

<u>PARENTS NAME</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>CHILDS NAME</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>TIME AT AMBER FAMILY</u>	<u>SETTING</u>
RACHEL DIXON	31	JACOB	8 weeks	16 Weeks	Amber Lodge

What did you think about the staff's general approach to supporting you throughout your placement?

I have felt very well supported throughout all of my placement at Amber. Most of the staff members are approachable and are always there to listen, give support and advice when needed.

What did you find most useful during your placement? E.g. groups, direct work etc.

I have enjoyed attending groups at Amber, which I have gone to with staff and also attended on my own with Jacob.

I took part in House meals, and surprised myself when I cooked a roast dinner, and other meals for all of the families in the setting. Everyone enjoyed the food on each occasion.

Did your Key Worker represent you competently? Please give examples

Definitely!! I have felt very well supported by my Key Worker. She has always been on hand to listen and give advice when needed. I have had to attend a number of appointments where I have had to leave Jacob at Amber Lodge. (Staff) were always very reassuring about this as they knew how anxious I felt about leaving him.

My Key Worker has always given a lot of her time supporting me and helping to explain anything I didn't understand.

Whilst these parents have helped us to write their story and have given permission for it to be shared with you, their names and any identifying information have been changed to protect their identity.

I used to dread having Key Worker meetings, as it is hard to hear negative feedback about yourself. But as the weeks have gone on I have learnt that my Keyworker explains it as it is, she always does this in a nice way and helped to try and focus on ways to improve and to move this forward.

What did you think about the facilities in the house?

I think the facilities in house are very good. Amber Lodge is not how I first expected it to be, but it is made to feel very homely and welcoming.

What did you think about the community-based parent and baby groups?

I have really enjoyed going to community-based groups with Jacob. Our favourite one was the Rhyme Time group, which is at the Atkinson Library. The group was always busy but very friendly and welcoming.

I also attended baby mindful at the children's centre and took part in Mums Group each week.

If you can think of any improvements/suggestions to make to the environment you lived in any better, what are they?

I think that there should be in house groups and activities planned to include all families over a weekend as there is often very little going on of a weekend and this time could be used to be more family centred.

Also, I think that there should be more parent centred activities of a night, as there is very little focus on just parents. This could be something like a games night, quiz, pamper night or film night where everybody contributes something and takes part. As all parents are under a lot of stress, and although it is there priority to put their baby first and focus on their assessments. It would also be nice to 'let your hair down and just have a laugh, as you would in everyday life.

What did you learn whilst in placement?

I have learnt to be more patient than I ever have before. I have also learnt not to take things personally, as people all have their own problems and you are not always aware of what is going on.

Whilst these parents have helped us to write their story and have given permission for it to be shared with you, their names and any identifying information have been changed to protect their identity.

I have learnt to think more before I speak, although I have always been gobby and tell people how it is. I now try harder to not react straight away and think about what to say before I react.

What do you think there should have been more/less of? E.g. domestic chores, outings etc.

The domestic chores are all very fair. Parents would have to do this on a daily basis if they were living at home on their own.

I think that the cleaning rota needs to be amended though as the kitchen is only on this twice and needs to be done every single night due to it being the most used area in the house.

I also think it would be better, if there were two-day trips/outings for the families to go on and take part in as it is something to look forward to.

Did you find the in-house groups useful E.g. – Craft Club/Cookery sessions.

I really enjoyed the craft sessions that were done each week with the staff, this was a good way to relax and make a nice memory book of your baby. These sessions were all really nice to do and the staff had everything ready in case you were not able to do them at the planned time.

I also really enjoyed the sensory play sessions. We were taught baby massage and also given lots of ideas of how we could include sensory play for our babies age range. These were really enjoyable, and it would be nice for families if they were done more often, because they are done in house and it I also a nice way for the parents in each house to sit and enjoy time together with their babies.

Do you think in-house disputes (if any) were handled well?

All in house issues were dealt with straight away. I have taken part in two house meetings, where everybody had the chance to speak.

If there have been any other issues they have been sorted out quickly.

Did you feel any Restorative Practice meetings worked?

None needed

Did you feel the benefit of having an allocated health visitor?

Yes, I did, she was always very helpful and always on hand to give advice. My Health Visitor has been out to see me a number of times, and she feels as though this was really helpful by seeing the same person as she got to know me and Jacob well throughout the weeks.

Did you find the local GP helpful/friendly?

This surgery was very helpful, and I always managed to get an appointment for Jacob and myself when needed.

Did you get a chance to visit the setting before you started placement?

No, I didn't visit the placement before I started.

What could we do better as a service?

Look into opening other units which are supported living. For parents to go to straight after their assessment if they needed to.

Would you recommend Amber to someone who is in a similar situation that you were in?

Absolutely, definitely Yes!! I felt so scared when I was first told I was coming to Amber. I did not know what to expect and remember the car journey down here with the Social workers being very quiet.

Whilst these parents have helped us to write their story and have given permission for it to be shared with you, their names and any identifying information have been changed to protect their identity.

I can remember pulling up outside the house and it not looking at all like what I had imagined it to. Once I was inside, I still felt very scared, but the atmosphere was welcoming and it had a nice feel to it.

I remember a conversation that I had with my Key Worker when she tried to reassure me that most families feel like I did and often did not want to leave at the end of the twelve weeks. I told her that this was not the case with me, and they wouldn't see me for dust once my weeks were over.

I was also told that the weeks would go by really quickly, which I also did not believe.

My advice would be to work with staff, and remember they are here to help you.

Do you feel you were encouraged to make decisions yourself?

Always

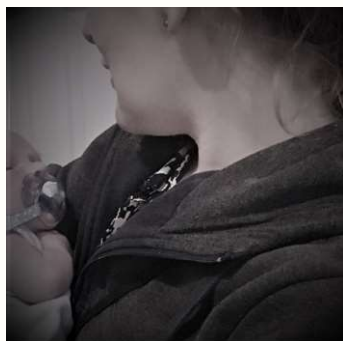
Memories



JACOB'S FEET



CRAFT CLUB



CUDDLES



RHYME TIME

Whilst these parents have helped us to write their story and have given permission for it to be shared with you, their names and any identifying information have been changed to protect their identity.