



Family Assessment



Inspiring and supporting young people to
live happy, healthy and successful lives



Family Assessment

Keys Family Assessment Service operate two Residential Family Assessment Centres in the Midlands - Crown House in Great Malvern and Victoria Villa in Stourport-on Severn, both in Worcestershire. The centres are located within easy reach of local amenities and benefit from good transport links.

Registered by Ofsted, Crown House is designed for up to 8 families and Victoria Villa for up to 6 families. Crown House benefits from a long-standing positive reputation with Local Authorities and the Courts, whilst Victoria Villa is a new service that opened in April 2019. The centres work very closely together and offer high

quality, evidence-based assessments. Parenting assessments are undertaken on behalf of the Local Authority or other relevant agencies to assist in decision making relating to the long-term living arrangements for children.

Assessments are undertaken in a non-oppressive and nurturing environment and the emphasis at all times is about reaching the appropriate outcome for each parent and child who come to Keys Family Assessment Centres. Direct work is undertaken with immense sensitivity and respect, often dealing with complex historical issues, many of which will not have been addressed previously.



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Both centres can accommodate single parents and couples with their children and will tailor make the assessment to meet the individual needs of each family. Staffing ratios are high to enable families to have the appropriate level of support at all times.

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Parents are assessed for their competence in all routine tasks involved in raising a family. Formal structured appraisal complements family observation to provide a comprehensive and balanced assessment package.

Keys Family Assessment Services can take 'same day' placements where there is sufficient information to complete a detailed admission risk assessment. However where there is time to plan, parents can visit the Centre prior to the assessment starting, to alleviate any concerns or anxieties about the assessment.

THE ASSESSMENT

Keys Family Assessment Services work collaboratively with the referring Social Worker and other appropriate local agencies to identify and establish ongoing support links.

An in-depth assessment follows the Framework of the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families. Assessments are usually concluded within 12 weeks. Each Residential Assessment Plan is individually designed to meet the needs and requirements of the family and the referring agencies. Both centres reinforce positive parenting by creating a caring, nurturing environment, as well as the development of self-esteem and a sense of achievement. Our team offers intensive support to all families and where appropriate, 24 hour supervision.

An understanding of a family's links in its own community forms a key part of our work. Keys Family Assessment Services work collaboratively with the referring Social Worker and other appropriate local agencies to identify and establish ongoing support links.

Families are assessed for their capacity to parent. Progress is monitored on a daily and weekly basis through observation and direct work. Historical issues and concerns are discussed in a self reflective manner, both to encourage recognition of problems and to develop an awareness of the link between past personal experience and one's own current parenting attitudes.

Parents take part in planned programmes of direct work at a minimum frequency of two, one hour sessions per weekday. The

intensity of the approach enables issues to be identified and addressed at an early stage in the assessment process.

Programmes of direct work include Child Protection, Domestic Violence, Alcohol Misuse, Substance Misuse, Relationships, Anger Management, Safety, Play and Child Development. Sessions are planned according to the issues and risks relevant to the family's specific circumstances. Keys Family Assessment Services have a proven record of working successfully with families with a variety of needs including parents who have learning disabilities and/or mental health difficulties.

Following the completion of the assessment, an individually designed transition plan is identified in consultation with other professionals, enabling the family to be supported fully in the critical stage of returning to the community. This sensitive transition planning is in place for all families regardless of the outcome of the assessment. Keys Family Assessment Services do not use judgemental language like 'pass' or 'fail' in terms of the assessment and where removal is the recommendation, this is handled with great care and sensitivity with life story work being facilitated before the family leave the centre.



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LEISURE

Alongside the development of a structured routine which includes direct work sessions and regular mealtimes, there is a daily shopping trip and a trip to the park, and additional leisure activities are also encouraged.

Keys Family Assessment Service is supportive throughout placements and seeks to

provide a realistic balance between the encouragement of individual personal hobbies and interests, and the assessment of parenting skills. The atmosphere within the Centres is deliberately informal and friendly; the discipline needed to ensure the well-being of parents and staff alike is maintained as far as possible on a low-key basis.

CHILD PROTECTION

The level of close supervision is agreed between all parties prior to admission. This could be full-time 24-hour supervision arrangements (where for example fabricated illness or non-accidental injury is suspected) or the more standard supervision arrangements whereby there is a gradual reduction in monitoring from full observations and 15-minute checks to spot checks. Whatever the level of agreed supervision, our philosophy is to prioritise the safety of the child whilst recognising the parent's right to reasonable privacy.

A continuous focus on child protection issues is the cornerstone of the Assessment. Evidence based reports are prepared by a member of the Senior Staff Team, who are all qualified Social Workers with significant experience in Child Protection and Care Proceedings.

Five weekly review meetings or the final meeting are usually held at the centre. The five week meetings will typically determine whether the continuance of assessment work is likely to prove productive for the family. A detailed review report is provided as the basis for this key review. Final recommendations are given in Week 10/11, permitting structured exit planning. Again a comprehensive supporting report provides the basis of the final meeting.

Throughout the Assessment, Key Workers and Family Support Workers maintain a daily dialogue about progress with families and relevant professionals and detailed records are maintained. Feedback progress reports are provided to parents at weekly intervals and targets are set for the coming week. The Centres pride themselves on working in partnership with parents and in the transparency of the assessment process.





AVAILABILITY

Should you consider Keys Family Assessment Services potentially to be suitable for a referral, we are available at all times to discuss case specifics. Demand for places invariably is high, but our flexible reservation system enables admissions to be made to suit most time-scales.

For a preliminary discussion, please contact Crown House on [01684 577496](tel:01684577496).

“ Thank you for your advice and support.
I now know how to care for my beautiful son.
Parent from Crown House. ”



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