confidentiality are explained to all families prior to and on admission to Richmond House; it is also

We provide clear guidance to all staff to respect the privacy of families in our care, this includes:

- Staff entry into families' bedrooms.
- Privacy in non-communal areas.
- Supervision.
- Use of recording and monitoring equipment.
- Telephone and meeting room facilities.

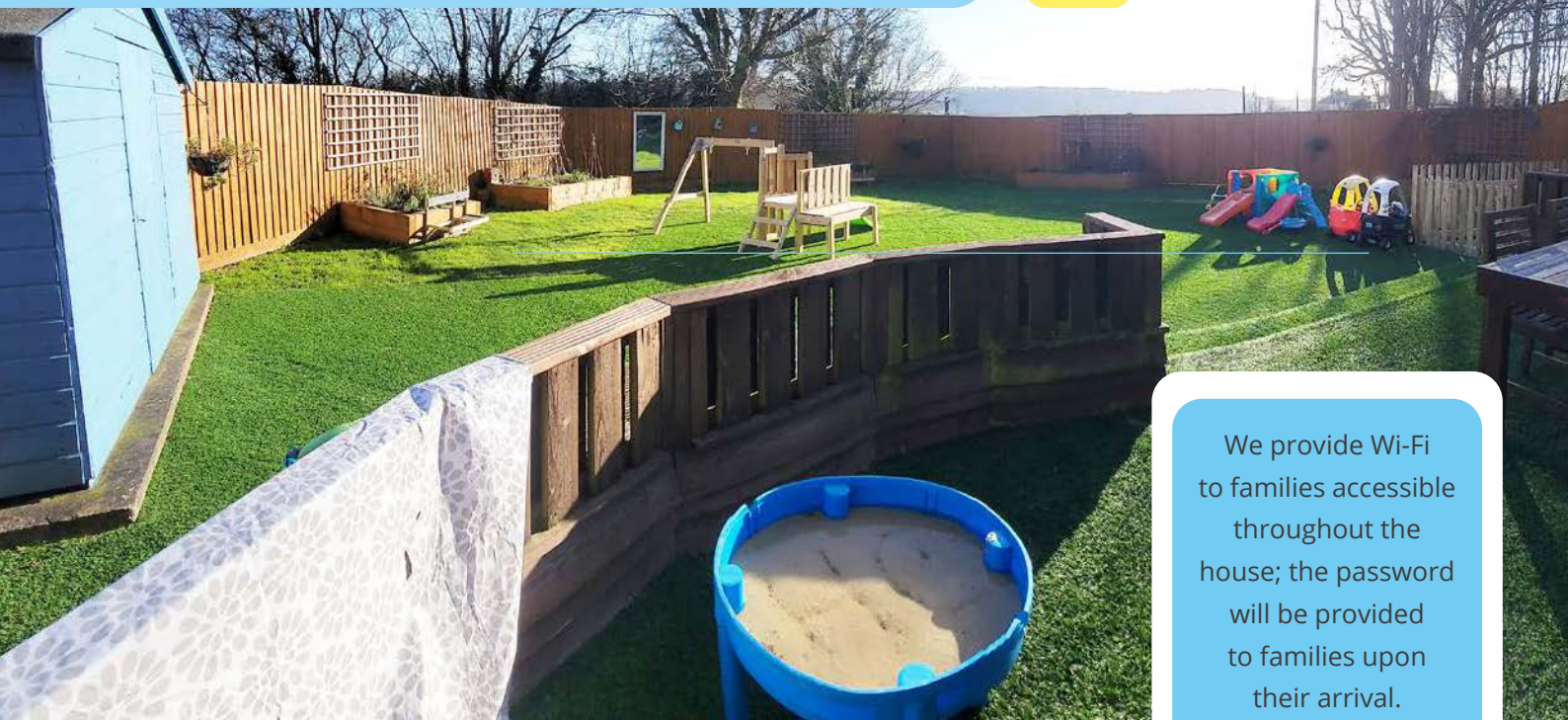


contained within the Residents' Guide as well as in the literature provided to the placing authority.

All staff and external professionals will respect the rights and privacy of the family and will ensure that:

- All information about them is handled in accordance with our GDPR Policies and Procedures.
- Information is only shared with other professionals and staff as required to ensure families and children's wellbeing.
- Meetings that take place about individual families are conducted in a private meeting space.
- All information on families and children will be kept securely. Paper files will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked room when unattended; electronic files will be stored on secure servers.
- Requests for families' information will be shared in accordance with our policies and procedures and will only be shared where there is a legitimate reason for the request.

Facilities and Services



We provide Wi-Fi to families accessible throughout the house; the password will be provided to families upon their arrival.

Our centre is located in the Somerset countryside. The house is furnished and decorated to a high standard with all modern conveniences. There is a large well equipped kitchen with three fridge/freezers, three electric ovens and hobs, as well as utensils, crockery, cutlery and other cooking equipment. Families are responsible for purchasing their own food and are provided with a cupboard and fridge/freezer space to store this. There is a communal dining area, equipped with highchairs so that families can enjoy meals together. We have a large lounge on the ground floor, which is equipped with a TV, books, highchairs, travel cots, playmats,

toys and other essential items. In addition to our main garden, there is also a courtyard with a covered buggy park and an area to dry clothes. The courtyard also has a designated smoking area.

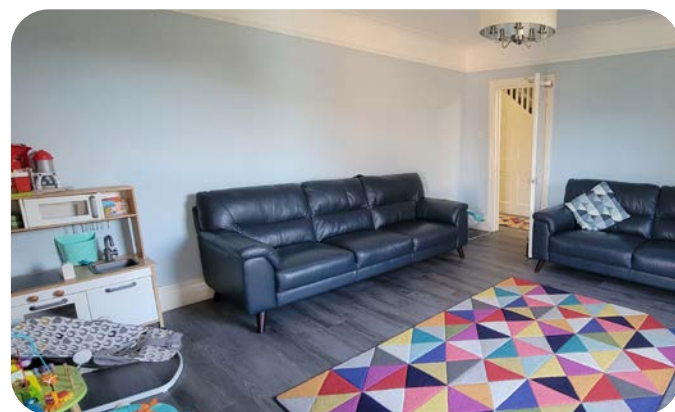
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Services we provide include:

- Residential assessments for families whose children have been identified as “at risk of harm”.
- Individualised services to support parents with a range of complex or additional needs including:
 - those with learning difficulties,
 - mental health issues,
 - substance misuse issues,
 - experiences of domestic abuse,
 - young parents,
 - those with a history of being looked after.
- Outreach and community based support.
- Supervised and assessed family time between parents and their child.

Facilities and Services



▶ We have two ground floor bedrooms – one single and one large double room. On the first floor there are a further four large bedrooms, one of which has its own toilet. All bedrooms are equipped with a bed, wardrobe, chest of drawers and TV. There are also safes for secure storage of valuables and medi-cabinets, for the safe storage of prescription medication. Cots, cot beds and Moses baskets are provided as required. All bedding, towels and toiletries are provided, although families may bring their own if they prefer. Stairgates are fitted to all stairways; the house complies with the Health & Safety Executive's (HSE) Fire Safety procedures. We refurbish and redecorate every room regularly to maintain a high standard.

Outside, Richmond House has a quiet, secure garden and play area, laid with safety approved flooring and grass. There is a range of age appropriate toys and activities available, including a slide, swing and a mud kitchen for older children. The flower and vegetable plots are well maintained and we encourage parents to engage in gardening. There is a sensory room for families to enjoy with

their children; this can also be used for family time or private meetings. Adjacent to the main building, we have recently added a further two self contained bedrooms to our site. These rooms have been decorated and equipped to a high standard, each with its own fully furnished kitchen, lounge, bedroom and bathroom. They are furnished to the same standard as our rooms in the main house and offer the same facilities, including high levels of supervision and support. Families that are placed in these rooms also have access to the communal areas in the main house, such as the garden and lounge. They will be included in all group sessions that are provided.

All our bedrooms and communal areas are monitored by CCTV. Our team of experienced family support workers also provide one to one support and supervision throughout the assessment. In consultation with placing authorities, supervision levels are adjusted accordingly over the duration of the assessment.

Ethos and Philosophy



The work we undertake at Richmond House places the child at the centre of everything we do, we have developed our ethos and philosophy based on both organisational values and the legislation that governs organisations working with children and families.

Our ethos and philosophy:

- To establish a collaborative working relationship based on mutual trust and respect.
- To work in partnership with parents when assessing their parenting capacity.
- To individualise parenting assessments for each family in our care, taking into consideration their individual needs and abilities.
- We strive to develop our skills, which will ensure risks to children are prevented.
- To ensure the child's basic needs, security, wishes and feelings remain central to the assessment process.
- To ensure parents develop an understanding of their child's needs and the importance of developing an early attachment with their child.
- To gather accurate and reliable evidence to inform parenting assessments of all families in our care.



The FA&SS Team



Responsible Individual – Dave Tucker

Dave has been CEO since 2022 and has been working for the Agency since 2013. Dave obtained a BSc in Social Work at the University of the West of

England in 2007. He has worked in a child protection team, both as a case holding social worker and as a team manager. Dave has experience of working with children with complex needs, ranging from attachment disorder to victims of physical and sexual abuse and neglect. Dave is experienced in working effectively with parents and children; he has a good understanding of the issues and impact of drug and alcohol addiction, learning difficulties and domestic violence have on parenting capacity.



Registered Manager – Kelly Berglund

Kelly started her career in social care, whilst completing a degree in Psychology in 2010. Prior to qualifying as a social worker, Kelly gained experience within

the voluntary sector supporting vulnerable adults and children. Whilst employed Kelly gained extensive experience of working with vulnerable families from complex backgrounds, including mothers in prison, parents with learning difficulties, addiction and parental mental health.

Kelly qualified as a Social Worker in 2015, after completing a MSc in Social Work at Bristol University. As a children's social worker she gained experience within safeguarding, care proceedings and adoption assessment in a variety of Local Authority Teams. Kelly became an assessing social worker at Richmond House in March 2019. During this time, she has worked with complex families assessing

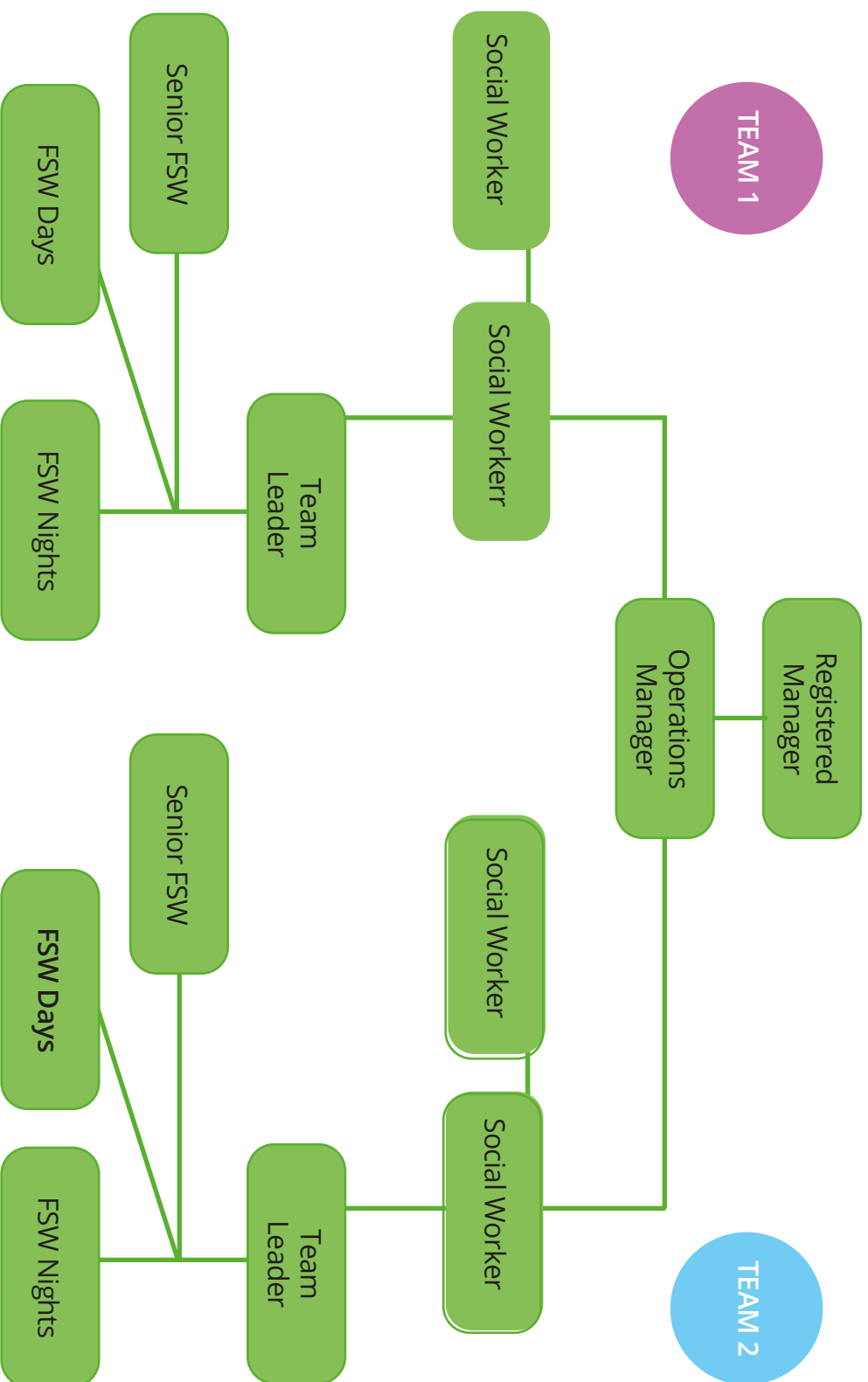
parental capacity to change. Kelly has undertaken a significant amount of parenting assessments and acted as an expert witness in care proceedings. Kelly is a trained practice educator and has supported a number of students, she is also PAMS 4.0 trained. Kelly was appointed as the Centre Manager of FA&SS in July 2022.

The FA&SS Team

FA&SS has a permanent team of staff and bank staff who provide cover when necessary. The team are recruited following the safer recruitment process.

All staff undergo an enhanced DBS check before working directly with families and follow a robust annual training schedule, which exceeds the National Minimum Standards, with emphasis on safeguarding and supporting parents with learning difficulties and mental health.

The team includes two assessing social workers who are responsible for ensuring parenting assessments are completed within the instructed timeframe, assessing risk and providing parents with opportunities to learn and make changes. They are supported by two social work assistants who undertake a range of direct work with parents. We also have a team of day and night family support workers who support parents with their daily routines and learning. They undertake parenting observations which informs the parenting assessments. Family support workers hold, or are working towards, the Level 3 Diploma in the Children's and Young People's Workforce.



Organisational Structure

Referral and Viability Assessment Process

We receive referrals via the Local Authority Children's Services, parents, solicitors or directly from the Family Court. Referrals are only accepted where:

- Parents have been made aware of the need for a residential assessment.
- Have demonstrated an ability to make changes to address Local Authority concerns.
- Do not pose a risk to themselves or others.
- Are not misusing drugs and/or alcohol and are working with professionals in this respect.

Parents need to be committed to meeting the expectations of our Residents' Agreement and are required to sign the Agreement, prior to or, at the point of arrival to Richmond House.

How to refer to our service

All referrals to Richmond House require a formal letter of instruction. The referral must include the following details:

- A full background history, this is usually provided by the placing authority.
- All previous relevant assessments.
- A detailed chronology, wherever possible.

Where additional information is required, this is obtained via a Viability Assessment prior to admission. Families will only be accepted at Richmond House if the team are able to meet their identified needs.



Criteria for Admission to Richmond House

We are not able to accept every referral we receive and there are a number of reasons for this.

We are able to accept families:

- Where concerns have been identified in respect of the capacity to safely meet their child's basic needs, and as such are at risk of harm.
- Who are actively participating in a drug and/or alcohol treatment programme.
- Who have learning difficulties.
- With poor mental health and have a plan in place for additional support from community mental health services and/or therapeutic intervention.
- Where the parents are over the age of 16 years.
- Who are one parent or two parent families.
- Larger family units with children whose ages do not exceed six years old.
- Expectant mothers, for the purpose of pre-birth assessment.
- Where the child has a severe or chronic illness or impairment.

We are unable to accept families:

- Where the parents have unmanaged drug and/or alcohol misuse.
- Where parents have a history of violence and/or arson, where no formal risk assessment has been completed.
- Where parents experience significant and enduring mental health difficulties, which may best be supported by specialist inpatient services.
- Where parents have a history of sexually inappropriate behaviour or who are on the Sex Offenders' Register.
- Where parents are under the age of 16 years.
- Children over the age of six years old.

Most placements are for a duration of between six and 12 weeks with the actual duration agreed with the placing authority. At the end of the assessment period our interim and final reports and recommendations are provided promptly.

Richmond House is also able to provide transition work to assist parents to return home and this may include:

- Making their home safe for their child.
- Liaising with Birth Links, if the decision is made by the Court to separate a parent from their child.



The Assessment Process



When families are referred to our service, a Family Placement Plan is agreed on arrival and a full Risk Assessment is conducted; this may identify specific needs that require additional support and/or service provision. The Placement Plan sets out the behavioural expectations of the families during their stay at Richmond House. We expect families to engage with the Plan and to contribute to the on-going review of their Plan.



Our family support workers are responsible for the day-to-day operation at Richmond House and are supervised by the Registered Manager and/or the Deputy Manager.

They gather evidence through observations, CCTV surveillance and direct work with families. This contributes to the on-going assessment process, which includes:

- Parent and child health and safety.
- Basic childcare.
- Home safety.
- Healthy relationships.
- Conflict resolution.
- Child development.
- Finances, including budgeting.

Assessments are conducted continuously, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Assessment Frameworks



Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)

We use the Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) as the main tool to gather evidence for the family. The assessment triangle enables us to explore the domains of the child's development and the parent's capacity, alongside environmental factors that contribute to the wellbeing of the child.

Parent Assessment Manual Software 4.0 (McGaw)

We use this software to assess the differing needs of families. Using this tool allows us to offer an extended learning opportunity for parents using creative workshops and observations that cover the whole placement which enables parents to demonstrate their learning.

The Advocates Gateway (2015)

We use this framework to support families who have learning difficulties, alongside the Department of Health (DoH) Guidance (2007) and Working Together with Parents Network (2016 and 2021).

Other Frameworks and Resources

We use a range of other widely used assessment frameworks and resources to gather evidence, depending on the individual need of the child and the parenting concerns raised; these may include:

- Social Care Institute for Excellence.
- Research in Practice.
- The NSPCC.
- Baby PEEP Model.
- Signs of Safety.



Support at Richmond House



Bespoke support

Every family at Richmond House will work alongside an experienced assessing social worker, who will provide them with a bespoke support plan which takes into consideration their individual needs. All our assessments are social work led and our team of social workers provide daily support and regular review meetings for parents to keep them updated on their progress. In addition, families are supported by an assistant social worker and a family support worker, this ensures they have access to 24/7 wrap around support.

Access to a range of wellbeing activities and practical skill based workshops.

All parents are provided with opportunities to support their wellbeing and develop their knowledge and skills.

We deliver a number of core workshops and groups. We can also provide more specialist and specific programmes:

- Baby Massage.
 - Sensory Play in our purpose built sensory room.
 - PEEP – teaching parents simple ways in which they can support their child's development.
- Courses, including:
- Healthy Relationship Courses,
 - Reducing Parental Conflict,
 - Me You and Baby too,
 - Arguing Better,
 - Getting it Right for Children.
- Arts and Crafts.
 - Gardening.
 - Baby brain development.
 - Internet safety.
 - Childhood illnesses.
 - Child safety.
 - Budgeting.
 - Healthy eating and cooking.
 - Rhyme and sing sessions.
 - Baby book group.

Family time

We can support and supervise family time so that children at Richmond House have contact with parents who are not being assessed at the centre, siblings and wider family members.

Transport

We will support families to attend appointments, Court Hearings and out of county meetings.



Fire and Emergency Safety at Richmond House



We take the safety of our families seriously and take proactive steps to keep children, parents, staff and visitors safe.

We undertake regular Risk Assessments for fire hazards and other health and safety issues. Richmond House meets the National Minimum Standards for residential Family Centres (2013).

Our staff receive full training in emergency evacuation procedures. Families, children and visitors are made aware of these procedures upon their arrival to Richmond House.

- We regularly test our fire alarms.
- We conduct regular fire drills; these are documented and available for inspection.
- Our emergency procedures are consistent with the regulations provided by Somerset Fire Services Department.
- We conduct regular safety inspections on Richmond House.
- Where health and safety issues are identified, remedial action plans are put in place.
- There is a maintenance file where all maintenance issues and remedial work carried out is logged.
- All staff are trained in paediatric first aid.



House Rules and Resident Expectations

Richmond House has a commitment to providing a safe and nurturing environment for all families and staff. We require all families to sign a Residents' Agreement when they arrive at Richmond House. There may be circumstances when we will need to terminate a placement; if this happens, we follow a set procedure to terminate the placement, working with the placing authority.

Circumstances where we may terminate the placement includes:

- Situations involving unsafe behaviour with the child and where the parent does not engage with staff to resolve.
- Situations involving aggression, violence, abuse to other families/family members, staff or external professionals.
- Consumption of alcohol, legal highs, illicit drugs or discovery of drug-related paraphernalia.
- Weapons of any description.
- Continued refusal to provide a urine or hair sample for drugs and alcohol testing.



Surveillance Techniques



Richmond House benefits from a high-definition audio and video recording system in all family bedrooms, communal areas, the rear garden and courtyard areas. We do not operate CCTV in the bathroom or toilets.

Families are informed about the video surveillance systems prior to their arrival and again at the first placement planning meeting. In addition, all visitors are informed, upon their arrival at Richmond House, that video surveillance is operated throughout the house and grounds.

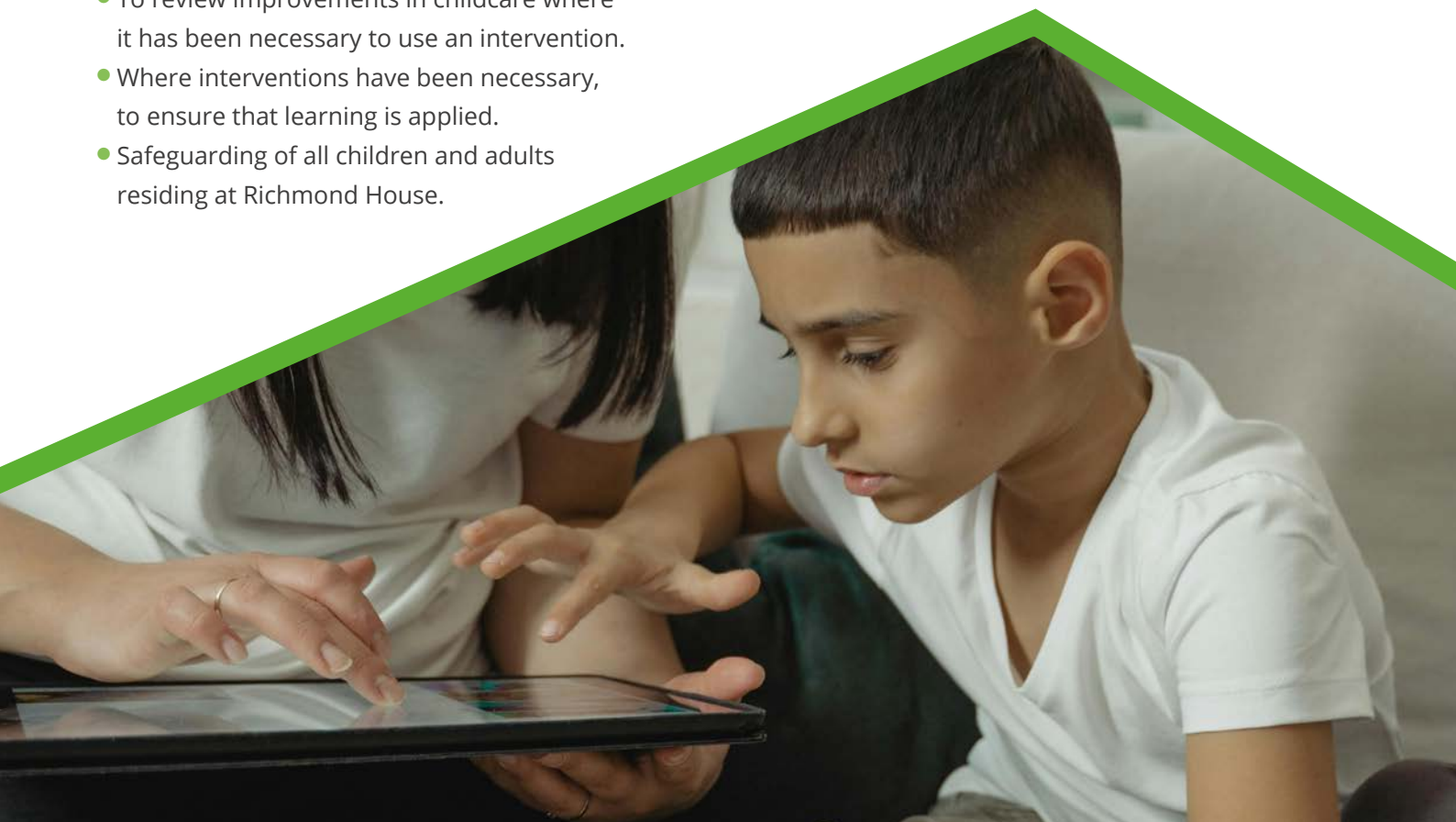
We undertake video surveillance for several reasons, these include:

- To monitor parenting techniques.
- Monitor parents' responses to their child.
- To review improvements in childcare where it has been necessary to use an intervention.
- Where interventions have been necessary, to ensure that learning is applied.
- Safeguarding of all children and adults residing at Richmond House.

Privacy, dignity and confidentiality

We understand that everyone has the right to privacy and dignity and so we aim to balance the need to safeguard children alongside this. In some situations the risk to children may be so high that constant supervision, monitoring and oversight is necessary. Parents are informed of the ways in which they will be monitored prior to arrival, and during their induction on arrival. We aim to use the least intrusive methods of monitoring families and so we regularly review the potential for reducing the way in which we monitor.

There are a number of private areas within the centre, which enables parents to have sensitive discussions and meetings with professionals, where possible.



Safeguarding



We recognise our individual responsibility to ensure that observations or allegations of abuse against children and adults are reported promptly to the appropriate person and/or agency. Our team undergo a thorough training programme for the safeguarding of children and adults.

We are committed to:

- Providing a safe and nurturing environment, free from neglect and abuse of any kind.
- Listening to, and taking seriously, any disclosure or allegation made by family members in relation to neglect and/or abuse.
- Protecting the children and families in our care.
- Ensuring we have robust safer recruitment policies.
- Ensuring Richmond House is free from discrimination, in line with the Equality Act (2010).
- Creating a healthy environment for all families in our care.
- Building relationships with families in our care based on honesty, trust and openness.
- Creating a robust risk assessment process which prevents safeguarding issues occurring.



Complaints and Advocacy



Policy and procedure

At Richmond House we strive to provide a service which is based on honesty, openness and fairness. We aim to provide an environment where families feel able to express their views, wishes and feelings, including any dissatisfaction with our service. We aim to address any concerns or frustrations informally in the first instance, however, there may be occasions when families wish to make a formal complaint. It is important to us that families feel they are being listened to and that their views, opinions and complaints are treated with respect.

Complaints received from our staff, external professionals and members of the public will be treated in the same way and will be thoroughly investigated. We maintain a complaints log and, where necessary, notifications of complaints are sent to Ofsted. Should an allegation of abuse be made against a member of our team we are required to report this to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

Making an informal or formal complaint

We have a Complaints Policy and Procedure which will be made available to all families upon arrival at Richmond House. Our Policy details how to make both an informal and formal complaint. All complaints are taken seriously and will be thoroughly investigated. Families will be kept informed of the progress and will be advised of the outcome of their complaint.

The Registered Manager is responsible for investigating complaints, unless the complaint relates to them; in this case the Responsible Individual will manage the family's complaint.

Placing authority complaints procedure and advocacy

Families have the right to use the placing authority's complaints procedure or access an independent advocate for advice; when families choose this option, we will support them to access the contact information. This procedure can also be used in cases where the family's complaint has not been resolved to their satisfaction within Richmond House.

Useful Contacts

Ofsted:

Ofsted National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate,
26 - 32 Store Street,
Manchester, M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Children's Commissioner for England:

The Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings,
20 Great Smith Street,
London, SW1P 3BT
Tel: 020 7783 8330
Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Local Safeguarding Children's Board:

Somerset County Council,
County Hall,
Taunton, TA1 4DY
Tel: 0300 123 2224

Independent Advocacy

There are a number of local services that can provide advocacy services to parents. Details can be requested from the Registered Manager.



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