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Dudley Lodge

safeguarding children services



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Dudley Lodge

Safeguarding Children, Strengthening Families

Providing safeguarding children services through comprehensive independent family assessments and interventions.

Incorporating parenting, safety and risk assessments alongside Protection Programmes for children.

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Dudley Lodge is a registered non-profit making charity established in 1895, and is one of the leading family assessment organisations in England and Wales. We opened our second site, Bonner House in Birmingham and our third site, Saxon House in 2024.

Our organisation is recognised by Ofsted to provide a 'Good' service at Dudley Lodge and Bonner House.

Comprehensive Safeguarding Services

We provide a variety of safeguarding children services including a range and combination of quality tailor made assessments and intervention arrangements to meet the needs of children and families.

We undertake comprehensive family assessment / intervention programmes with a range of parents to ascertain their ability to care safely for a child. Services we offer are targeted to address the family's needs in line with the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families. Within this framework we collect and analyse information to support our professional judgement and make appropriate recommendations.

About Us & Our Values



Guided by Values

Dudley Lodge hold values that are deeply held beliefs that govern and guide our behaviour in dealing with each other; our professional colleagues, clients and suppliers, and in achieving our corporate objectives.

We believe that...

- All children have the right to have their safety and welfare needs met.
- All adults have a responsibility to respond to concerns, worries and doubts regarding the safety and wellbeing of children wherever they may be.
- It is people who make the difference in any enterprise and to give off their best they must be treated with dignity and respect.

These values form part of our Standards and Behaviours that all staff working at our centres endeavour to meet.



Family Assessment Services

We undertake comprehensive family assessment / intervention programmes with parents to ascertain their ability to care safely for a child. We work with a range of families; varying from those requiring mainly support; to those where serious abuse and/or neglect is known to have occurred. In the main, we work with high risk families.

A comprehensive family assessment includes the evaluation of risk factors such as family history, domestic abuse, substance/alcohol misuse, mental health issues, chaotic lifestyle, protection/safeguarding issues and poor parenting experience. In addition, the family's strengths and protective factors are assessed to identify resources that can support the family's ability to meet its needs and protect their child(ren).

We show due sensitivity to the individual needs of children and families, and all parents are treated as individuals with potential for change. Throughout the assessment and intervention process we treat all family members with dignity and respect. Engagement, building relationships and working in partnership with families are of central importance in gathering meaningful information during the assessment process. We ensure parents/carers are fully aware that the child's safety, health and welfare must be given first priority.

All assessments are guided by 'Assessment Requirements' (as identified by the placing Local Authority) or 'Joint Instructions' and an Assessment / Placement Plan is constructed prior to the commencement of an assessment. Comprehensive family assessments always consist of two elements: parenting assessment and risk assessment.

Parenting and Risk Assessment

Parenting Assessment

The assessment process is guided by the 'Assessment Framework' 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018); which promotes working in partnership with parents and aims to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Within this framework we systematically collect and analyse information to support our professional judgement.



The assessment therefore takes into account the three domains:

- The Child's Developmental Needs
- Parental Capacity - the parent(s) ability, commitment and motivation to respond appropriately in meeting these
- The Wider Family and Environmental Factors

We provide a 'Child Protection/Child-Centred Approach' in which the safety of the child comes first and at all times the focus of our work with parents promotes the safety, health and welfare of the child. The assessment team (Team/Case Manager and allocated Family Assessment Workers) focus on the welfare of the child throughout the assessment process and upon strengthening families.

Risk Assessment

Our risk assessment is a continuous process in which the Team/Case Manager, Family Assessment Workers, and Senior Managers weigh the factors in a particular case to determine the level of safety for a child within the family; utilising the 'Signs of Safety' Model.

The risk assessment process:

- is ongoing
- expands as new information emerges, so that family strengths as well as problem areas need to be continuously redefined and considered in case planning
- systematically assesses the family's strengths and needs in order to link to the most appropriate level of services
- takes into account the frequency, intensity and duration of risk factors and child protective factors which may decrease the risk of abuse and/or neglect.



Our Services

We offer a diverse range of assessment methods, intervention arrangements and services to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children. Our comprehensive services cater to the specific needs of families and children. Our focus is on addressing the family's unique issues and requirements.

- Place of Safety: allows for a short residential viability assessment to be completed whilst awaiting a court hearing, or whilst deciding whether an assessment is appropriate.
- Viability Assessments
- A range of Residential Parenting Assessments: The family temporarily resides in one of the centre's self-contained flats whilst undertaking an assessment / intervention programme to ascertain their ability to care safely for a child.
- ParentAssess: a variety of tools to make the process more accessible to parents with special needs.
- Protection Work in relation to Children and Parents
- Freedom Programme, Domestic Abuse Work with Perpetrators and survivors
- Advice and Guidance: staff advise parents regarding issues in, childcare, behaviour management, child development, health, relationships, protection, self-esteem and life skills.
- Outreach Support: support for families post assessment, regardless of the outcome, with our Community Outreach Programme Hurdle.
- Counselling: we utilise professional counselling services provided by Relate and Phoenix Psychology.
- Free Consultations

Place of Safety



Following discharge from hospital, we are in a position to offer a 'Place of Safety' (at both Centres) to prevent a parent and their new born baby being separated whilst waiting for a Court hearing to determine the baby's immediate future.

Rather than a baby going into foster care we are able to accommodate parent and baby together for a maximum period of ten days. This service prevents the emotional distress that separation creates, facilitates the bonding process which fosters a sense of security for the baby and promotes healthy attachment. At the same time we are in a position to undertake a viability assessment to recommend whether or not there should be further assessment.

There is no charge for this invaluable service.

Viability Assessments

Our Referrals Manager undertakes 'paper' (case-papers) viability assessments.

We have Local Authorities' request a paper viability assessment in order to seek an independent opinion in relation to an assessment plan. Also, solicitors acting on behalf of parents sometimes request a paper viability assessment when a Local Authority's plan is for no further assessment

On occasion, in conjunction with reviewing the Court documents they may also request the assessor to meet with their client/s. Out of every ten occasions we are asked to conduct a paper viability assessment by solicitors, we refuse to offer any further assessment in around seven/eight cases due to there being insufficient positive indicators for us to recommend further assessment.

We provide paper-based viability assessments at no cost to any party in Care Proceedings.





Residential Assessments

We provide Residential Assessments for families from our three sites: Coventry (Dudley Lodge), Birmingham (Bonner House) and Wolverhampton (Saxon House) within a range of timescales (4 weeks – up to 12 weeks).

However, taking into account the above, we reserve the right to suspend/terminate the assessment at any stage if it is felt that it is not in the best interests of the child for the placement to continue. Obviously, should such a situation arise, full consultation with the Social Worker and Children's Guardian would take place, and a decision would be made in conjunction with these professionals.

Levels of Surveillance/Supervision:

Surveillance/supervision levels for a family upon admission varies and is entirely tailored to each individual case. We encourage regular reviews of surveillance/supervision levels to ensure these appropriately match the needs and risk of the family. We provide a range of levels of surveillance and monitoring which includes (but is not limited to):



- **24 hour surveillance of a child within a residential setting:** If the family poses a high/unpredictable risk to their child(ren), we may recommend 24-hour direct supervision to be implemented. This can either involve a worker always remaining with the child(ren) or staff needing to spend prolonged period of time with the family during the day and CCTV being in place during the night, or the child coming into the care of staff.
- **CCTV Monitoring:** CCTV cameras will be switched on in the family's flat and this will be displayed in the main staff office. The CCTV will be checked at intervals by a member of staff, alongside the family receiving regular visits and supervision of tasks.
- **Background CCTV:** This is switched on in the family's flat but not displayed in the main staff office, and therefore not monitored by a worker. Background CCTV can be viewed retrospectively.

Parent Assess Model

The framework is based on the well-known DOH Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000), and makes use of a variety of tools and tables to make the process more accessible to parents with special needs.

The results are explained in an accessible manner for parents in a separate Abridged Parent Report.

Framework built on strengths

Assessors are taught to thoroughly pinpoint the parent's unique needs and comprehend what can be of assistance to the parent. It addresses every conceivable danger problem while putting the child's experience front and centre. Assessors are taught to use innovative methods to assist parents in understanding the danger to both themselves and their children.

Parent Assess incorporates the advice from pertinent case law and the Good Practice Guidance, taking the intended support network into thoughtful consideration.



Protection Work



Protection Work in relation to children & parents

In addition to the assessment of a parent's ability to meet their children's various needs, we provide an assessment of the parent's ability to protect and explore risk they pose to their child(ren).

Protection work is carried out via both group work and individual sessions. The latter are clearly more individually tailored to the presenting needs of the parent/family, so a more specific plan regarding content is drawn up at the point of the initial assessment. This work will focus on the specific issues of the family, their history, incidents/patterns of failure to protect in the past, their recognition and 'ownership' of professionals' concerns.

Work can involve direct discussions, pictorial materials, rating scales and questionnaires, flow diagrams regarding the sequences of events and the range of possible outcomes, role play, scenarios and the use of stories to illustrate particular points and possible situations.

Freedom Programme (Pat Craven) Victim & Perpetrator Groups

At our Centres we run the 'Freedom Programme'. We have staff trained to deliver this work in either a group setting or on an individual basis. We work with both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Group Work

Dudley Lodge offers an enriched programme of group sessions for parents undertaking an assessment; which aims to provide a learning/re-learning experience within an environment that is sensitive and supportive.

Our extensive group programme helps to provide parents with essential tools to enhance their parenting knowledge, skills and abilities; whilst helping to equip them to meet the needs of their children and protect them in their care.

Childcare groups are offered to facilitate parent-child interaction, and focus on promoting early childhood attachments and child(ren)'s development.

Group work offered at Dudley Lodge also focuses on the needs and rights of the individual, and aims to promote parents' personal development, confidence and self-esteem; with acquired knowledge and skills for them to draw upon both during and post assessment.



Our Parent/Child Group Sessions include:

- Baby Sensory
- Musical Babies
- Messy Play
- Physical Fun
- Outdoor/external child-focused trips
- Baby massage

Our Parent Group Sessions include:

- Protection Group
- Freedom Programme
- Self-Development Group
- Relationship Group
- Child Development Group
- Parenting Skills Group
- Cooking Group
- Memory books Group

Drug Test/ Alcohol Test Services

Where there are concerns in respect of substance/alcohol misuse for a referred family (current or historic), we are able to incorporate instant drug/alcohol testing during the assessment process.

This service helps to assess parents' commitment and motivation to remaining abstinent from substance/alcohol misuse whilst also contributing to the safeguarding of children in their care.

We offer:

- Urine and swab drug tests (which test for a range of illegal substances)
- Breathalyser tests



Relate Counselling



Relate is an independent provider of counselling services who we work in partnership with to provide single and couples counselling.

We refer parents/carers to the service where there is an identified need for this work to be completed alongside our own assessments.

Phoenix Psychology

Phoenix Psychology Group is an independent provider of psychological services in the Midlands who we work in partnership with to provide psychotherapy work for families.

We refer parents/carers to the service where there is an identified need for this work to be completed alongside our own assessments.



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