



OAK HOUSE

# YOUNG PERSONS GUIDES



ACORN  
GROUP

---

INNOVATION IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES

## WELCOME FROM THE MANAGER OF OAK HOUSE

Hello, I'm Tania, the Manager of Oak House. I have been at this home for over 3 years and feel really happy here and I want you to feel the same way. I would like, along with the staff team, to welcome you to Oak House

I have been looking after and helping young people for over 14 years. It is both the staff team's job and mine to make sure you are cared for, feel safe, secure and happy. We can only do this with your help and by you telling us how you are feeling and how we can do things to help you.

We all do this job because we love working with young people. We respect and understand that you are an individual coming to live with a new group of people and this can be difficult. We too are all very different and we will all help you in different ways and our aims are the same: to support you to overcome barriers and enjoy positive life experiences.

We will not always agree on everything, but together we will find ways for you to achieve good things by working closely with you. We have lots of sports and activities to offer you but if we don't already do what you would like to do, we will try to find something you like and arrange this for you.

This will be your home for a short time or maybe a long time but either way all we ask is that you give us a chance to help and support you reach your goals.

Details of how to contact me or David Knowles, the person in charge & Managing Director of Acorn Homes, are on the back page.

### **Welcome and enjoy.**

At Oak House we have devised a great way of helping young people to learn to enjoy and get the most from life. We do this through a programme of sports and active pursuits which encourage individual and team work and helps young people feel better about themselves and others.

### **Young People's Comments:**

*"If you are good you can earn to go and see concerts I went to see Sam Smith in London, I have also been taken on holiday to Spain and I have also been to Blackpool."*

*"I joined Cubs and street Dance."*

This may be the first time you have lived away from your family or you may have moved here from another placement.

### **Young Person's Comment:**

*"I was really scared as it was my first time in care but everyone made me feel welcome, staff and other young people, and I also love that there was a dog and he is lovely. I loved my room which I got to choose new wallpaper, paint, curtains and new bedroom furniture and a new bed had also been bought before I arrived."*

This booklet is designed to help you settle in and explain some of our expectations of you, as well as some of your rights as a young person being 'looked after'.



THESE ARE SOME OF THE QUESTIONS WE EXPECT TO BE ASKED BY YOUNG PEOPLE WHEN THEY MOVE TO OAK HOUSE.

#### WHAT POSTERS CAN I PUT UP?

We know that most young people want to put up pictures of their favourite stars, football teams, and celebrities. However, we do not allow pictures of a violent, sexual nature or that promote illegal activities such as drug use in the home.

#### Young Person's Comment:

*"I was bought canvases of my choice and the maintenance team put them up in my room for me"*

#### CAN I WATCH TELEVISION IN MY ROOM?

Yes, you can have a television, although we would remove this if it helps you get a good night's sleep.

#### Young Person's Comment:

*"We all have Freeview in our rooms too."*

#### WHAT TIME DO I HAVE TO GO TO BED?

Depending on your age your bedtime is something that is discussed and agreed on.

Age	Time
10	8.30pm
11	8.45pm
12	9.00pm
13	9.15pm
14	9.30pm
15	09.45pm
16+	10.00pm

#### WILL I HAVE MY OWN BEDROOM?

All young people have their own room and you will have a key. This is your own private space; a place for you to relax and a place for you to keep your belongings safe. We will always knock before entering your room unless we think you are in danger or unsafe and have to enter without your permission. We suggest that you don't allow other young people in your room, we have three communal rooms where you can spend time together. If you do invite another young person into your room for some specific reason, something that cannot be done in the communal rooms then you should let the staff know and keep the door open. This is to keep everyone safe.

#### Young People's Comments:

*"I love having my own room, I like taking time out on my own away from the others."*

*"I love spending time relaxing in my room relaxing listening to music or watching my TV"*

#### CAN I BRING MY PERSONAL BELONGINGS?

Yes, we think it is important that you bring your personal items to the home. Any electrical items have to be tested to make sure they are safe. Most young people like to personalise their room and can go out shopping with staff to choose their duvet cover, lamp, clock and canvas among other things.

#### Young People's Comments:

*"I was allowed to choose my own colour scheme. I chose the wallpaper and the staff team redecorated it for me. I was also allowed to help by doing my own stencilling on the walls, I also got to choose a new rug, mirror and lamp. I also have a double bed which I got to choose all the new bedding for."*

*"I have had my room decorated twice and each time I have chosen the colour scheme and wallpaper. I have also earned a new white wardrobe and a matching chest of drawers which I'm allowed to keep and take with me when I move to either a flat or a sixteen plus provision"*

#### MEALTIMES

These tend to be set so that a routine can be kept to and we encourage eating as a group. All young people need a healthy, balanced diet.

We like young people to try new food as well as enjoy the foods that they are used to. If there are certain foods you don't like or are allergic to, tell the adults who look after you and they will work with you to find the foods you do like. Everyone is invited to choose a meal each week. You are also welcome to help prepare and cook the meals.

#### MEAL TIMES

Breakfast: 07.00 - 09.30am  
Lunch: 12.00 - 13.30pm  
Dinner: 17.00 - 19.30pm

#### Young Person's Comment:

*"We all eat together this is when everyone chats about their day."*

#### CAN I BRING MY MOBILE PHONE?

If your social worker agrees that you are able to have a mobile phone and you can use it sensibly then it's ok to bring one with you. You can leave it in a safe in the office when you are school, college or with your Tutor. We will look after it during the night because we want you to have a good night sleep. You can make an agreement with your keyworker about how you are going to earn credit.

#### CAN I MAKE TELEPHONE CALLS?

Yes, you have the right to make calls to friends, family and other people involved in your lives at reasonable times.

## KEY WORKING

Each young person is allocated a key worker. These adults will make sure that all your day-to-day needs are met, for example: you receive the appropriate health and medical care and keep in contact with your social worker. They will also help you develop your living skills and prepare you for leaving care, but most of all they are there for you to talk to and confide in if needed.

### Young People's Comments:

*"We have the best keyworkers; they are both quite strict but that's what we need. Also they always listen to us"*

*"The staff treat everyone fairly."*

## AM I ALLOWED TO SMOKE?

For the benefit of your own health and in line with the law you will not be allowed to smoke inside Oak House or anywhere within the grounds. If you have permission from your social worker or parent then you may, at certain times, smoke outside the building in an agreed area. However, if you are a smoker then staff will help you to give up, together with support from the local GP or Nurse.

## WHAT IF I USE ILLEGAL DRUGS?

Oak House are committed to providing a healthy and safe place for all the children and young people who live there. Therefore, the use or storage of illegal drugs in the homes is not allowed.

Oak House has a zero tolerance policy towards illegal drugs. You have the right to privacy for yourself and your property, however, if staff believe you are carrying drugs they will ask you to turn out your pockets. If they believe you have drugs in your room they will search this. Two members of staff will carry out any searches.

## DO I HAVE TO WEAR A SCHOOL UNIFORM?

If you attend a school where uniforms are worn, then you will have to wear one along with everybody else.

## DO I GET POCKET MONEY?

What you receive is dependent upon your age.

## WILL I GET MONEY FOR CLOTHES?

Yes, everyone receives a weekly allowance for clothing. We will also pay for you to go to the hairdressers or barbers regularly.

Age	Pocket	Clothing
10	£5.00	£10.00
11	£5.00	£11.00
12	£6.00	£12.00
13	£7.00	£13.00
14	£8.00	£14.00
15	£9.00	£15.00
16	£10.00	£18.00
17	£12.00	£20.00

We also want you to be able to buy nice things. We have incentive system which enables you to earn extra money over a period of time to buy something special that you have chosen in advance.

### Young People's Comments:

*"I think that the pocket money we get is enough."*

*"By sticking to the targets on my incentive chart I earned enough money to buy myself an iPhone, also I have had my nails done, I also save my incentive up so I can buy my family Birthday and Christmas presents."*

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I BREAK THE RULES OR MESS UP?

Staff will discuss this with you and listen to you before making a decision about any consequences. Behaving poorly or breaking rules can result in the sanctions below.

Staying in the house (grounding), loss of free/trust time, early bedtime, loss of privileges e.g. not allowed to go on a trip or out for a treat, loss of electrical items from your room, e.g. removal of your television or game console etc. Sanctions are not intended to be punishments, they are put in place to encourage young people to behave positively and succeed.

We want to provide a homely and welcoming place for you to live in and we think it is important for everyone to respect the home furnishings inside it. If you intentionally damage or break something in the home, you will be expected to pay for or help repair it.

Remember we would prefer to be rewarding positive behaviour rather than sanctioning unacceptable behaviour.

## CHARTER OF RIGHTS

As a young person at Oak House you have the following right to:

- Have your personal dignity respected.
- Be treated as an individual.
- Have personal independence, personal choice and responsibility for your actions.
- Have your religious, cultural and emotional needs promoted and respected.
- Be treated fairly by those around you.
- Have an advocate or advisor present when your care is planned or reviewed in meetings.
- Be spoken to when changes are to take place and have your say.
- Be supported to complain when you need to.
- Be involved as fully as possible in the writing of your own care plan before and during your stay.
- Stay in touch with people that are important to you and hobbies you enjoy.
- Be able to request to look at your file and what has been said about you.
- Always be valued and listened to.

## ADVOCACY

Staff can also arrange an independent advocate to come and meet with you.

An advocate ensures that the views, wishes and feelings of young people are heard when decisions are made about their lives. Advocates are independent of the home which means they don't work for us or have to do what we say.

The advocate will ensure that you have a voice in decisions that are made about your life and, they play an important role in helping you access services that you may need, this may be a school, a social worker or somebody else. Remember, it is your right to contact an advocate.



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Your safety and protection is the most important thing for us and we will always try and prevent you feeling that you are being treated unfairly. Bullying is unusual in our home, but sometimes young people can feel bullied for a number of different reasons. Staff are quick to respond to any signs that bullying may be taking place and will support you if you feel unhappy about the way other people are treating you.

We will also ask you to think about how you treat other people and it is just as important that other people do not feel that we are bullying or being unfair to them also. If there are occasions when young people fall out, disagree or feel unhappy with one another, staff will work with you to get you through this. Relationships and friendships can be difficult for all of us and all our staff are reminded that they too were once young people and understood how difficult relationships can be at times. At this home, you will be helped to understand how to build and keep relationships with others, the important part you play in these relationships and what you can expect from friendships and relationships.

Finally, remember, you are not alone, we are here to support you and it is our job to make sure we do this properly. We would encourage you to feel that you can come to us for anything and we will always work with you to resolve any difficulties.

### Young Person's Comments:

*"You can tell the staff if you feel like you're being bullied and they help you."*

### UNHAPPY? WANT TO COMPLAIN!

No problem, we take all complaints very seriously and we have a formal complaint system. First speak to your key worker, tell them what's up. Normally they will be able to sort things out, but you will be offered the chance to record this in the 'grumble book'. If you feel it is more serious you will be helped to make a formal complaint. I will be able to deal with your complaint quickly, I will investigate your complaint and ensure you are kept up to date with progress and ultimately the outcome. If this still does not satisfy you, you can raise your concerns with your social worker. If your complaint is against me (The Registered Manager), please contact David Knowles, Responsible Individual, on 01843 808454 and he will be able to assist you further.

Once again, welcome to Oak House, we are really pleased you have come to live with us and we will do our best to make a difference. If we have missed anything in this guide that you think should be included, do let us know. The space below is for you to write down any ideas and to make notes you may find useful.

Above all, try to remember, the staff are here to help.

### YOUR NOTES...

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

If English is not your first language or you have different communication needs, we can help you with this. Staff will also be happy to read through this guide with you and answer any of your questions you may have, if you would prefer.

## USEFUL NUMBERS/INFORMATION

**Home Contact Number:** 01843 482048 **Email:** oakhouse@ahgroup.eu

Your Local Authority Tel No: .....

Your Local Authority Address: .....

Your Social Worker Name: .....

Social Workers Contact No: .....

Independent Reviewing Officer Name: .....

Independent Reviewing Officer Contact No: .....

**Child Line:** 0800 11 11

**NSPCC:** 0808 8005 000

**Kent Safeguarding Children Board:** 03000 421126

**Independent advocate – Coram Voice:** 0808 800 5792

**Children’s Commissioner:** 02077 838330

**Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services  
and Skills:** Amanda Spielman

**Ofsted:** 0300 1231 231 **Textphone / Minicom Users:** 0161 618 8524

**By Post:** Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

**Home Managers Name:** Tania Smith

**Direct Dial:** 01843 482049

### **Acorn Homes Head Office**

Northdown House,

Northdown Park Road

Margate, Kent CT9 3TP

**Tel:** 01843 808454

**Email:** info@ahgroup.eu

**Web:** www.ahgroup.eu

**Responsible Individual:** David Knowles

**Direct Dial:** 01843 808454 / 07890 482045

Northdown House

Northdown Park Road

Margate

Kent CT9 3TP