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Ash Cottage is a Residential Children's Home operated by Acorn Homes (Group) Limited. The Manager, awaiting registration, is Ryan Wells.

Ash Cottage is regulated by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) the contact details are as follows:

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

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## **STATEMENT OF AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **Introduction**

Ash Cottage is a privately-run Children's Home established under the Children's Act 1989 and run in accordance with Acorn Homes' Policies and Guidelines for Children's Residential Services. Our practice is in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 and the Quality Standards.

Ash Cottage can provide care and accommodation for up to 4 boys or girls with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Staff have developed their skills to accommodate all age ranges, applying more nurturing and arguably more common parenting techniques for younger placements.

We understand that a more diverse age range presents challenges, many similar to a typical domestic family. However, the vulnerability of these young people can also be more acute due to behaviours and stages of development, for this reason, supervision levels are high. Team meetings and supervisions are used to consider and evaluate care, safety and any negative outcomes from age ranges.

These opportunities are also used to look at the positive aspects such as role modelling, peer support and learning skills and techniques to gain confidence and socialise. Many of our young people have developed nurturing skills and demonstrated more caring attitudes as a result.

Placements are generally medium to long term and young people placed at the Home will often have suffered abuse or neglect prior to their admission. Young people accommodated at the home may display challenging behaviour and difficulties forming and sustaining relationships.

Ash Cottage is required to operate in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulations which are written in conjunction with The Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the Quality Standards 2015.

Core legislation provides the regulatory context for Ofsted who inspect the Home at least once per year with a full inspection and the option to undertake an interim inspection. Following an inspection, a report is available which sets out the findings of the inspection and specifies any actions or recommendations required by the home.

### **A statement of the range of needs of the children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

At Ash Cottage, we support young people who:

- Display emotional behaviour disorder, self-harming behaviour, verbal and physical challenging behaviours, risk-taking behaviours and criminal activity.
- May have been victims of sexual exploitation, or who are at risk of sexual exploitation.
- May be unaccompanied minors as a result of asylum seeking.
- May suffer from Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiance Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Struggle to form attachments and trusting relationships
- May have broken down previous placements and require a period of sustained and consistent boundaries in order to stabilise their lives.
- Require increased and consistent supervision and monitoring through 1:1 staff and waking night support where necessary.
- Require a period of assessment in behaviour and cognition

**We do not offer placements for young people that present some of the following needs:**

- Have a primary diagnosis of a learning disability which requires specialist training and adaptations which may be beyond our area of expertise
- Have physical disabilities requiring adaptations or use of specialist equipment such as hoists and wheelchairs
- Have a primary diagnosis of a mental health issue where a treatment programme is required
- Are convicted fire starters
- Are convicted sex offenders

**Description of Accommodation offered by the home.**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

Ash Cottage is situated in a quiet, rural area of Kent. There is a Dentist, Doctor's Surgery, Opticians, Library, Cinema, bowling alleys and beautiful beaches within a short drive of the home.

Ash Cottage is a large detached house, registered for the accommodation of four young people. There are also communal rooms, including an education and games room and additional TV room, to allow the children and young people space to relax, as well as a garden.

The accommodation is decorated and maintained to a high standard, providing a friendly and homely atmosphere. The maintenance and décor of the home is frequent and young people are encouraged to influence this. We involve all of the young people with any development of the home to ensure that their opinions are instrumental in this.

Maintaining safety is extremely important and the home has a built-in fire alarm system, emergency lighting, external CCTV, fire extinguishers, fire doors, heat detectors, auditory door monitoring systems and smoke detectors.

We recognise the importance of providing a home where young people can learn to live and enjoy one another's company. The family lounge is warmly and tastefully decorated and comfortable. It is equipped with comfy sofas and chairs, a large screen television, DVD player and Sky TV.

The Home has a large dining area where young people can benefit from family experiences, such as eating and enjoying meals together. We understand that meal times can be excellent opportunities for both casual catch ups and richer sources of conversation. Young people can have informal discussions with staff and one another about their day, what they would like to do in the evening and how they are feeling.

All bedrooms are for single occupancy and have comfortable furnishings. Young people are encouraged to choose furniture for their rooms. The rooms are decorated to a high standard.

Each young person is encouraged to personalise their own space with such things as posters, pictures, themed bedding and personal possessions. We try to encourage all young people to make this their space and special for them.

Staffing ratios ensure that all young people receive levels of support in accordance with their care plans and needs.

The staff team consists of a Registered Manager, a Deputy Manager, Team Leaders and Support Workers. All staff complete a probationary period prior to qualifying to a minimum of Diploma Level 3 in caring for young people.

The homes' staff work to develop relationships, to be good neighbours and friends with the local community and teach young people the importance of respecting others. Ash Cottage liaises closely and proactively with the local police and uses these opportunities to look at safeguarding.

There are a number of schools and colleges locally. There are also several football academies within a short travelling distance, there are also clubs for young people to join such as drama, dance, horse-riding, Scouts, Guides, karate, judo, and trampolining, all a short journey away.

## **Ethos, Aims and Outcomes**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

Ash Cottage's primary aim is to provide a safe environment where all young people's welfare is promoted and they are cared for in a manner that helps them develop positively and progress.

We aim to be proactive in seeking and establishing a true and clear picture of each young person's unique and specific needs and wishes. We are aware that gathering information and a picture of the young person can be challenging. In addition, that while data and agency information can be gathered, there are often limited or vague pictures of the young person. Their character, individuality and what makes them special and unique is often absent in information. Where possible we will contact previous carers, establish relationships with family members and those significant in the young person's life.

We will provide strong and robust advocacy for the young person ensuring that their voice is prominent and influential. We will appropriately challenge decisions where we feel that these are not in the best interest of the young person, making clear our rationale and views. Where young people express dissatisfaction or wish to make a representation, we will work with that young person to help them identify a way forward.

With the young person at the forefront, we design an individualised placement plan that demonstrates both the broader, longer-term goals as well as the shorter-term day to day care practices. We aim to encourage the young person to take ownership and invest in their plan. They will only achieve this if they are 'connected' and influential in this plan. We believe that it is incumbent upon us to ensure that plans are ambitious and achievable, providing goals that young people themselves can measure and celebrate.

Keeping young people safe is paramount and therefore risk assessment's must be clear concise and effective. While there are clear roles for staff and the professionals in risk management strategies, we believe that young people should be supported to manage risk where this is appropriate and possible. To this end, young people are not merely 'risk assessed' as passive responders, they are significant in helping us understand how together we manage and reduce risk. Where the likelihood of harm increases and we have to be more dominant in risk management, we use key working and one to one working to help young people understand the concerns.

Young people are therefore instrumental in shaping and influencing their placement plan and actively encouraged to express their wishes, thoughts and feelings in respect of all aspects of their care.

We aim to assist children and young people to successfully deal with significant changes and challenges. We endeavour to develop enterprising strategies, positive relationships and encourage young people to take greater levels of control over their lives.

With staff as role models we aim to help young people form and sustain meaningful and beneficial relationships with one another and those important to them. We understand the importance of the wider community and how young people can feel marginalised. Therefore, we promote young people's involvement in clubs and external activities, enabling

them to learn how to behave towards each other and within the local community in a non-discriminatory way. We use these opportunities to encourage them to understand the range of cultures and beliefs that exist within wider communities and use these experiences to discuss and gain insights in to being a productive and valued citizen.

### **The arrangements for supporting the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of children accommodated in the home**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

Each young person's cultural, linguistic and religious beliefs are supported by the home. The matching process performed at the commencement of the placement ensures that the staff have the skills, understanding and ability to meet these needs. Therefore, we invest heavily in the matching process.

We understand that we do not always have the full picture at the point of referral, we also understand that information often follows the placement and behaviours emerge, which may not have been anticipated. Therefore, matching is an ongoing and somewhat fluid process where young people's emerging needs shape and influence the placement and their care planning.

The staff team within Ash Cottage will always actively support young people in pursuit of their beliefs, whether that is by providing a certain choice of food or preparation of food, or by ensuring that the young person has transport to and from their chosen place of worship. Where young people wish to celebrate traditions and festivals, we use these occasions for other young people and staff to learn about other cultures and special events.

We will ensure that young people whose first language is not English are supported to understand their care planning and other essential documentation, including placement plans, positive behaviour plans, complaint's policy, children's handbook and statement of purpose are translated or adapted into their preferred language through confidential, translation services. We also support them through access to people with similar backgrounds and via local communities such as social groups, churches and services.

We are aware that ignorance or more active views can discriminate and marginalise minority groups. It is our role as carers and parental figures to help young people understand and be accepting of differences of others. We therefore understand the need to educate and help young people gain insights into different cultures and individuals. We use more innovative measures to engage young people finding new foods, festivals and ceremonies to make learning about other cultures fun and enjoyable.

In this way, we engage young people in preparing and tasting new foods, decorating the home and partaking in festivals.

Where we need to be more proactive or directive in challenging discrimination this is challenged through specific and targeted key working sessions. Staff members are specifically trained and benefit from learning through their training in Equality and Diversity which allows them to identify and challenge racism and inequality.

We understand the importance of belonging and engagement and we aim to create a stable, accepting, caring environment, for all young people which will help to:

- Enhance their self-esteem.
- Enhance their coping strategies to prepare them for living in the wider society where they may experience racism, stereotyping and prejudice.
- Allow them to develop their religious, cultural and linguistic awareness, to enable them to be accepted and participate in their chosen community
- Create a climate where racial and religious differences are acknowledged and respected, and where discussion is actively encouraged. This may be expressed by providing multi-cultural books, pictures and magazines. Through providing choices of food, celebration festivals and traditions.
- Promote beneficial and enjoyable contact with friends and families and encourage membership of the wider community.

### **Arrangements for dealing with complaints**

As part of the admission and welcoming process, each young person is given the contact details of Children's Rights, a copy of the home complaint's policy and also have the complaint's procedure clearly explained to them. They are encouraged to share any concerns they have within the Home either personally or anonymously if they are more comfortable to follow this route.

As part of the above the home operates a 'Grumble' Book where young people can write their 'Grumbles' about any aspect of life at the Home, which may not necessarily come under the term 'complaint'. They are assured that they will receive a prompt response from the Home Manager resulting in minor issues being dealt with not therefore becoming more serious or problematic. As well as this, there is a 'Compliment's' Book available for everyone to write in; this includes young people, professionals, family members and staff. This provides evidence of compliments that are received and helps monitor the progress at Ash Cottage.

Each young person is made aware of the complaint's procedure upon arrival and will be supported to use it if they wish. This will involve either a verbal or written complaint which will be recorded within the complaint's book and responded to immediately. We aim to resolve the complaint within 14 days. More complex or enduring complaints will be regularly updated for the young person every 14 days until resolution to ensure they are aware that the matter is being taken seriously.

Staff will always try to resolve the concern for the young person; however, the matter may at times, be more appropriate to pass onto the home manager if a more objective overview is appropriate. All steps will be carried out in order for a satisfactory outcome to be achieved. Should this not be the case, then the young person may want to use an alternative complaints procedure, as stipulated below.

A young person can also make a complaint or raise any concerns to their Social Worker should they wish to do so.

The Children's Commissioner can also be contacted on 02077 838330 if the young person did not feel that they were being listened to. The nominated officer would then make arrangements to visit and speak to the young person and follow up with any subsequent actions.

Child line also offer support and advice to young people choosing to use this service. Telephone number 0800 1111.

In addition, each young person, parent or member of the public can make a complaint known to, Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD. Telephone number 0300 123 1231.

The "Registered Provider" as defined in the Care Standards Act, is Acorn Homes (Group) Limited.

The Responsible Individual is Carol Bradley. 01843 808454, c.bradley@ahgroup.eu

The Manager, awaiting registration, is Ryan Wells, 01843 808454, r.wells@ahgroup.eu

Correspondence for the Responsible Individual should be addressed to them at:

Carol Bradley  
Acorn Homes  
Northdown House  
Northdown Park Road  
Margate, Kent CT9 3TP

**Details of how a person, body or organisation involved in the care or protection of a child can access the home's child protection policies or the behaviour management policy.**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

The Responsible individual, in accordance with the Head of Care, monitors the home through the regulation 44 visits, the manager's regulation 45 reports and through regular liaison with the home. All child protection policies and the behaviour management policies are centrally held and can be accessed within the homes or remotely through the company's server. The Responsible Individual is also the safeguarding co-ordinator and as such is consulted in respect of any allegations passed to the local authority with sight of notifications under regulation 40 (Children's Homes Regulations 2015)

**A description of the home's approach to the monitoring and surveillance of children.**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

We understand the fine balance between personal freedom and people's rights to privacy



and keeping people safe. We operate a CCTV system which covers external areas of the home. CCTV assists with security by monitoring who may come onto our premises or to our front door.

We provide door warning devices in the home which we are able to switch on or off as risk assessments and circumstances present. These systems are only for use for night time periods and not used as a substitute for staff supervision. These devices are only used when we believe it is necessary to enhance existing safeguarding and protection. All staff are aware that electronic devices in whichever form are not a substitute for effective staff supervision.

These systems are overt, visible and discussed with the young people and included on the young person's placement plans and influenced by risk assessment. The Local Authority are notified by letter of our use of both CCTV and door alarm systems, where their agreement is undertaken.

Caring for children in a residential setting is very rewarding but we also understand that at times this can also be challenging.

We ensure that all staff have a sound understanding of child development and how children react to crises and traumatic experiences in their lives. All staff are supervised, supported and trained to enrich their learning and skills. Effective staffing and supervision ensures that expectations of behaviour for both staff and children is clearly understood and maintained.

This enables staff to develop the ability and competence to understand children's behaviour, intervene constructively ensuring young people have the right kind of support to develop positive behaviour. Competent staff set and maintain safe, consistent and tangible boundaries promoting acceptable behaviour.

The formal supervision of staff and their day-to-day management ensures that they are able to demonstrate that they understand and support:

- Each child's wishes and preferences
- The needs of individual children
- The needs of the group of children resident at the time
- The protection and safeguarding of the child/young person
- The protection of others (including the public) from harm

Staff are supported and trained to develop the skills they will need to manage conflict, so they are confident in being able to maintain constructive dialogues and react appropriately in their interactions with young people. Staff supervision also enables the staff to reflect on situations and discuss how they could be managed differently.

When sanctions for negative behaviour are imposed these are clear, reasonable and proportionate. All sanctions are robustly recorded. The registered manager oversees and evaluates the use of all sanctions and will challenge any practice where sanctions are either ineffective or seen as disproportionate.

## **The Views wishes and feelings of young people.**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

Staff work in partnership with young people and encourage them to express their views and opinions. The concept of partnership is promoted to install a feeling of partnership and collaborative care practices. We believe that if young people feel confident and empowered, they are more likely to express themselves verbally and constructively. In this way, we encourage young people to use dialogue and express opinions to influence and shape their care.

Key working provides each young person with a formal mechanism to express themselves as well as have their views and comments recorded. In addition, young people's collective views are gathered in formal house meetings. We encourage young people to identify agenda items and themes and try and make these meetings meaningful and engaging occasions.

We also understand that young people do not always feel comfortable in more formal settings therefore we may have a house meeting during a meal, on a day out or in other less formal settings. We believe that the most important outcome is to engage the young people in effective dialogue and we will always adapt and innovate to achieve this.

Staff consult with placing Social Workers and other professionals involved with young people about the overall running of the Home.

Young people are involved and consulted in relation to all aspects of their lives within Ash Cottage, their community as a whole, their future and their role within family and society through:

- Full involvement in all meetings including reviews
- Both planned/unplanned Placement Plan sessions
- Key Working weekly meetings
- Regular young persons meetings
- Menu/activity planning
- Management's consultations with young people

## **Promoting anti-discriminatory practice**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

We will promote equality and inclusion through engaging and supportive relationships with young people. Many of our young people have suffered abuse and neglect and felt that they have not had a voice or been able to express themselves. We will promote children's rights and through positive engagement and re-enforcement, empower them by listening to them. We will value their views and help them to become confident and responsible members of society. We will use our relationships and seize opportunities to re-enforce their worth.

We aim to use these types of experiences to help young people gain understanding of being discriminated against or marginalised and challenging these concepts. We will help

them recognise choices that they can make to avoid being discriminated against or discriminating against others.

Our young people are supported to appropriately challenge discrimination firstly within themselves and then develop skills to challenge the discrimination of others. This will be achieved by helping young people first establishing an innate value for themselves, celebrating their individuality and unique qualities and understanding the giving and receiving of respect. We understand that this is no small task and that young people must first establish their self-esteem and self-worth.

We recognise the major role that we play in shaping young people's attitudes and behaviour. We recognise our responsibility in dealing with and preventing discrimination. We interact with children and young people in a way that values diversity and respects cultural, religious and ethnic differences.

We will challenge discrimination and stand up for children's rights by exploring views from different perspectives making sure each child feels valued, safe, secure with equal opportunities to those of their peers.

We will ensure that we develop a practice culture where staff:

- Understand the ways in which children and young people can experience prejudice and discrimination
- Explain the importance and benefits of valuing and promoting cultural diversity in work with children and young people
- Ensure that discriminatory barriers to access are removed and allowing for children and young peoples' individual needs to be met
- Interact with children and young people in a way that values diversity and respects cultural, religious and ethnic differences
- Ask children and young people what works, what doesn't work and what could work better; and involving them in the design, delivery and evaluation of the care they receive on an ongoing basis
- Take positive action to counter discrimination. This will involve identifying and challenging discrimination and being positive in own practice about differences and similarities between people
- Support inclusion and inclusive practices in work with children and young people a process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging.

### **Workforce and staffing**

In respect of our workforces we will not discriminate based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation in the allocation of employees employed in any post.

All employees will be considered solely on their merits for career development and promotion with equal opportunities for all.

## **Care planning**

### **Any criteria used for the admission of children to the children's home**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

All placements begin with a matching process. This is an interactive process where the known details and characteristics are gathered from the placing Social Worker. (See matching above)

The following information will be required, where available, at the time of the placement:

- The contact arrangements that may be permitted between the child and his parents, siblings, relatives and friends – no contact may be allowed without the approval of the Social Worker or as set out in the child's Placement Plan;
- A copy of the child's Health Care Plan or, if this is not available, details of any healthcare or medical needs/requirements that the home should be aware of e.g. Home Remedies or Medication that the child may require
- Copies or information relating to any Court Orders that may be required or influence the child's placement e.g. if the child is subject to a Remand.

Many young people considered for placement at Ash Cottage may have a history of social services intervention and may have already experienced multiple, failed placements. Some young people have exhibited challenging behaviours that have precluded fostering, and residential care is a second option.

We promote the merits of residential care and believe that this is the right and most appropriate setting for many young people that are looked after. We do not therefore consider that residential care is the second choice or foster this belief in young people or their families.

For this reason, placements are carefully and meticulously planned, reflecting the view that a residential home is the preferred and most realistic option for the young person and a positive choice. Ash Cottage adheres to the belief that, for some young people, residential care is a positive experience and the practice of the home and engagement with the young person make this a reality.

Ash Cottage is supported by the Health and Wellbeing Team who aim to undertake an assessment within 28 days on most placements and produce a report with recommendations. This is further supported by a range of therapists if required.

## **Purpose of the Placement**

In order to judge whether the home will be appropriate for a young person the purpose of the placement must have been agreed. Young people are looked after for a number of

different reasons and so for each young person it will be important to consider:

- Why they are being looked after;
- What the intentions of the placement are;
- Whether any specific tasks are required;
- What the desired outcomes will be;
- Whether these expectations are realistic;
- What input is required from other agencies

### **The Length of Placement**

It is important to identify that the length of placement is likely to be required in order to ensure that, if a young person is successfully matched to a home, they can remain in that placement for as long as they need to. It is not in the young person's best interest to experience frequent change of placements as this can be damaging to their wellbeing. Predicting the length of the placement can sometimes be difficult therefore it is important, where possible, to build into the arrangements a certain amount of flexibility to take account of unforeseen developments.

### **The Wishes and Feelings of the Young Person**

The young person's wishes and feelings must be ascertained having regard to his/ her age, understanding and situation. The level of a young person's participation in the process will depend on an assessment of their understanding and the quality of information they receive about the process. Sometimes in order to promote the welfare of a young person it may be necessary to make a decision that is not consistent with his/ her wishes and feelings because they may be restrictive or unrealistic. The reasons for not acting on their views and wishes must be explained to the young person.

### **Diversity Issues**

We understand that it is not sufficient to just identify the ethnicity of a young person; it is also important to be aware of the implications of cultural elements which may affect the young person, i.e. family culture, religion, language, community and society. These elements can influence the way in which a young person views the world. In today's society people have very diverse mixed ethnicity and it is important that individuals take pride in all elements of their racial heritage.

In prioritising factors in these areas, consideration should be given to whether the decision will promote the young person's welfare and whether it is consistent with the young person's wishes and feelings.

### **Educational Considerations**

When placing a young person consideration should be given to:

- The young person's education history;
- The need to achieve continuity in the young person's education;
- What school year is the young person in (particular efforts should be made not to disrupt young people in years 10 and 11 - key stage 4);

- The need to identify any educational needs which the young person may have;
- Action which will need to be taken.

Each looked after young person will have a Personal Education Plan which outlines the role of the teacher, staff member and Social Worker

### **Health Considerations**

We will provide good health care for the young person and make arrangements to monitor the young person's health care in accordance with the education, health and care plan. When placing a young person, considerations should be given to:

- The young person's state of health;
- The young person's health history and the effect of the young person's health and health history on their development;
- Whether the young person has any allergies;

### **Past Experiences and Behavioural Needs**

Consideration is given to a young person's personality and overall patterns of behaviour and history of what has happened in their life so far. It is important to identify whether any additional support will be required to help the home's staff to cope with, manage and, where necessary, modify the young person's behaviour.

### **Deciding a Match and Placing**

Once all relevant information has been gathered, the process of matching will then be used to consider how far a particular home meets the needs of the young person. Ash Cottage recognises however, that a planned placement is not always possible. Indeed, many social work interventions which result in a request for a residential placement tend to be in response to a crisis, and since crises cannot always be predicted neither can the need for a residential placement always be anticipated. However, we always seek to gain maximum information from Placing Authorities.

We accept information may not always be available and therefore the manager will need to make decisions based on what information is available at the time of referral, for example, a young person new to the care system.

Acorn Homes has its own 'Emergency Placement and Emergency Review' policy which outlines what is required when accepting an emergency placement.

There is a detailed procedure in respect of emergency placements which each manager is familiar with.

In all emergency placements, we consider prior to admission that:

- We have gathered sufficient information to make an interim assessment of the young person, their needs and how their risks will be managed. (see information above)
- The existing young people's needs and stability, their views and how this may be

influenced by the emergency placement.

- The young person's views about the placement gathered prior, if possible, but if not, immediately upon admission.
- Any specific health or specific educational needs that may be more difficult to meet.
- We have sufficiently trained staff in appropriate numbers to provide effective care and protect them and promote their welfare.

In the event of a referral for an Emergency Placement, the person receiving/administering the referral should do all that is reasonable to follow the normal admission's procedures. (When an emergency placement is requested out of hours then the on-call manager should be consulted prior to accepting the referral).

Given the time constraints, the risk assessment is likely to be carried out from information provided over the phone, e-mail or facsimile. Matching forms need to be completed and received before the young person is admitted despite the time pressures with emergency placements.

## **Education**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

All the Young people coming to live at Ash Cottage are encouraged to engage in education unless they are in employment. Education may take place in our own separate DFE registered provision or through mainstream or other special needs education.

Identifying a suitable education provider or school that specifically meets the needs of the young person is essential and will be a priority within the planning process.

Educational plans may include initial placements being made at our specialist education provision with a longer-term aim of reintegration into mainstream schools or full-time provision or at another specialist provider. Exceptionally, home tutoring can be arranged if alternatives cannot be accessed, whilst a more appropriate provision is sought.

Each young person's Personal Education Plan (PEP) is an integral part of his or her care plan and these arrangements are agreed upon admission or as soon as possible thereafter. The Social Worker and school, along with the manager of the home, will ensure that this is addressed and influenced by the young person and key worker.

Where young people are already attending an educational provision at the time of their admission, every effort will be made to ensure there is no interruption in their existing provision.

All young people have appropriate facilities and private areas for home study. Staff will promote academic support and help young people in the completion of their homework.

Our staff build and maintain effective communication with external agencies committed to

furthering the child's academic and career progress. In this way, we will work together with outside agencies to explore educational and career opportunities for all our young people.

## **Enjoying and Achieving**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

Staff help each young person to develop interests and hobbies; whether this is within or outside the Home. We believe it is vital that the young people take part in activities that they enjoy and if we do not already supply a particular activity, we will look into any reasonable suggestion that is made. Young people are able to choose and discuss activities within Young People's Meetings.

We provide a variety of activities that develop and meet the needs of the young people in our care. These can vary from Trampolining to visiting theme parks and zoos. In addition, companywide activities, charity and sports events are arranged which young people can participate in.

We at times encourage participation in cultural nights based on multi-faiths and traditions, whereby young people choose and help prepare the food they will eat.

## **Health**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

Each young person is registered with the local General Practitioner, dental surgery and optician as soon as possible after they arrive. Appointments will then be made for regular check-ups and appointments will also be made for optician visits and referrals to the CLA nurse and any specialist interventions. We would, where possible, endeavour, to keep young people with their GP.

We place great importance on nutrition and our menus always constitute a balanced and varied diet. We also recognise that individuals may have specific dietary needs or wishes which will be respected. Young people also need to learn about keeping themselves healthy through exercise and diet. Lifestyle choices are also the focus of discussion between staff and young people. Choices young people make such as smoking, using alcohol and substances are discouraged through engaging and meaningful discussions. Staff will also encourage engagement with outside services in order to tackle smoking, alcohol or substance use. Ensuring young people make informed decisions and understand the impact this has on their health.

## **Measuring progress**

To ensure that we meet the young person's health needs we use the placement plan and track their progress. We complete a monthly progress report which records the young person's progress in all key aspects of their care.

All health interventions, from encouraging a young person to attend a GP appointment to promoting personal hygiene, are articulated through formal key working records and one to one reward charts. By measuring young people's progress against the point that they



became resident we are able to look specifically at how their general and more specific health needs are being met. By measuring this, adjustments can be made to plans and goals through careful analysis of demonstrable progress reports.

One to one key working looks closely at how young people learn and develop the skills towards independently making healthy lifestyle choices. It is through engagement and support that we help young people understand the impact of poor lifestyle choices such as using substances, alcohol and risk-taking behaviour.

We help young people to learn the importance of the health and safety aspects of food preparation and safety procedures within the kitchen as part of their preparation for adulthood.

We have a dedicated and qualified Health and Wellbeing Team that are based on the principles of a Children's Adolescent Mental Health Team that support all young people and staff in their work with young people. This team provides counselling and therapy and also engages and refers young people to community services. The Health and Wellbeing Team are pivotal in the liaison with community services ensuring young people access the correct health services to meet their needs. They advise staff and managers, assist with training and source appropriate professional interventions.

If a young person is assessed to need a specific therapeutic intervention this will be addressed in the course of Looked After Children reviews. Arrangements will then be made to provide appropriate assistance in consultation with all interested parties and consistent with the young person's Care Plan.

When appropriate and necessary, referrals to CAMHS will be made so that more intense and direct work can be completed with the young person.

Our Health and Wellbeing Team provide staff with additional training and guidance when required to ensure that they are able to understand more complex behaviours and develop strategies to manage the young people in our care. Our social care, educational staff and Health and Wellbeing Team all work together to deliver a programme of personal development and independence training that is monitored and, therefore, measurable in monthly progress reports.

## **Positive Relationships**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

We recognise the huge benefit of harmonious and enjoyable contact between young people and their friends and family. We also understand that contact can be challenging and that this often needs high levels of support and preparation from staff. Where necessary we use both informal one to one support and more formal key working to prepare young people for more challenging contact arrangements.

We understand that contact must be promoted, encouraged and be beneficial and we ensure that we place the young person at the centre of all contact arrangements. We do this by acting on their behalf, providing advocacy and advice.

The home has an open-door policy and parents and carers are welcome to visit the home.

We encourage telephone contact and electronic communications such as email and Skype subject to any restrictions or limitations within the care plan.

We will support contact arrangements by providing transport, liaison and through discussion and support. We always provide a welcoming and friendly atmosphere, which we understand is important to achieving individual aims and to facilitate the role of the parents in the young person's future. The home will ensure that relatives and friends are provided comfort in our home and privacy if appropriate.

Parents and carers are encouraged to attend Open Days, Parents' Consultation Evenings, and to be in attendance at reviews.

Contact with the young people's families and significant others will always take account of the best interests of the young person.

## **The Protection of Children**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

### **Safeguarding**

All staff receive training on safeguarding issues as an integral part of their induction package and ongoing training program. This training is refreshed at regular intervals in line with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the company policies and procedures. Managers and Deputy Managers receive a higher level of Safeguarding training (Level 3 Safeguarding).

The staff employed at Ash Cottage are fully aware of the protocol when dealing with safeguarding issues, this protocol is an integral part of initial and ongoing training. Staff are aware of the sensitive nature of which these issues must be managed. Ash Cottage' staff ensure that the young people in our care are aware of how to keep themselves safe; this is done through key working sessions and de-briefing when risk has been more evident.

A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), procedure is kept in the Homes and read by staff. There is a hard copy of the policies and procedures kept at the house which all staff have access to; as well as these being readily available online at <http://acornhomes.proceduresonline.com>. The policies and procedures are updated regularly by an independent company called Tri.X. Tri.X update our policies in line with legislation changes, but if we require any changes to be made then Tri.X will amend these for us immediately.

At Ash Cottage, the designated Safeguarding Officer is the Mark Blesky, Head of Service Development, who deals with all complaints and investigations. This is done in conjunction with Social Workers and the Safeguarding Team in the placing authority and the young person's placing authority.

If there is a suspicion of a safeguarding incident the appropriate steps will be taken to contact the local authority duty team and LADO the placing authority. In addition, where necessary the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Ofsted are also notified and consulted. We will then be guided as to who conducts the initial child protection

investigation, prior to a Section 47 strategy meeting taking place.

Ash Cottage operates a Whistle Blowing Policy to ensure that staff are supported and guided to raise concern if they feel that the practice of others falls short of good care practices. Induction with all staff fosters the culture that whistle blowing is a key part of safe and transparent care practice. Failure to whistle blow where poor practice was evident is considered gross misconduct and disciplinary measure would always be considered.

To ensure that young people are kept safe in a well-maintained environment Acorn Homes' has its own dedicated and professional maintenance team, which are available at all times. This ensures that Ash Cottage is designed, furnished and maintained so that each young person is protected from environmental and situation hazards that could arise.

Local Area Risk Assessments (LARA) are carried out yearly to ensure that Ash Cottage is situated within a safe and suitable location. Any risks that are brought to our attention are fully investigated immediately. Action is then taken to mitigate or reduce risk. We liaise with our partner agencies, such as the police, to consider any trends or risks that emerge through crime or the local community. The LARA is reviewed and any information that emerges that causes us or our partners concern triggers a LARA review. In this way, we ensure that the risk assessment remains a fluid and dynamic process.

### **Bullying**

Ash Cottage recognises the need for each young person to be valued as an individual, and also recognises that all-young people arrive at the home from differing backgrounds. They may have had different experiences of trust, different experiences of care and may have suffered from abusive and neglectful relationships. This may make it difficult for young people to trust and respect one another.

All staff are aware through their training and experience that young people can be marginalised and sometimes bullied by their peers. Staff work hard to create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable.

The home has a policy and guidelines on countering bullying. Young people that are being bullied within the home are fully supported and the young person that does the bullying is given suitable guidance and support. To successfully address bullying, we are aware that we must protect the victim but engage with the victimiser if we are to build and sustain harmonious and non-abusive or exploitative relationships.

At Ash Cottage, we work in line with the 'no blame' approach to bullying.

If bullying becomes a child protection issue we evoke our safeguarding and child protection protocols at such a stage, a planning/review meeting would be held to look at the sustainability of placement of the young person who is instigating the bullying and maintaining safety for other young people. Ultimately our Homes must provide safe and caring environments for the young people that we seek to care for.

### **Missing Children Policy and Procedures**

If a young person is absent from the Home without permission or has failed to return within

a reasonable time limit dependent on individual risk assessments, we will follow the procedures agreed with the Placing Authority and the local runaway and missing from home and care protocol.

When a young person is not considered missing but absent, our guidelines on the process for dealing with unauthorised absences are as follows:

- The senior team member will report all absences to the Home Manager who agrees to the informing of police on duty as per risk assessments.

The police should be given the following information:

- A physical description of the young person including age, height, weight, distinguishing features, clothing etc.
- Details of any relevant medical condition, e.g. epilepsy, diabetes etc.
- Possible location or known relevant associations
- Home address
- A photograph of the young person

The young person's Placing Authority and Parents, if appropriate, would be notified at the earliest opportunity.

If the absence occurs out of normal office hours, the relevant Out of Hours local authority Duty Team will be notified.

The Social Worker will be requested to have a meeting with every young person that goes missing when they return to ensure that they are safe and well.

The Health and Wellbeing team are also available to carry out a debrief following missing episode.

### **The homes approach to physical intervention**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

(a) All staff will receive regular training in safeguarding of children and young people are certified as Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA) competent.

Children and young people in the home must be looked after without favouritism or antipathy. The deployment of staff suitably qualified and experience staff in appropriate numbers enables us to provide young people with high levels of support. Staff are well known to the young people and we do not use a bank staff system. This enables young people to be looked after by a stable and consistent staff team with whom they have formed meaningful and enriching relationships.

Because relationships are stable and trusting, physical intervention is uncommon. All staff understand training is to avoid physical restraint where it is safe to do so and is a last resort.

When physical intervention is unavoidable every incident is fully recorded in accordance with the Children's Homes Regulation's 2015, and includes the young person's comments and views. Staff will talk through difficult situations afterwards and agree with the young person a plan to ensure that this behaviour and intervention can be avoided in the future. The Registered Manager, or appointed senior, will also undertake a staff debrief and meet the young person following each episode of physical intervention to establish if the actions were warranted and the effectiveness of the intervention. They will also ensure that the paperwork is completed appropriately, reflects and details the event and within timescales and is then forwarded to the young person's Social Worker.

### **Experience and qualifications of staff working at the children's home**

*Matters to be included in the statement of purpose Schedule 1, Regulation 16*

***Please see staff qualification list in appendix 1 and house staffing structure below***

### **Details of the management and staffing structure of the children's home**

The staff team at Ash Cottage consists of a team of Support Workers including designated deputies and shift leaders. Their number is ultimately dependant on the needs of the young people placed and each team works a flexible shift pattern in accordance with the needs of the young people. Either the manager, deputy manager or one of the shift team leaders provides on-call support. At night, there will be two staff members on shift, one will typically undertake a sleep-in duty while the other can provide a waking night or second sleep-in duty, dependent on requirements.

Staff meetings are held monthly, and all staff are expected to attend.

All staff at Ash Cottage receive supervision in line with Acorn Home's supervision policy and have annual Performance Development Reviews, carried out by their line manager.

Supervision is the key process by which managers can ensure that staff know the contribution they are expected to make, as individuals and as members of a team, and that they are supported in achieving this through individual performance and development plans.

Explicit within this policy is a commitment to ensure that every member of staff receives regular, purposeful and dedicated time with their line manager or supervisor.

The purpose of supervision is to: -

- Ensure that the high quality of service to young people, for which managers are accountable, is achieved, maintained and enhanced
- Develop an open culture which is supportive to the individual, encourages their potential and enhances motivation

- Promote an honest working relationship based on mutual trust
- Ensure that individual staff roles and responsibilities are clear in relation to organisational objectives
- Enable staff to achieve the necessary skills to deliver identified and sound standards of practice
- Ensure that all staff have a jointly agreed personal development plan, which identifies areas of training required.
- Develop a culture of equality for staff and young people

# Ash Cottage House Structure 2020

