

# Willow House



## Statement of Purpose

URN- 2731966

latest update- 20.8.24

*This document will be updated annually unless there are changes that need to be made periodically*

## Contents

Mission Statement
Quality and purpose of care standard; - Purpose, aims and objectives of Willow House Underlying principles and ethos Accommodation and facilities, safeguarding, supporting children of varying ages, location, cultural, linguistic, and religious arrangements, complaints.
Views, wishes and feelings standard; - Consultation Anti-discriminatory practice and children's rights
Education standard; - Varying education provisions up until age 18 years and the homes support and approach to education
Enjoyment and achievement; - Promotion of recreational, sport and cultural activities Engaging with the wider system and local community-based activity and involvement
Health; - Promoting the health of young people
Positive relationships; - Promotion, development, and maintenance of positive relationships both internal to the home and external to the home
Protection of children; - Behaviour management Arrangements for safeguarding Bullying/E-Safety Missing from care/unauthorised absence
Leadership and management; - Staffing policy Supervision/training and development Staffing structure/qualifications and experience Staff additional roles and responsibilities
Care planning; - Care planning from admission to transition
Fire and health and safety
Covid -19

## ***Mission statement***

### ***To do the best we can every day!***

#### **Quality and purpose of care**

Willow House cares for young people, who have a range of conditions most notably Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), Learning Difficulties, and Social, Emotional and Mental Health. However, as every child is unique, we will always assess children individually.

The atmosphere that we aim to create and uphold in the home is one of a nurturing and happy nature. We will look after up to three young people of either gender up to the age of 18 years of age. Our aim is to ensure all Children and young people accommodated at Willow have individual plans that are appropriate for their age and cognitive ability and needs, ensuring they receive a holistic service that meets their own individual needs.

Our aim is to ensure that all the children and young people can co-habit together and enjoy the value of group living whilst maintaining a safe environment for all our children and young people, with consideration to the different issues varying age levels and developmental stages can present.

At Willow, we believe that each young person needs a sense of routine and consistency in their lives and a caring approach to encourage their development whilst maintaining a high level of pride, self -discipline, self -esteem, confidence and ultimately to feel trust and respect for themselves and others. To this end, we endeavour to have a staff team who are committed to working with young people. To encourage them to express themselves positively and freely without judgement or prejudice.

We believe that the involvement of everybody concerned with the young person's well-being, most importantly the involvement of the young people themselves, is of paramount importance in facilitating and achieving our aims and the young person's personal goals and aspirations. We recognise the importance of treating each young person as an important and respected member of a "family unit", whilst at the same time recognising their individual personality and needs.

Young people are actively encouraged to discuss their needs, wishes and feelings openly. Our purpose is to provide high quality residential care to young people from admission to transition. Working closely with our Head of Therapeutic Services – Kirsty Lucas.

Kirsty is a Cognitive Behavioral Therapist with over 10 years of experience in the health care industry. We will ensure that the young people have preferred communication systems which are accessible and implemented as part of their day to day living.

We provide individual packages of care tailored to meet the needs and requirements of each individual young person.

#### **Aims:**

To provide a safe and personalised environment where young people develop the skills, confidence, and self-esteem that they need to flourish in their lives.

To provide an integrated, and personalised living and learning experience.

Engage in pioneering new approaches through research and training.

Raise awareness, aspiration and increase understanding in society for our young people to positively integrate into their local community.

Provide families with the support and guidance and the opportunity to spend quality time with their child.

Support our young people to make a positive difference in the home and in all other areas of their lives.

To understand and develop the needs of each individual in terms of their emotional, social and educational welfare.

To provide a happy and nurturing environment for the young people, staff and visitors.

### **Objectives:**

To encourage, all individual's, to build and maintain positive relationships with others.

To address traumatic previous experiences, in order, to facilitate a more positive future, recognising that different people exposed to the same trauma may respond in different ways.

To create individual Care Plans / Pathway Plans/ PEP Plans with the involvement of each young person, so that they have an active role in planning for their future.

To encourage young people to achieve their goals as set out in their individual Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP)/Care Plan / Pathway Plan.

To enable young people to become emotionally stronger and resilient to ultimately assist them in making a brighter future.

### **Underlying principles and ethos**

The management team and staff at Willow believe that residential care can be a positive choice in meeting the holistic needs of specific young people. This cannot be achieved in isolation, which is why the young person is always the central figure in determining their needs and identifying the best possible 'package' of care. Furthermore, it is our belief that through working in partnership and engaging with the wider system so much more can be achieved than working on our own.

At Willow, we are committed to the Charter for Children's Rights ensuring that our care is underpinned by maintaining each young person's rights. Willow is striving to ensure children are fully supported to flourish within all the Quality Standards and that each child has the opportunities and support available to reach their maximum potential.

In determining our model of care the home takes each of these outcomes and uses a 'can do' attitude to explore all that can be achieved. We believe that the homes approach should follow that of any good parent. Making decisions and supporting all our children and young people with their best interests at the forefront.

Willow works within a person centred and child friendly framework where each individual child and young person are central to all decisions around the care.

### **Underlying ethos and principles on safeguarding**

Willow has a commitment to promote and safeguard the welfare of our young people. Our aim is to provide a safe environment that enables children's need to be met and developed. We have a commitment to protect our young people from exposure to harm and develop their own awareness around dangers to enable them to make good decisions to also keep themselves free from harm. We believe in our young people taking safe risks whilst within our care in order to build resilience and learn themselves with our support in order to prepare them for adulthood. We believe that everyone involved in the care of our young people should be alert to the possibility of abusive situations. Our policies and procedures recognise this possibility and aim to promote an environment in which abuse is unlikely to occur.

Willow believes on focused outcomes for children and working closely with the child and family to develop plans based on the assessment of their developmental needs and the capacity for the carers/families and child to respond to these needs within the context of different environments will impact on the effectiveness of potential safeguarding. Plans and interventions to safeguarding should be based on clear assessment of the child's developmental progress and the difficulties the child may be experiencing. We believe that by having an integrated approach which understands a child within the context of their wider environment strengthens the ability to implement effective safeguarding strategies. Willow welcomes the involvement of all other external support services to ensure the child has access to the most specialised advice and guidance to learn to keep them safe.

Willow has clear policies and procedures around internet safety, privacy and security and telephone use; however, these are also based on individual risk assessment and circumstance. All our young people that have been given permission by relevant people to use a phone and social media are subject to random checks to ensure appropriate communications are being upheld.

### **Accommodation and facilities**

Willow house is set back from the road with wooden gates which open onto driveway as you go down the driveway there is greenery on each side, trees and fence panels to maintain privacy. The main of the garden is located to the front of the house with plenty of parking space on the drive and room for games and summer activities. The greenery in the garden attracts lots of wildlife and is peaceful to sit in throughout the year. To the rear of the house there is paving that wraps around the house and a useable space.

As you walk into the house there is a large welcome area which has been decorated in neutral colours and pictures on the walls. There is a downstairs toilet just off the entrance way which is small but practical. Leading on from the hallways is a number of doors going into a lounge

area which is big and bright with a big window looking onto the front garden. There is a chill out/ sensory room which is a good size however as of yet the functionality of that room will depend on the young peoples needs and wants. The kitchen is also on the ground floor with plenty of cupboard space and room for everyone to eat around the table, off the kitchen there is a separate utility room for washing and additional storage.

In keeping with the home, the rooms are decorated and furnished to reflect a domesticated setting and the young people are encouraged to contribute to planning the ongoing decor and facilities within these rooms.

Each bedroom is individual in design and the young people are encouraged to consider this to be their personal space. As such the young people are encouraged to choose their own colours for decoration, posters, choice of bedding on admission. Each bedroom is fitted with a thumb lock to ensure that the young people can maintain their privacy, and clear procedures exist on the circumstances and way the staff enters a young person's bedroom.

We aim to always ensure that the external and internal physical condition and soft furnishings of the home are maintained to a high standard and to work within HSE regulations and requirements.

### **Supporting children and young people of varying ages**

We will ensure that there is structures and routines available which will be specific to individual needs and developmental stages. These will incorporate both group and 1:1 activity, as well as sensory diets where appropriate. Group activities both in house and within the community, involving younger children and older young people together, will be supervised where needed by residential support staff to enable full monitoring of interactions between all children and young people. Through 1:1 consultations and house meetings, weekly activities plans will be devised and implemented including internal and external. These will include activities, such as youth groups, for specific needs and ages.

Staffing ratios are allocated to ensure that there are appropriate supervision of children and young people. This will be discussed with the placing social worker prior to admission and regularly reviewed where appropriate. Should changes to staffing levels need to be changed this will be reviewed, actioned, implemented and updated in the relevant plans.

### **Objectives:**

At Willow, all individuals will be treated with respect and equality regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, culture.

### **Location of the home**

Willow is situated 5 miles away from the centre in the town of Wigan, Greater Manchester. As such there is a range of local schools nearby, all medical practitioners, and leisure facilities. The host Local Authority is Wigan Council. With such a variety of towns and cities nearby, the home can offer a wide range of educational, cultural and leisure activities to reflect the individual choice of the young people in our care. Within local distances there are various religious places for worship dependent on a young person's religious identity and several voluntary organisations that can offer opportunity for voluntary involvement.

Willow has a location risk assessment which will be comprehensively reviewed annually and submitted to all relevant people for viewing. The review will include the identification of any risks and opportunities presented by the home's location, with strategies for managing these risks. Systems are in place to monitor crime, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE/CCE) and other emerging issues within the local area on a monthly monitoring tool. The police, health team, placing authority, social workers, MFC Coordinator and CSE Team are aware of our location risk assessment. The home will maintain positive links with local police in the area to ensure we are fully aware of current issues in the location of the home

### **Arrangements for supporting cultural, linguistic, and religious needs**

Each young person's placement plan will detail their individual cultural and religious needs and how these needs should be supported, as identified by themselves and main carers/family. All the main cultural and religious feast days and festivals will be collectively celebrated with appropriate food, music, and festivities.

In promoting diversity, staff at Willow are committed to meeting each young person's religious needs and beliefs. The staff team will work in partnership with the young person, and where appropriate the family, to facilitate religious observation. This includes enabling the young person to attend services and special sites of religious interest. Furthermore, the home will ensure that any dietary needs are met, a space to worship is identified if required, and all special days are promoted and celebrated.

There will be an appropriate and diverse range of staff, for example, a good mix of both male and female staff/role models, varying ages, and staff with different life experiences to offer the job and our young people.

The staff team will act as positive role models for young people to learn how to present themselves whilst in the home and community.

Where possible and appropriate if a child or young person has displayed a behaviour, which has upset or insulted someone external from the home restorative justice action will be explored. It is important that everyone understands the impact of the behaviour and the affect this can have.

### **COMPLAINTS**

On admission, each young person will be made aware of the in-house complaints procedure and will be supported to use it if they wish. This will involve either a verbal or written complaint and will be recorded. Staff will try to solve the concern for the young person; however, the matter may be more appropriate to pass onto the Manager, Deputy or Responsible Individual. All steps will be carried out 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.

Following admission our young people are issued with their own individualised help phone numbers lists so they have all relevant support numbers available as and when they require.

A young person can also make a complaint or raise any concerns to MY3 LTD , Responsible Individual, their Social Worker and independent reviewing officer, or Reg 44 visitor should they wish to do so.

Young people will be provided with information to access independent advocates and independent visitors, staff will support them to access these services should they choose.

A Children's Rights Officer can also be contacted if the young person did not feel that they were being listened to. The nominated officer would then 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.

Children's commissioner for England Dame Rachel De Souza - 020 77838330

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

On admission, a complaints pack outlining all relevant person's that can be contacted in respect of a complaint about the home or person's working at the home will be made available to all significant others such as parents. This information is available to the young person in the children's guide, pecs and communication aides are in place to support our young people who require additional support.

All complaints are taken seriously, and every effort will be made to resolve problems internally when and where appropriate.

Each half year a feedback on service questionnaire will be sent out to significant others/parents and all relevant people involved within everyone's package of care. The feedback gained will be incorporated within our annual development plan and form part of the regulation 45 report.

On admission alongside the complaints pack an overview of our child protection and behaviour management policies will be included and sent out to parents.

### **Views, wishes and feelings**

### **Consultation with the young people about the operation of the home**

Willow embraces the general principles of the UNCRC and article 12; -

- Parties shall assure to the child who can form his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting that child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child
- For this purpose, the child shall be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through representative or appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of the National law.



Willow staff aware of the Data protection laws implemented on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018. Staff in the home will comply with the directive that is set out to protect personal data for young people, staff and visitors to the home. The home will ensure that systems are in place to allow young people access to their personal information in line with the GDPR. All sensitive/third party data will be stored in a lockable cupboard to ensure information is not shared incorrectly.

Willow recognises the unique communication skills of all our young people and aims to develop these skills to support our young people to communicate effectively in all areas of their lives. On admission each young person will be provided with a children's friendly guide to all aspects of the home, staff will also use appropriate contracts with young people to ensure that everyone is fully aware of all key areas of their time in the home and is able to communicate their wishes and feelings about the running of the home. The Children's guide is in place however is interchangeable and will be tailored to individual needs prior to admission.

Key workers regularly meet individually with their key child and help represent their views. Young people are supported through this process by individual communication preferences, objects, symbols, verbal or written word.

Willow wants to provide a homely family environment. To achieve this, the young people are encouraged to take an active part in decisions that affect their daily life as well as the homes structures. Mostly these decisions happen organically, i.e., group chats during mealtimes etc. A weekly consultation is being introduced to ensure the young people have opportunities input their ideas on a range of issues, from activities they would like to see offered or the food on the menu for the following week, through to input on the development plans for the home and the design and use of the communal living areas. The staff team continually works hard at building relationships with the young people to gain a better understanding how they express and communicate their needs and wishes.

Willow welcomes feedback from families or independent visitors, should the young people prefer them to act as an advocate. Young people are supported to attend their reviews and planning meetings. Prior to the review a staff member from the home will have discussed with the young person anything that they may want to raise, and how this will be achieved. Staff will act as an advocate should the young person so wish. The young person will also be given the opportunity to read the review report written by the home and will discuss any issues that the home intends to raise, prior to the meeting to prepare the young person. The child will always receive feedback and where possible see the results of there being listened to and acted upon.

The young people will have opportunity to be involved in the recruitment process and meet new applicants, ask those questions and then the home will gain feedback from the young people on whom they feel would benefit our existing staff team.

Willow employs the services of an independent visitor. A representative will visit the home each month. They get to know the young people, monitor their welfare, and represent their best interests. This independent visitor may visit unannounced and will meet with staff and consult with families, social workers, and other external professionals. They submit a report (Regulation 44) to Ofsted. This report is then shared with the home that in turn sends it to the placing Authorities.

## **Anti- discriminatory practices and Children's Rights**

As is outlined above Willow places the rights of the young people in their care of primary importance. The staff team strive to encourage the young people to express their feeling, wishes and promote a culture whereby our young people not only understand their rights but the rights of others.

Willow is committed to develop an environment that is free from discrimination in any form. The starting position to achieve this is by ensuring that all relationships are built and maintained by the guiding principle of 'mutual respect'. In treating each young person as an individual, they are supported in recognising their own identity and to be accepting of difference in others. The aim of this is to encourage tolerance and understanding whilst developing confidence and self-esteem.

Policies within the home outline our approach to dealing with issues around equal opportunities. Whilst our Equal Opportunities Policy is the central document, the home has ensured that an anti-discriminatory approach is adopted throughout its policies and procedures. For example, our policies on countering bullying and combating racism reflect our expectations regarding equal opportunities.

In making a stance against anti oppressive practice the home considers all acts of discrimination to be unacceptable. This includes discrimination on the grounds of ethnic or social origin, race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or religion. This includes both direct and indirect discrimination, no matter how subtle. All such instances will be challenged and addressed. The Complaints Policy and Whistle blowing Policy provide further support to ensure that young people are not oppressed in such a manner. In dealing with such situations with young people it is important to achieve a balance between imposing Consequences on discriminatory language and behaviour and to develop and increase understanding and learning to change future behaviour.

Willow works stringently and collaboratively within the guidelines and ethos of 'Working together to safeguard children' March 2015 and revised December 2023. We value a co-ordinated approach to ensure effective safeguarding and to ensure we are not working in isolation. The homes Manager Sara Osborne is the designated person for dealing with staff and child protection/safeguarding issues - Responsible Individual for the home is Shelly Daly.

We recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that a child centred approach for services to be effective should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of the children.

## **Education**

### **Education for our young people**

Every young person in our care will be treated as an individual and as such his/her educational needs will be assessed accordingly. Where applicable young people will be provided with an EHCP (Education, Health, Care Plan) and given appropriate levels of support to fully access

it. Assessments completed by therapy staff will also inform the young person's educational plan.

We recognise that children who have experienced severe trauma, have mental health difficulties or have been excluded for significant periods, that we need to address and work through past experiences and present needs before they can be expected to positively participate in learning. We will work closely alongside each young person's assessments and EHCP (Education health care plan) as these outlined objectives inform their individual learning targets.

The staff team has a good understanding of the school's functions, admission processes, roles of designated Looked After Children (LAC) teachers and virtual heads and will collectively support and encourage young people to remain in education until at least 18 years of age through either apprenticeships, employment, or training. We will work closely with the local authority to ensure our young people are getting the support and guidance they need to participate.

During periods where children and young people may be awaiting confirmation of a set educational provision or have periods of disengagement or exclusion/suspension from school the home will work with schools, education departments and the young person to gain schoolwork that is appropriate to their current level and assist the young person to complete this whilst being home schooled through an elected home education policy.

The staff team are trained to deliver in a child led approach which develops existing communication behaviour into more concrete, meaningful communication in children that have limited ways of interacting effectively.

We value the importance of a person-centred approach to identifying and developing a support programme based upon each young person's abilities, interests and needs and an integrated approach where we can support the continuation of the school room approach beyond learning, into everyday living. The home will utilise appropriate communication tools to ensure all young people are able to communicate as a continuation of educational based toolkits.

All young people will be provided with appropriate facilities and private areas for home study. Staff will be on hand to offer any moral support in completion of homework. We understand that homework is a vital aspect of a young person's educational programme and are committed to assisting them.

Where appropriate we will send staff into school with young people to give 1:1 support throughout their school day.

Where needed, we will support our young people to access any pupil premium money or PEPSA (Personal Education Plan Support Allowance) funding for items required for schooling or to gain additional tuition outside of schooling so to best ensure each child's full academic potential can be achieved.

The staff will communicate with external agencies committed to furthering the young person's academic and career progress. Willow will support young people who no longer receive

compulsory fulltime education, to explore further education, training, or employment, alongside guidance and consultation with our local Young Persons Service, and each young person's allocated YPS (Young people's Worker).

Internally we will support the young people to work through an independence pack and we will also fund and encourage the young people to complete in house training courses, for example, bullying, basic first aid, sexual health. We also provide opportunities for our young people to learn informally through outings and activities such as cooking, visiting museums, theatre, craft sessions, board games, quiz nights.

Willow will ensure that alongside placing authority and educational provisions that PEP (Personal Education Plan) meetings are regular and PEP plans and IEP'S (Individual Education Plans) are in place, so that staff have up to date information about each child's progress, school attendance and goals and targets. This information will then feed into internal care plans, with target and goals that the staff team will be jointly working towards with each individual young person. The home and allocated school liaison officer will ensure that they maintain regular contact with each child's school, college and alongside the placing authority we will advocate to help overcome any problems the child may be experiencing in their educational setting.

The home ensures that each month percentile data for each young person's school, college or employment is recorded. The home will look at measurable progress from each young person's starting point and this will include not just academic and vocational awards but success in increased attendance, reduction in behaviours including suspensions/exclusions and extra-curricular achievements.

When appropriate to do so an inhouse independence / life skills pack will be worked on with young people shortly after moving into Willow House, based on individual needs and all young people are supported to work alongside their own daily life skill chart. This is specific to each child's development level and identified area of need. A rewards and incentive system support this to encourage our young people to make every effort to try new experiences and tasks

All young people will be enrolled at our local library and encouraged to visit the library and use their resources for both the purpose of learning and leisure.

## **Enjoying and achieving**

### **Promotion of recreational, sport and cultural activities for young people**

All children and young people are encouraged to develop and pursue hobbies, interests, and outdoor activities, including sport, clubs, music, dance etc. Where a young person arrives at Willow with an existing hobby or interest the home will try to facilitate and encourage the continuation of this. In planning activities we will encourage young people to partake in both group and individual pursuits. These activities not only consider individual young people's ethnicity, culture, language, interests, and ability, but seek to expand young people's experiences of inclusion and diversity. To this end the staff will seek to introduce young people to new activities and experiences to complement their existing interests. Equally the young people within the home will be encouraged to participate in activities with their friends from

outside the home, and if appropriate, linking in with the local community. Naturally before any activity is undertaken a risk assessment process is followed.

Young people are encouraged to buy books and magazines. They are given many opportunities to make choices about activities and new resources within the home, including the purchase and rental of age-appropriate computer games, DVD's, board games etc.

Further to this the home organises planned outings within the school breaks and takes the young people on holiday. The home also makes sure that birthdays and other special days such as religious holidays are enjoyed and celebrated

Each child and young person will have the opportunities to engage in activities that may pursue specific talents or are deemed to promote health and emotional well-being, additional monies will be made available, for example swimming, dance classes, horse riding and singing lessons.

The children will be encouraged to make a positive contribution to the wider community and the staff will encourage our young people to be mindful of those less fortunate by engaging in charity events and doing 'good deeds' for neighbours and the local elderly community.

The home will celebrate and recognise achievements by reward systems and ensuring photographic memorabilia is up on display around the home environment.

## **Health**

### **Promoting the health of young people**

The staff team at Willow are committed to ensure that health promotion is at the forefront of care planning for each young person. To meet our aims, the home encourages a holistic and integrated approach to health recognising the importance of factors such as diet, exercise and emotional wellbeing, alongside the practicalities of doctors, dentists and opticians. As such staffs take an active role in promoting all aspects of healthy living. Staffs are proactive in ensuring each young person eats healthily and regularly, develops, and maintains a good level of hygiene, follows appropriate waking, and sleeping routines, is encouraged to take regular exercise, and engage in a range of stimulating leisure activities to contribute to their physical and emotional well-being. Where appropriate, monitoring in relation to specific health needs will be undertaken through consultation with external professionals, to include incontinence nurse, dietician, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, and psychological interventions.

We have a range of resources to utilise dependent on the child's level of understanding, preferred communication, and representational systems.

The young people's health is promoted in accordance with their individual placement and care plan.

Staff receive training on health and hygiene so that they can help develop the young people's knowledge around health issues in a safe and informed manner.

We actively seek the views of our children and young people around food, menu planning, and engage them in food purchasing and preparation. Food related issues are integral to the day-to-day activities of the home. If any child has a food intolerance, allergy or self-imposed restrictive diet, then appropriate medical advice sought and any dietary requirements which avoid specific foods or ingredients will be closely followed. The children and young people are encouraged to rise early enough to enjoy breakfast. Children and young people involved in preparing their own packed lunches, staff will ensure a healthy balance.

Each young person has a Personal Health Plan. This is devised in conjunction with relevant health professionals, and where possible the young person themselves. The plan covers the whole range of potential health needs, including physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual health. Young people are encouraged to have regular dental, health and eyesight check-ups and attend their annual statutory medical. Wherever possible and if young people choose, we aim to help them remain with their own doctor, dentist, and optician. However, if this is not possible or desirable, we will ensure that young people are registered with the local GP, Dentist, and Optician. The young people are supported in accessing help with any illnesses or health issues that they experience. Any identified allergies and special dietary requirements and cultural or religious needs will be included. The staff team are mindful of privacy and confidentiality issues about the young people's health.

Where appropriate Individual and group work will take place with the young people via our local sexual health team and our LAC nurse to further develop their physical and mental health and awareness. This will cover a range of issues as determined by the Personal Health Plan, but may include: raising self-esteem, sexual health, relationships, and drug awareness.

Where the Personal Health Plan identifies a specific health need outside our expertise, we will work with local provision to meet that need. For example, therapeutic practitioners, counsellors etc.... to meet service needs as required.

We will support young people to access smoking programme, if required, which initially supports the young people to assess their level of habit/addiction and offers alternative therapy, incentive schemes to work alongside reduction programmes and stopping smoking.

All staff will receive Training based on the needs of the service for example, Health and nutrition training, drug and alcohol, sexual health, first aid training and medication administration training. Staff will provide information and support for young people around these topics.

### Therapeutic Services

The role of therapeutic services is to support the assessment, management and coordination of care for each child, young person and adult living within My3 Limited homes and houses. Therapeutic services offer our care teams the knowledge, resources and tools required to provide excellent therapeutically led care.

Therapeutic services support the identification and facilitation of appropriate training for our care teams. Ensuring care teams have the appropriate knowledge and skills to support individual needs. Additionally, care teams engage with our team of clinicians to consult on individual needs or behaviours. Our clinicians include a CBT Psychotherapist, Occupational Therapist, PBS coaches and practitioners. Clinicians will support functional analysis, assessment, and development of appropriate care team led interventions, which are regularly reviewed. Where required, clinicians will support care teams to engage with local services who provide interventions. As well as, offering regular reflective practise sessions, promoting our value of continuous learning and adaptation. Supporting a resilient, compassionate and empathetic care team who understand the individual needs of each person within our care. In addition, therapeutic services engaged in the assessment of social and physical environmental care needs. Identifying adjustments and adaptations required within each home or house, to meet the individual needs of each child, young person or adult.

Overall, it is the role of therapeutic services to support our skilled, competent and caring teams in the delivery of day-to-day care. To offer care, which is therapeutically underpinned, person centred, improving quality of life, maintaining safety, and increasing independence. Care which is regularly reviewed, to learn and develop new approaches. Supporting the physical, social, emotional and mental wellbeing of each child, young person and adult. As well, as supporting the wellbeing, resilience and positive culture within our care teams.

The therapeutic services teams consist of Kirsty Lucas-Smyth, our head of therapeutic services. Kirsty is a qualified CBT Psychotherapist, with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapy, Master of Science degree in Applied psychology and a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. Kirsty has over 10 years' experience within healthcare services, and over 5 years' experience of working within tier 4 services, supporting young people and adults with complex care needs and behaviours which challenge. Kirsty oversees the development and implementation of therapeutic services across My3 homes and houses. Including, supervising each clinician, engaging in assessment and multi-disciplinary care planning meetings, identifying and coordinating facilitation of appropriate interventions, and delivering reflective practise sessions. Kirsty is supervised by Consultant Psychiatrist Mahadev Jasti and CBT and EMDR accredited therapist Nonye Ibekwe. Additionally, our therapies team comprises of our consulting HCPC Occupational Therapist and Sensory Integration Practitioner, Caroline Pintar. Offering staff training, care team consultations, supporting assessments, development of support strategies, guidance regarding delivery of interventions and review of individual care needs. Moreover, our therapies assistant Mary Davidson, Mary is studying a Master of Science degree in Psychology and Child Development, has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology and has 3 years of experience as an SEN Level 3 teaching assistant, supports the delivery of therapeutic services across My3. Lastly, we have our PBS team comprising of our PBS coaches, and soon to add PBS practitioners. The PBS team support each care team to understand, and deliver PBS care plans as well as engagement in functional analysis, and assessment of behaviours to support continuous learning and adaptations to care plans.

### **Positive relationships**

At Willow we believe in supporting families and working in partnership with young people, their families, and significant others in their lives. We recognise that both the young person and families will have high anxiety during their transition into the home and will endeavour to work at a pace that both are comfortable with and work hard to develop positive relationships. Placing a child in a residential setting affects the whole family, so our staff support everyone through this process including ‘Talking to families, listening to families’ and ‘what families tell us’ segments within our staff induction programmes.

Where appropriate, Families will also be encouraged to join in with staff training to also develop their own awareness and skills to support their child. Therapy staff will provide bespoke training for families where appropriate to support understanding of their child’s condition and difficulties and promote positive relationship development.

The manager and staff team will be pro-active within the development and maintenance of relationships with families and will be available if families need to get in touch with us at any time. The manager and senior staff will ensure frequent calls to each family, regular up-dates by team leaders and other members of our staff team. We believe in the importance of sibling relationships and offer activity days, based at Willow and in the local area, to also encourage siblings to be part of Willow and to give them opportunity to meet, have fun and build friendships.

Willow will facilitate contact with the young people’s families and significant others which will always consider the best interests of everyone, any arrangements will include the input of the young person themselves and will be in line with their individual care and placement plan. All contacts are subject to local authority or parental agreements and risk assessments.

Appropriate friends, be it from the past or local acquaintances, can visit the home after being arranged through staff and management.

Decisions about overnight stays at friends and families are decided and agreed in conjunction with the placing authority, parent’s and individual’s placement plan. The home will establish and maintain communicative and positive links with friend’s parents/family and complete necessary environmental checks.

As well as visits by, and to, family and friends, we also encourage other means of contact such as telephone calls, emails and letters. Young people are entitled to phone immediate family whenever they wish, so long as it is at acceptable times of the day. They can also contact their Social Worker, advocate, leaving care workers and any other persons involved in their care and welfare during the week. The home will supply all stationery and stamps should a young person want to write to family or friends.

In addition, family members and significant others will be encouraged to participate in Care Planning and Review meetings, school parent’s evenings.

The home has an anti-bullying policy and pro-actively and positively challenges bullying supporting our young people to recognise the impact of their words and actions on other people both emotionally and physically and working within a restorative justice framework and encouraging mediation to develop therapeutic rapport.



The home has clear expectations for our young people in respect of positive behaviour and these are outlined within the children's guide and our behaviour management policy and procedures. The young people and staff team are encouraged to review our 'restorative forms' at regular intervals to enable a collective viewpoint when assessing effectiveness of behaviour management support. Team meetings and individual supervisions are utilised as a forum to explore 'good parenting' and 'positive relationship building' where staff's responses to the young people can be safely and constructively explored. The home has promoted a positive role modelling environment where staff and young people have relationships developed on mutual trust and respect.

## **Protection of children**

### **Behaviour management support**

The management team and staff at Willow firmly believe in the principles of positive care. Our aims and underlying philosophy focus upon what can be achieved and worked towards as opposed to limiting ourselves to restricting and controlling negative elements of behaviour. To achieve this, the staff within the home will always offer encouragement and praise for positive behaviour. We believe that behaviour is a means of communication and will endeavour to work with each child to ascertain what they are trying to communicate and give them alternative skills and tools to communicate more positively. Goals are identified with the young people and staff take an active interest in helping young people work towards their goals and in celebrating their successes. The individual planning processes and reward structures within the home are designed to reinforce this plan of positive care.

Similarly, when young people do make mistakes or 'get things wrong' the initial response is for staff to work constructively to overcome this. Young people are encouraged to learn from their mistakes, and staff assist the young people in identifying new strategies and coping mechanisms to reduce the likelihood of them reoccurring in the future. From time to time there is a consequence to negative behaviour. If there is scope to put right the mistake through a positive outcome of reparation or restitution this will always be sought instead. Consequences are never excessive or unreasonable and are appropriate to the young person's age and understanding. The effectiveness of all Consequences is reviewed by manager or deputy to ensure they have a positive impact on this learning experience.

Occasionally the young people in our care will present behaviours that inevitably mean that the staff team must physically intervene. The Behaviour Support Policy clearly outlines the circumstances in which this is permissible. Consents for the use of restraint for individual children will be established and gained as part of the referral and admission process.

Physical restraint can only occur to prevent likely injury to the child concerned or others, likely significant damage to property. Furthermore, of equal importance, physical restraint will only be used as a last resort. However, should the need arise the staff team are trained in behaviour management techniques designed to assist the child in regaining self-control and applied in a manner that is the least restrictive, proportionate to the situation and safe.

This training is regularly updated via refresher courses. The manager of the home will review all incidents of physical restraint and where the manager is involved, the homes responsible

individual will review. Debriefs with the staff and young people are conducted to identify possible triggers and possible alternative actions to avoid the need for future physical management. The staff team will use their own professional judgement, supported by the knowledge of the child's individual risk assessment and care plan needs, to determine level of immediate risk. The staff team will be aware, and mindful of any past experiences unique to each child, and the impact this could have on the individual's response to restraint by adults responsible for their care.

Following any restraint incident, the child will be given opportunity and encouraged to express their feelings about their experience of the restraint as soon as is practicable possible. Ideally this would be within 24 hours but we recognise that some children may need space and time to process their feelings and will give up to 5 days where needed before gaining the young person's views. The Home's Manager, in consultation with the Therapeutic Manager, will always review the appropriateness and effectiveness of any restraint incident.

The children and young people will have individual behaviour monitoring charts which will be completed by the manager. The manager will speak with each child following a major incident to gain their own personal experience, interpretation and perspective on behaviour and situations that may have occurred. The level of staff to Children and young people placed at Willow supports high levels of supervision and monitoring and enables early identification of issues, conflicts of behaviours and resulting interventions to help alleviate and hopefully combat any issues, conflicts, or behaviours.

### **Arrangements for safeguarding**

#### **Surveillance and monitoring**

Willow has an electronic surveillance system through bedroom door monitors and external doors. The alarms are used as a risk management strategy during sleeping hours; the system alerts staff that a external door has been opened. We ensure that all stakeholders consent to the use of this system prior to it being used and the process is detailed in the young person's placement plan. The home has a door alarm protocol in place and this strategy is regularly reviewed to ensure that unnecessary observation of children and young people does not occur. This is reviewed as part of a multi-disciplinary team under the supervision of the Registered Manager and the Therapeutic Manager.

The Registered manager, Deputy and staff team, work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that we are not working in isolation and the young people have the benefit of a multi-disciplinary working approach to enable high levels of safeguarding to be maintained. Willow house will endeavour to make that it has close links with the local police officers and the CSE team (Child Sexual Exploitation) and if any concerns arise then these professionals are consulted for necessary checks and guidance.

Willow House will encourage children and young people to take appropriate risks as part of normal development and growing up, and the staff team prepare the children and young people to keep themselves safe including inside and outside of the home.

Unchecked visitors, i.e. people who are legitimately on site but have not been subject to Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks, are always adequately supervised when on the home's

premises and the home has external contractors check sheets that outline the expected code of conduct that will apply during their time on site.

Children and Young people are offered opportunity to have an advocate and/or independent visitor from Children's Rights at regular intervals throughout their time at Willow.

High levels of staff supervision enable higher level of safeguarding and early identification and intervention of issues such as bullying, inappropriate behaviour and interactions.

High levels of monitoring and auditing of the service by the Registered Manager undertaken on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

## **BULLYING**

Willow recognises the need for each young person to be valued as an individual and recognises that all-young people arrive at the home from differing backgrounds. It is our primary aim that Willow promotes a friendly atmosphere with mutual respect.

Bullying is identified as the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else, putting them under stress. Bullying is aggression (physical, verbal or psychological), although not all aggression is necessarily bullying. Bullying can take place in a number of ways including race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and can take many forms including:

- Name calling
- Being physically hit
- Gestures
- Extortion
- Coercing the victim into acts they do not wish to do
- Exclusion from friendships or peer groups
- Stealing property
- Malicious gossip
- Watching and encouraging bullying behavior
- Cyber bullying

We attach value to every achievement, however modest, but recognise the efforts and care of each individual person within our community and home and believe that each young person has a right to happiness and a sense of security whilst living in the home.

It is with this ethos that the home and staff 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 residents that do the bullying are given suitable guidance.

Bullying becomes a safeguarding issue when it becomes persistent. At such a stage, a planning meeting would need to be held to look at the placement of the young person who is instigating the bullying.

We ask all young people on admission to sign an anti-bullying contract. We take bullying very seriously and it will not be tolerated in Willow. Children will be encouraged to develop their own anti-bullying pledges and have input into the homes annual review of the anti-bullying policy.

To try and combat barriers to disclosure of a bullying offence we allocate each young person a key worker, who can develop a relationship with the young person, in a manner and pace they are comfortable with, and the key worker role enables each young person to have confidence in the fact that their allocated key worker will advocate on their behalf, who will ensure that any issues raised about group living, incidences of bullying will be addressed immediately. We will use many forms of Alternative and Augmented communication to help young people express their feelings, such as feeling intimidated. The young people's behaviour development plans will address aspects of behaviour that may cause harm or distress to a peer.

Where possible and appropriate the home promotes a restorative approach to dealing with bullying behaviours. Topics around bullying will be regularly spoke about with the young people upon admission and throughout the placement to ensure young people understand the concept of bullying, its impact and the consequences on both sides. This will be discussed through key working sessions, weekly meetings and ad hoc sessions.

The challenging behaviour presented by some young people can sometimes be directed towards others and could be interpreted as 'bullying'. Learning difficulties and Autism often mean that children do not understand the concept of bullying. However, at Willow any form of behaviour that causes distress to others will be taken seriously, regardless of intent or reason. Any instance of such behaviour will be investigated and responded to, and outcomes monitored.

Staff receives annual training on bullying and therefore are continually updated with both non-verbal and verbal signs of bullying occurring and have training on how to discreetly intervene and provide early identification of potential bullying to then enable strategies to be implemented to prevent full instances of bullying occurring.

### **E-SAFETY**

E-safety is considered a priority across the home and there are clear and robust processes to follow allowing everyone to report issues with confidence and trust. The staff team will receive formal e-safety training each year and where possible families will be encouraged to join in with this training. The manager takes responsibility for e-safety and will ensure that policies and procedures that are in place are subject to robust monitoring and regular reviewing, alongside the staff team and young people. Any internet usage by the service is managed and monitored and the storage, use and transfer of personal data is adequately protected in accordance with data protection legislation. As a service, we reward positive and responsible technology usage and understand the vulnerabilities of the children and young people that we support and ensure we have appropriate resources and strategies to keep our children educated to protect themselves and build resilience.

### **MISSING FROM CARE AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

Willow has a detailed missing from care policy and procedure which works alongside those

policies of the local and placing authorities and the police. The decision on whether and when to inform the police and others will be based upon the written agreement made with the placing authority at the admissions stage which will in turn inform the completion of young person's 'Missing from care Protocol'.

The areas included within the protocol relate to:

- The risk of offending
- Any medical condition the young person might have
- The young person's mental state including issues relating to self-harm
- Previously assessed levels of vulnerability
- The young person's age and level of maturity
- Any concerns about physical or learning difficulties
- Previous patterns of behaviour including criminality, drug/alcohol misuse
- Known associates when missing
- Any risk a parent or carer might present – e.g., substance misuse, domestic violence, child protection issues, mental health problems.

Staff at Willow, work proactively with the young people at the home to talk through any anxieties and difficulties they may be experiencing, to help them find positive solutions. In part this is a strategy to reduce the risk of young people absenting themselves from the home by 'running away', thus making themselves even more vulnerable at a time when they are already anxious.

Nevertheless, due to circumstances beyond our control young people living at Willow may be missing from Care. This may be due to a late return, running away or other circumstances. In all cases we will work in accordance with the protocol for young people who go missing from care established by the local authority, working hand in hand with the joint protocol 2015 'Children and young people who run away and go missing from home or care'.

On admission to the home a full assessment of the child's current and future needs will be made, including potential risk to selves and others and their care plan will consider of any risks that the child may go missing in future and factors which may increase this risk and this information will also be placed in the child's placement plan

When a young person is missing a range of risk factors will be taken to determine their level of vulnerability and the exact course of action to follow. This will include the age of the child, time of day, the physical and mental health assessment of the child, previous history of being missing, the possible location of the child, and the specific circumstances in which the young person went missing. As a minimum, the staff team will be active in trying to locate the child. This will include a search of the premises and local area, checking known addresses and places frequented, contacting known family and friends and local hospitals and checking social networking sites However, if the risk is deemed greater or increases over time, the young person will be reported as missing to the police detailing the above. The police will be provided with a profile and picture of the young person.

Even following this reporting procedure, the staff team still maintain their duty to try and locate the young person, assisting the police, and following up their own sources of information.

On return from being missing the young person will be given a warm welcome back to the home. Staff will ensure that the young person is safe and comfortable, including warm drink and food if needed. Staff will also inform all relevant parties of the young person's return as soon as is practicable. The staff team will identify an appropriate time to talk to the young person about the missing episode to explore the underlying reasons and try to identify strategies to avoid the need to be missing in the future. Often this conversation will occur the next day. Additional to this someone independent from the home (e.g. Children's rights worker) will be expected to visit the child within 72 hours of the child's return and after which a back to home interview report completed which where applicable will be securely e-mail to the divisional MFH co-ordinator and Local Authority Lead.

The parents and placing authority are informed of the incident, a meeting is convened to discuss and review the risk assessment. The procedures would be the same if a young person went missing from the group/staff whilst on an off -site activity.

### **Leadership and management**

#### **The Registered Provider is: MY3 LTD**

Address; - 300 ST Mary's Road, Liverpool

Telephone: N/a

#### **The Responsible Individual is: Shelly Daly**

Telephone: 07515347477

#### **The Registered Manager is: Sara Jane Osborne**

Telephone: 07496818005

### **Staffing policy.**

In the Manager's absence, the Deputy Manager or Team leaders will deputise for her.

Team Leaders will oversee Willow at times when the management are not available. At Willow House we have a good staffing ratio of a mixture of male & female staff members on shift.

The Manager and Team leaders are responsible to ensure rotas are made up and that there is adequate staffing on duty always.

Should problems arise due to the likes of sickness, then it is the responsibility of the team leader on duty to fill this gap with alternative staff. In the first instance the homes bank staff members will be contacted. If this is not possible, then staff in the home would look to cover this with overtime, to ensure that the young people are always supported by staff that are familiar to themselves and have full knowledge, understanding, and working experience of everyone supported at Willow House.

Dependent on the present client group in residence, the staffing levels may have to be increased or decreased and it will be the responsibility of the senior member of staff on duty to decide if an increase is necessary and to implement this.

In emergencies, there will be a on-call rota on display in the office with numbers to contact so the staff team can gain extra support and guidance where required.

Willow is committed to providing a high quality and flexible staff team to deliver a level of care to fulfil our objectives. Our future staffing strategy will be to maintain a healthy team of residential support worker's whilst identifying new potential to further enhance the staff team.

The Manager of Willow works on site at the home and arranges her working time to maintain a thorough overview of the routines and structure of the home. This includes regular interaction with the young people and the staff team to ensure that their ideas, issues, and concerns are listened to and reflected upon. Leading through process of observation and self-engagement.

The manager ensures a thorough monitoring system is in place, to include checking of finance, use of house mobile, individual young people's logs, and behaviour management daily and random spot checks by manager on varying shifts.

We encourage and involve young people in the staff interview process and value their input and perspective. The young people are given opportunity to ask prospective employees questions that they feel important. Feedback from young people is then gained following interview. Potential staff may also be invited to a site visit to have tea with the young people.

The exact numbers of staff will always be needs led, and dependent upon the individual care plans of the young people currently accommodated within the home. Nevertheless, Willow will always ensure that the number of staff on duty reflects the demands of the service at that time, and as such will ensuring adequate staffing levels to cover appointments and leisure activities. Similarly, the night-time shifts will be covered and led by the needs of the young people which may include a mixture of sleep-ins and waking nights where needed.

There is a clear and thorough process for the recruitment and selection of staff. This includes an exhaustive vetting process including taking up references, previous employments check, and a fully enhanced DBS check. No member of staff will commence work at Willow until this vetting process has been completed, following government guidance within safer recruitment. All appointments will be made following an application and interview process, to ensure that potential employees have the qualities and personal characteristics that residential childcare demands.

The young people's views and responses will be considered when staff receives their annual appraisal and monthly supervisions.

Should agency staff or volunteers be deemed necessary as part of a shift then they too will undergo a similar vetting process including an induction prior to their first shift; however, agency staff will only be utilised as a last resort.

Please see Appendix 1 for the current staff team's background.

### **Supervision, training, and development:**

All staff receives regular supervision and all new staff members will undergo an in-house induction programme. Each member of staff has their own Personal Development Plan which

is visited at regular intervals and areas identified for further training and development to enhance their skills, knowledge, and practice. Further support to the staff team is offered via informal supervision and team meetings. Staff and management will meet with Therapist at regular intervals to review and discuss each child's development and this will extend into group reflection

Each month the Team leaders will have a formal meeting with the manager and discussions and decisions from these meetings recorded, with relevant issues, information and decisions being passed down throughout the staff team.

Therapy staff will receive regular clinical supervision, in addition to organisational supervision, from a professional who is experienced and has skills in the same field of expertise at the individual therapist. They will also be required to maintain an up-to-date Personal Development Plan (PDP) file evidencing their ongoing training and development. Each member of staff receives an annual appraisal to identify their progress, development needs and goals for the forthcoming year. This will be based around a self-assessment reflective tool.

We recognise that the role staff undertake can often be stressful and as a caring service we recognise our responsibilities and take on board that staff may at times be involved in the management of stressful situations, we ensure that staff have alongside regular supervision an adhoc and debrief system in relation to managing their emotions and stresses. Staff can receive support over the phone and can have face to face counselling and CBT sessions if required as MY3 LTD have access to these services.

The Manager and team leaders will complete staff supervisions during probation periods and throughout employment as follows: - fortnightly supervision including 1<sup>st</sup> probation at 8 weeks then monthly until 2<sup>nd</sup> probation at 16week and 24 week probation reviews, for the 6-month probation period, then one supervision per month, additional supervisions can be requested by either supervisor or supervisee. Supervisions are clearly agreed in the supervision contract.

The Manager has professional supervision from the home responsible individual.

All staff will undertake mandatory training during their induction at Willow House, these will include:

MY3 require all new starters to undertake the residential childcare diploma level 4 in line with the children's home's regulations, this must be completed within two years of starting employment.

See the Willow House training matrix for further information on the training provided by my3 limited and homes specific training to Willow House.

The home also provides additional specialist training, that staff will undertake during their employment in line with the needs of the young people. These generally include, but is not exhaustive to :-

It is an expectation of Willow House that all Mandatory training offered requires attendance, and all staff must complete further training in line with the needs of the service, this forms part of each employment contract.



Further to this staff, are encouraged to 'specialise' in areas of interest or service delivery need and staff can approach management with courses they may like to complete and would benefit the young people that we support.

We have a range of resources available to enable staff to pursue their research interests and encourage them to disseminate the outcomes of their work, including staff library containing literature and journals, research discussion forums, research and practice briefing sheets, both internal and external professional development courses.

Through the process of regulation 45 the manager ensures thorough and rigorous monitoring of the home to include how the quality of care that is being given impacts on the outcomes for everyone and the home as a group. The manager will be responsible for proactively implementing lessons learnt and sustaining good practice.

We employ an independent visitor who undertakes monthly visits to Willow under regulation 44 of the Children's homes regulations 2015.

The home has a training manager to support staff to undertake mandatory training and where applicable external courses and professionals are sought, for example, safeguarding, sexual health, First Aid, CSE, drug and alcohol training, e-safety, health, and nutrition.

Families are also encouraged to attend training days with our staff team so the home and family can work consistently and confidently with each individual young person.

### **Care planning**

On initial contact with Willow, we would, as a matter of routine, need to ascertain the background of an individual, i.e. their previous experiences and circumstances, and their immediate needs. The manager will be happy to receive all enquiries regarding placements. After initial contact with us, we would ask for the Social Worker, the young person, and the young person's family, if appropriate, to visit the home to assess our facilities and environment in terms of suitability for a placement. Alternatively, we are prepared to visit them. We feel that this initial meeting is very important for all concerned.

Admission to Willow is based on the home being able to meet the needs contained within a child's Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN). We will need to also assess how we would meet any additional needs which may not be explicit in their SEN, to ensure that a child's social, health and welfare needs can all be met appropriately. We will gather information as possible from sources such as the Core or single assessment documents, Annual reports from their current educational provision, medical reports, risk assessments, and any health and care plans that are already in place. This will also include our screening tools and self-assessment forms

Willow will only take emergency placements in exceptional circumstances.

An impact risk assessment would be completed prior which would also help inform us if the placement would be suitable for the home and existing group of children but also for the child requiring a placement.

In planned circumstances a young person will not be placed at Willow until a face-to-face introductory meeting has been held however in emergencies this will not always be possible.

We will challenge any placing authority which asks us to accept a child in the absence of a complete and current relevant plan and unless in specific emergency situations, the placement request would not be accepted.

Once the admission date has been agreed, there will be a Placement Planning Meeting within 7 days or if the placement is an emergency placement then a planning meeting must be held within 72 hours. The first review will take place within 20 working days and subsequent reviews will be 3 monthly and 6 monthly, as each individual care plan dictates.

Whilst it might be difficult for a young person's family to care for them now, we place great importance on the involvement of family members, as well as the individual, in choosing Willow as an appropriate setting for future care.

We welcome young people from all ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds and fully recognise an individual's right to exercise and maintain their beliefs.

We recognise that there are several significant transitions for children during childhood and as good parents we support the promotion of preparing a child for these in a manner that will support the child to manage the transitions to reach their full potential and this extends to admission and transition. To this the home will do whatever is needed to support a transition that is conducive to each child's own preferences and needs.

During the admission process permission, will be sought for the person conducting our independent regulation 44 visits to access relevant parts of the children's records, as agreed with the child.

Prior to arrival at Willow each young person will receive a Young Person's Welcome Pack/children's Guide. This outlines the running of the home and our expectations and boundaries but also what the child can expect from us.

On admission to Willow all efforts are made to assist the young person to settle in and to make them feel 'at home'. House routines, such as mealtimes, fire and Health and Safety procedures, finances are explained to them and any questions that they may have can be answered.

A key worker will be assigned after the young person has had opportunity to settle in and build relationships with the staff team, after which they will be able to choose their own key worker. Young people may wish to nominate their own individual adult for meeting times, though the key worker will remain the same. When availability permits, a second key worker may be identified.

We aim to make the admission process as informal as possible and therefore we require all relevant information and documentation prior to admission. A list of our requirements would be included with the information pack to the Social Worker. All personal belongings will be recorded and safeguarded if requested.

A full assessment is undertaken during the first three months of all new placements. A formal review is held after one month, and again at the end of the three-month assessment period.

Review meetings continue a six -monthly basis, in which a child's placement plan and progress is monitored.

The child's EHCP and placement plan will be regularly reviewed and, depending on the placement arrangements, this may be led by Willow, Local Authority independent reviewing officers (IRO) or social workers. It is at this meeting that any amendments to their EHCP/SSEN can be recommended. The child, their family and any departments involved with the child can contribute to this review through reports and/or attendance.

Throughout the young person's time at Willow, support will be given to develop life skills and independent living skills thorough both informal (role modelling, discussions) and formal processes. The home aims to ensure all our young people are prepared and confident ready for their transition out of the home. Each child will be supported to complete a journey file of their time at Willow as well as a life story book to reflect on their life. The young people can access our in-house independence programmes which will be specific to each child's level of understanding and competency levels. We will work hand in hand with the LA pathway plan and the planning process for this will include a meaningful contribution from the young person as well as the assessments of need by those professionals who are responsible for providing the young person with care and support. Each child's individual LA pathway plan will triangulate into their care plan/transition plan and planning processes within the home, and the home will challenge the LA if a child has not started their LA pathway planning by age 16 years. We will question and challenge if a child has not been allocated and met their personal advisor prior to the pathway planning process starting.

We accept that young people with ASC go through phases of behaviour and we will strive to support them effectively during this difficult time. In the unusual event that a young person's behaviour poses to much risk to peers or staff then we will endeavour to support the placement for if possible whilst a range of behavioural strategies and interventions can be fully explored.

### **FIRE/HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Willow pays full regard to fire precautions and other emergency procedures. Smoke detectors are placed at strategic points throughout the home, and we have service contracts with companies who check our emergency lighting and fire-fighting equipment.

The procedure in the event of a fire is as detailed below and is included in the Welcome Booklet issued to young people on admission. Each young person's key worker will explain the routine with him or her on admission to the home. Young people are encouraged to be aware of potential fire hazards and are requested to switch off all electrical appliances before retiring with specific risk assessment around this.

### **IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE:**

LEAVE BY THE NEAREST AVAILABLE EXIT

CLOSE THE DOOR OF THE ROOM WHEN LEAVING

ALERT OTHER PEOPLE

## ASSEMBLE IN THE FRONT GARDEN NEAR THE GATES

### DO NOT RE-ENTER THE BUILDING UNTIL INSTRUCTED

The fire equipment and sensors will be visually checked every week.

A Fire Drill is performed once every month; however, this may be subject to alteration dependent on the sensory sensitivities of current groups. This ensures that all young people and staff are reminded of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire. This will occur at different times, and on occasion, at night-time. Visitors to the home will be informed of our fire procedures.

All the above tests are recorded within the Fire Log folder, located within the staff office. This folder also contains records of the mandatory checks carried out by external agencies on our emergency lighting and fire -fighting equipment.

All young people will have individual PEEP if required to ascertain potential issues and risk during an evacuation of the building. This will enable contingency plans to be implemented to hopefully support young people to safely evacuate

In addition to fire precautions Willow undertakes many other measures to ensure that our young people are cared for in a safe environment. A comprehensive risk assessment process identifies and reduces hazards in all rooms within the home. Each year all electrical equipment is PAT tested to ensure they are safe to use, and the boiler and gas equipment is similarly checked. COSHH guidelines are followed in the storage and use of any cleaning and chemical equipment, and the water temperature is regulated to avoid scalding with staff completing daily water temperature checks. Staff are trained in food hygiene to ensure that they observe the highest of standards in the storage and preparation of food and ensure meat is temperature checked before serving.

The service vehicles are subject to thorough weekly checks and before each journey a basic check on water, oil is undertaken to also include checking for any damage internal or external to the car which may impact on safety.

In the event of any accident in the home, whether it happens to a young person, staff member or visitor, a record is made detailing the circumstances. A review of existing procedures and safety measure follow this to establish if any changes are necessary to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence. All staff receives training in first aid. In addition to this all medicines are stored securely with a clear procedure for dispensing and recording.

Those young people that have been risk assessed and are safely competent to administer their own medications will have suitable lockable cabinet for self-administration. The manager will complete weekly monitoring checks of their medications.

Our health and safety officer ensure that all aspects of health and safety are overseen throughout the month via a Weekly health and safety audit.

## **Appendix 1**



The current staff team comprises of: Can be shared to the Local Authority as per the admission process