

*Building Bridges Care Homes Ltd*

*Austen House*



*Statement of Purpose*

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## **1. Location**

Austen House is located in the Newton le Willows area in the borough of St Helens, and easily accessed via the A580 and the M6 motorway. There are two train stations in the area, one of which is close to the Home, along with a bus station situated within a few minutes' walk from Austen House.

There are two secondary schools in the locality, two primary schools and a further education college within walking distance. There is also a local leisure centre nearby, providing young people with a wide range of activities.

The Home is detached and adjacent to other residential properties. The property is similar in nature to other properties within the area and is not distinguishable as a residential children's home. There are gardens to the front and rear of the property.

## **2. Local Area Assessment and Child Sexual Exploitation**

In relation to child sexual exploitation, there is no current evidence of any instances of organised or gang exploitation and there are no current hot spots identified across the Borough

### **Levels of crime**

Austen House is located within a short walking distance from Earlestown village centre and six miles from St Helens town centre. They are typical of many small towns with bars and public houses in their centre. It is understood that incidents of anti-social behaviour are in the main associated with these bars and late night drinking. However, crime statistics evidence that levels of crime are lower than the national average and the Home has developed good relationships with both the local police service and their local ward councillor.

## **3. Admission Criteria**

- Austen House will provide placements for five young people of mixed genders between the ages of 11-17
- Placements will be short, medium and long term
- Young people who need a resettlement plan of care undertaken for either rehabilitation with families or preparation for foster placement
- Young people whose behaviour in their current setting is unmanageable
- Young people who have suffered abuse and significant neglect, which has impacted on their ability to form significant relationships and secure attachments
- Young people with behavioural difficulties including physical violence and persistent angry outbursts
- Young people who are resistant to adult authority and boundary setting
- Young people who may benefit from a placement with us may have experienced numerous placement moves and be presenting with chaotic behaviour patterns and distress

#### **4. At referral**

Gain maximum information from social worker to inform our assessment of whether we can meet the needs of the young person against our Statement of Purpose and Function and other young people so we can risk assess factors such as gangs, violence and aggression, the nature of anti-social behaviours, social work concerns, apparent reasons for placement breakdowns and so on, not pre-judging or labelling, as well as keeping other young people safe. The Registered Manager makes the admission decision and needs as much information as possible to do this safely; usually we should have a care plan and Part 1 of Placement Plan (or equivalent). We would assess the impact of the admission against the needs of the current residents and identify strategies to manage possible difficulties.

Initial discussion with the Registered Manager detailing the following:

- Young person's history, previous placements, family relationships
- Purpose of placement
- Current functioning - psychological, emotional, social and intellectual
- History of aggression or violence, verbal, physical, sexual
- Education - current and history
- Details of any offending behaviour
- Health Issues including sexual health
- Risk Assessment

A decision will then be made as to whether a placement will be considered.

Young person will be invited for a visit, introduced to the resident young people and staff on duty and given information about the home.

If all parties consider that a placement may be appropriate then an admission meeting will be arranged. The following information will be required prior to the admission meeting in order to make an accurate assessment.

Documentation required:

- Assessment Framework – Core Assessment
- Any reports prepared by Mental Health Services
- PEP Plan
- Risk Assessment

At the Admission meeting mutual expectations will be discussed including:

- Purpose and length of placement
- Family relationships and contact details
- Educational opportunities

#### **5. Admission Process**

At Austen House we believe that all young people have the capacity to change and move forward. However we also recognise that we will not be able to meet the needs of every young person who is referred.

Inappropriate placements resulting in frequent moves perpetuate the belief that young people are worthless and that rejection is inevitable. It is important therefore that we are given as much information as possible in order to make an accurate assessment as to whether a placement will be appropriate.

In order to make the decision as to whether a placement will be made the Assessment Process will proceed as follows:

## 6. Emergency Admission Process

Emergency placements will be considered, however any young person placed within these circumstances will only be offered a time limited placement. The following factors will be considered.

- Impact on the current resident group and dynamics.
- Young person's presenting issues
- Young person's views and feelings about the placement.

The emergency procedure for admitting young people is as follows:

- Discussion with the Registered Manager or Deputy Manager detailing the following
- Immediate presenting problems
- Young person's history, previous placements, family relationships
- Current functioning psychological, emotional, social and intellectual
- History of aggression, violence, verbal, physical, sexual abuse
- Education - current and history
- Details of offending behaviour
- Health Issues including sexual health

A decision will then be made as to whether a placement will be made.

If the young person is to be offered a time limited placement, the following documentation is required.

- LAC documentation /Essential 1 and Placement Plan 1
- Risk Assessment – if available
- Initial Core Assessment (Assessment Framework)

A placement planning meeting will then be called within 72 hours to enable further information to be gathered.

At the placement planning meeting a decision will be made as to whether the placement will be extended beyond the seven days.

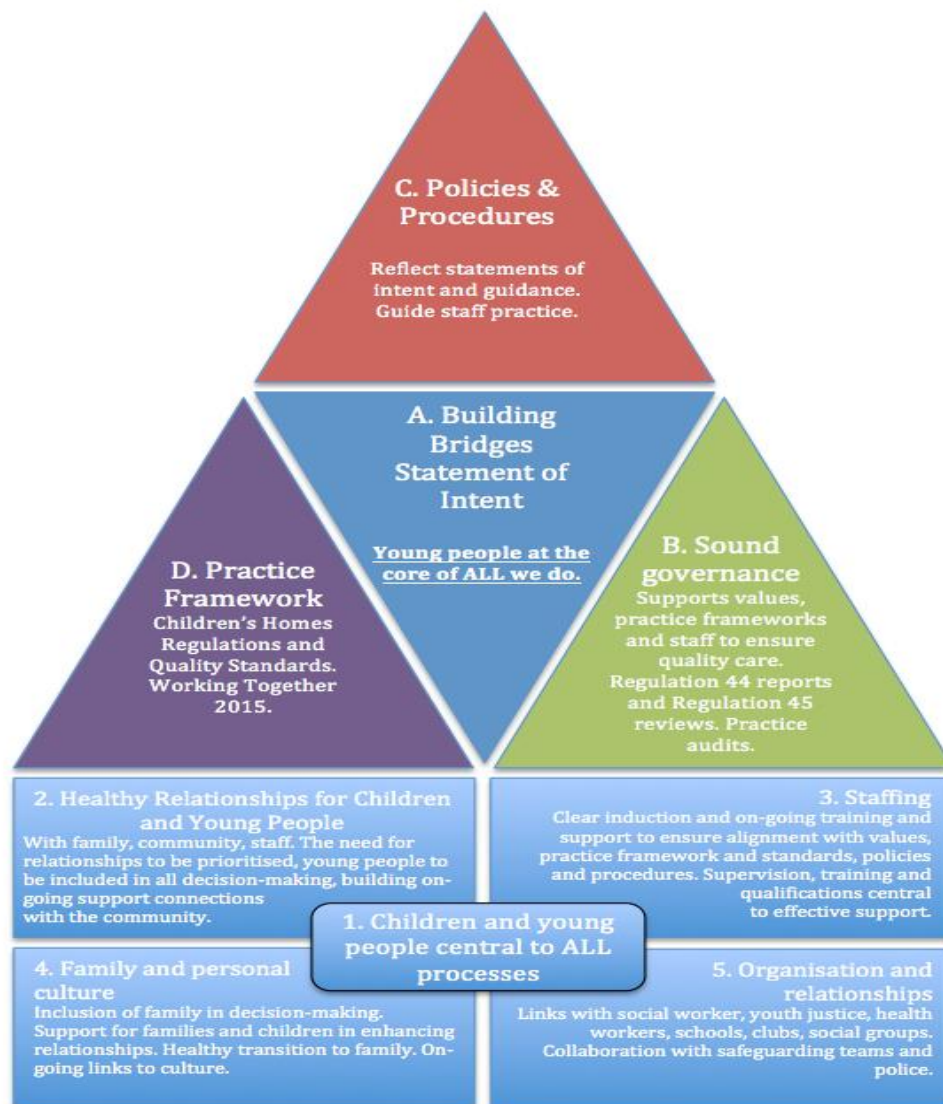
A four week placement whereby an assessment will take place may be offered. This will largely depend on the circumstances of the individual young person and the possible impact on the current resident group.

If an emergency placement extends beyond the initial seven day period the following LAC documentation will be required:

- Essential Information 2
- Placement Plan 2
- Care Plan – within two weeks of initial placement

A placement planning meeting will be held within 7 days of placement

## 7. Our Service Model



Underpinning the work of the Home are our Service Model's values, policies and procedures, safe governance and most importantly the centrality of young people all focussed on relationships, partnership, family and staff, as well as the young person. This supports the staff team to be resilient, build relationships, and effectively manage challenging and chaotic behaviour, whilst providing a safe and nurturing environment.

## **8. Aims and Objectives**

Looked After young people represent the most disadvantaged, marginalised and alienated young people within our society. Affecting positive change, growth and development within this population requires a significant amount of time, energy commitment and determination on behalf of all parties involved in the welfare of the child.

An underpinning ethos of the home is one of positive re-enforcement achieved by working with young people to ensure the identification and achievement of realistic goals based on their individual needs and honouring and respecting their rights.

This organisation will:

- Keep placement disruption to a minimum
- Understand young people's behaviour and coping strategies within the context of their life experiences
- To enable young people to recognise, acknowledge and communicate thoughts and feelings
- Provide a safe and structured environment in which young people are encouraged to develop a positive outlook on life and a belief that difficulties can be overcome and challenged
- Encourage young people within our care to have high aspirations, resilience and a strong sense of self-belief.
- Prepare young people for the transition to adulthood
- Ensure that staff will be developed to optimise their potential to develop specialist skills and knowledge in order to support them in meeting the complex needs of young people in residential care. This will be achieved through robust supervision, training and development processes
- We will create an environment for young people and employees which values diversity in terms of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, religious and cultural expression
- Recognise the emotional impact of residential child care on employees within the organisation and provide them with a high degree of supervisory support and development. This will include monthly team consultations

- Specialist support for individuals will be purchased when required
- The service will provide Residential Child Care Officers opportunities to acquire specialist skills, knowledge and training which supports them in the residential task

## **9. The organisation will achieve its aims and objectives by:**

Significant investment in terms of training will be made in developing a workforce who is highly skilled in the core areas needed to manage this specific service user group. These will include anger management, de-escalation skills, problem solving and solution focused approaches.

Understanding that the environment generates expectations in behaviour and that disorganised environments can escalate or stimulate crises. Ensuring that the physical environment is well managed, that it is safe and conducive to self-discipline and nurturing.

Ensuring that the child's physical needs are catered for. This will include food that is nutritious and healthy. That clothing is purchased which is appropriate and does not separate them from their peer group within the community and access to health services and recreational opportunities.

Providing young people with daily positive encouragement and support. Identifying those areas with them that are presenting young people with particular difficulties.

Ensuring that young people's emotional needs are met and that workers are able to appropriately express to young people that they are valued and cared for.

Praising and encouraging young people and recognising these as opportunities to develop their self-worth. Valuing the small steps forward.

Providing pre-planning crisis management by understanding a young person's normal functioning state, typical problem solving behaviour and responses to frustration and anger.

Providing an environment which facilitates and enables young people to take age appropriate risks.

Involving young people in the decision making process within the home, valuing their views and opinions. Providing young people with constructive opportunities to have control over their lives, including choice, managing finances etc.

Providing young people, within the structure of their day-to-day lives and interactions, opportunities to reprocess more constructive, effective coping strategies.

We will also provide an environment where young people are clear that the adults around them are confident in their ability to manage them when they are feeling out of control.

We will support and encourage young people to engage in similar social activities and leisure pursuits enjoyed by their peers.

Preparation for leaving care occurs throughout a young person's placement. Young people will be given opportunities to develop skills which will aid them in this process, that is, purchasing and preparing own food, when this is considered appropriate.



## **10. Outcomes for young people**

It is our intended aim that we will provide an effective, quality assured service with clear aims objectives and expected outcomes. Placements will not be used to merely contain young people. All placements will be reviewed at three month intervals against the following outcome indicators:

### **Health and Well-being Standard**

- Children are able to make appropriate attachments, develop resilience and experience emotional wellbeing through a sense of belonging and relationships with a consistent team of carers who care for them
- Each child has at least one significant adult whom they trust to communicate with
- Children have optimum mental health and emotional wellbeing through feeling valued and having good self-esteem and are equipped to cope with life's challenges
- Those children with an identified assessed need, access agreed mental health specialist services
- Children value the importance of their health and well being
- Children establish/sustain and develop optimum physical health
- Children access appropriate advice, support and where appropriate treatment with regards to their emotional wellbeing, physical and mental health
- Children know how to stay healthy through good diet and regular exercise
- Children are engaged in preparing healthy meals in the home, and children learn meal preparation skills for independence

### **The Protection of Children Standard**

- Children are safeguarded from bullying
- Children are treated fairly, and as an individual taking full account of their abilities, special needs, disability, age religion, racial origin, sexual orientation, culture and language
- Children have safe access to the internet and safe use of mobile phones
- Children feel secure and have stability
- Children are ready for transition to adulthood/next placement

### **The Enjoy and achieve Standard**

- Children attend, and are supported in full-time education
- Children are achieving their identified educational/learning targets

- Children develop personally and socially
- Children are happy and have pride in their achievements

### **The positive Relationship Standard**

- Children have increased independence, self-reliance and resilience
- Children know what their placement plan is, and are actively involved in their care planning
- Children have age appropriate social life and independent living skills
- Have an understanding of their rights and responsibilities
- Children have pride in their environment
- Children benefit from being with others and feel a sense of wider inclusion
- Children are encouraged and supported to pursue positive leisure pursuits
- Children make a positive contribution to their community
- Children are equipped to successfully deal with significant changes
- Children are not offending, or there has been a reduction in their offending behaviour
- Resources are made available that support constructive and meaningful activity to engage children and prevent their involvement in anti/social or offending behaviour
- Children are encouraged and supported to be involved in the management and development of the Home

### **The education Standard**

- Children feel positive about their future, and have ambition and aspirations
- Children take up post school training/employment opportunities
- Children can manage their finances safely and responsibly
- Children are encouraged and supported in maximising learning/training opportunities

## **11. Statement of Philosophy**

At Austen House the central focus of our philosophy is that the welfare of the child is paramount and should be the basis of our decision making.

The organisational culture and approach will focus on the following:

- Helping young people achieve their full potential emotionally, socially and physically
- Providing young people with practical skills such as problem solving, anger management and conflict resolution to assist them in managing their own behaviour
- Facilitating positive change within young people
- Providing a care environment which doesn't label and stigmatise young people because of the behaviours they display nor any past behaviours
- The care environment will be a learning environment for children and for adults
- The structure of the placement will be designed to meet the individual needs of the young person. Interventions used will therefore need to be adaptive to suit individual needs

Attachment theory will be primary to all the work we undertake with the young people in our care.

## **12. Registered Provider**

**Director – Susan Foster**

Building Bridges Care Homes Ltd

## **13. Responsible Person – Peter Barron**

Peter Barron is a qualified social worker and experienced Assistant Director in both NHS joint commissioning and local authority care provision and has worked in Liverpool, Halton, St Helens and Warrington. Peter also has considerable experience at a senior level within the residential child care sector and was the Principal Officer for Nugent Care.

Peter's qualifications include

BA (Hons)  
MA  
MSc  
PG Dip SW

## **14. Management Team and Staff Team**

The staff team at Austen House all share a strong value base in valuing and respecting young people. We have extremely high standards and aim to exceed the standards laid down by Ofsted.

### **Director and Registered Manager (Wordsworth House)**

**Donna Tagoe**

Donna has extensive experience from within the statutory sector including Liverpool Social Services and Knowsley Social Services. She has managed emergency, long term and pre-independence units and is a committed and dedicated professional who believes in the

positive contribution residential childcare can make to young people's lives. Donna has continuously developed her Knowledge base and has completed post qualifying training including the Child Care Award.

### **Qualifications**

BA (Hons) History and Politics

BA Health and Social Welfare

Diploma in Social Work

Post Qualifying Award part 1

Child Care Award

### **Manager Sarah Stead**

Sarah has a wide range of experience working in the care industry. Her previous work history is predominantly in the adult social care sector ranging from working with elderly care, adults with learning difficulties and mental health issues both in a community setting and forensic secure hospital. Sarah was employed at senior support worker level in her previous role in supported living.

Sarah joined the organisation in 2006, and is our longest serving staff member, and is qualified at NVQ level 3.

She was promoted to deputy Manager in 2012 and is currently in the process of completing Level 5 Diploma in leadership and management- children and young people.

Sarah has experienced a variety of training and development opportunities as follows: Team teach, food hygiene, first aid, safeguarding, child development and attachment, CSE, supervision, recruitment and selection, appraisals, leadership to management, leading a team, equality and diversity, decision making, mental health awareness, administration of medication, behaviour management, communication. Level 5 safe guarding.

### **Deputy Manager Debbie Callan**

Debbie joined the organisation in 2010. Prior to joining the organisation, she worked as a teaching assistant with S.E.N. children in both primary and secondary educational settings.

Debbie has experience of working with EDB CYP in an inclusion unit in a mainstream setting, supporting young people individually and as a group.

Debbie is qualified at level 2 in counselling skills.

She has continued to develop her skills and knowledge within the organisation and was promoted to senior RCCO in 2012 and then again recently promoted to Assistant Manager in January 2016.

Debbie's qualifications are: Diploma in Childcare and Education Level 3, also a Diploma in Social Care and Young People Level 3, Management and Leadership level 3, mentoring level 3. Debbie has recently enrolled on the Level 5 Diploma in CYP leadership and Management.

### **Senior R.C.C.O`**

#### **Tina Millington**

Tina's has a variety of work experience ranging from industrial work, bar work through to residential care. She brings to the Organisation over 10 years EDB residential child care

experience. Tina has a wide range of skills and experience of direct work with children and young people; she has worked in semi independence homes and in EDB educational provisions as a class room assistant. Tina joined the organisation in 2008 she has experienced continued training and development opportunities and was promoted to Senior RCCO in 2013.

Tina holds the following professional qualifications:

NVQ Level 3 Children and Young People, NVQ level 2 as a teaching assistant.

Tina has completed the following training opportunities:

Team Teach, food hygiene, first aid, safeguarding, child development and attachment, CSE, equality and diversity, decision making, mental health awareness, administration of medication, behaviour management, communication, Health and Safety Level 2, domestic violence, fire safety, sexual health, healthy eating, self-harm, ADHD, learning difficulties, Complaints, substance misuse, drug and alcohol awareness, transgender, supporting gay and lesbian young people, HIV/Aids awareness including a wide range of in house development days covering company policies and procedures.

## **R.C.C. O's**

### **Brian O'Hare**

Brian has recently joined the team at Austen House. He joins the team with over 15 years' experience and knowledge in the care sector and has worked in a wide range of services for Children and young people, these include residential settings, secure settings, mental health, working with young people who have learning difficulties and working crisis/ activ8 centres, Brian has also worked as a secure escort, transporting young offenders to and from secure settings.

Brian is currently working towards achieving his level 3 diploma in CYP.

Prior to Brian moving to the UK he resided in both Ireland and America. Whilst living in America Brian was employed at a fire fighter.

Brian enjoys sports and martial arts.

Brian is currently completing his induction with the organisation and will be participating in all mandatory training.

### **Sean Hewson**

Sean joined the team at Austen House in December 2015 and has previously worked in a retirement home and worked for three years with children and young people who had autism. Sean is qualified to NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care and will soon be undertaking his NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.

Sean is currently completing his in house induction training and has completed training in health and safety, safe guarding and food hygiene, including a wide range of in house development days covering company policies and procedures.

Prior to entering social care, Sean worked as a painter and decorator.

Sean enjoys sports and attending the gym.

### **Hayley Venables**

Hayley has over 10 years' experience in Residential child care. She has worked in residential home's and a secure setting for young females. Hayley has a vast amount knowledge and experience in the care sector.

Hayley has been employed with Building Bridges since 2013.

Hayley has a degree in social studies and youth work she is also qualified at Diploma level 3 in Children and young people, along with team leading at level3 and Counselling skills at level 2.

Hayley has completed her induction with the organisation along with the following training opportunities:

Team teach, food hygiene, first aid, safeguarding, child development and attachment, CSE, , equality and diversity, decision making, mental health awareness, administration of medication, behaviour management, communication, health and safety level 2, counselling skills level 2, Foetal alcohol syndrome, domestic violence, fire safety, sexual health, healthy eating, self-harm, ADHD, learning difficulties, complaints substance misuse, drug and alcohol awareness, transgender, supporting gay and lesbian young people, HIV/Aids awareness, record writing skills, including a wide range of in house development days covering company policies and procedures

### **Michael Duckworth**

Mike has recently joined the team at Austen House, he brings with him over 7 years' experience of working with children and young people, both as a residential support worker and as a youth worker. He has gained a range of experience working in secure setting, EBD residential homes, and a mental health provision.

Mike is currently completing the Diploma level 3 in Children and Young people.

Mike is currently completing his in house induction training and has completed training in health and safety, safe guarding and food hygiene, including a wide range of in house development days covering company policies and procedures.

### **Ian Marsh**

Ian has experienced employment ranging from working on a meat counter to owning his own butchers prior to his employment as a residential child care worker.

Ian joined the organisation in 2011 and brings with him over 10 years of experience and knowledge with the care sector. Ian has experience of working with adult mental health, care of elderly, learning difficulties, EBD residential homes.

Ian has experience at both residential RCCO level and managerial level, he was previously employed as a registered manager for a provision specially for children and young people with learning difficulties.

Ian is qualified in NVQ level 3 CYP and NVQ 4 Leadership and Management. He has extensive knowledge of working in residential settings across the private sector.

Ian has completed the following training opportunities:

Team teach, food hygiene, first aid, safeguarding, child development and attachment, CSE, , equality and diversity, decision making, mental health awareness, administration of medication, behaviour management, communication, health and safety level 2, domestic violence, fire safety, sexual health, healthy eating, self-harm, ADHD, learning difficulties, complaints substance misuse, drug and alcohol awareness, transgender, supporting gay and lesbian young people, HIV/Aids awareness, record writing skills, including a wide range of in house development days covering company policies and procedures

### **Lillian Fazenfield**

Lillian is the organisation's part time/ bank worker; she works within both homes across the organisation.

Lillian joined the Organisation in 2014. She has a wide range of experience working with children and young people. She brings to the organisation over 10 years of experience working in residential homes caring for young people with EBD. During her employment in the care sector Lillian has gained a wide range of skills and experience of direct work with Children and young people who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Lillian holds the following professional qualifications:

NVQ Level 3 CYP

NVQ Level 4 CYP management and leadership.

Lillian has completed the following training opportunities:

Team Teach, Food Hygiene, First Aid, Safeguarding, Child Development and Attachment, CSE,

Equality and Diversity, Decision Making, Mental Health Awareness, Administration of Medication, Behaviour Management, Communication, Health and Safety level 2, Domestic

Violence, Fire Safety, Sexual Health, Healthy Eating, Self-Harm, ADHD, Learning Difficulties,

Complaints, Substance Misuse, Drug and Alcohol Awareness.

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## **15. Staff Supervision**

At Austen House staff will receive formal planned supervision in line with the Children's Home Regulations 2001 and Company Policy and Procedure. Supervision will be viewed as central to the development of positive residential practice.

Staff will be formally supervised every four to six weeks. The record will detail the time, date and length of the meeting. Supervision records will be signed off by both parties.

Staff will also receive supervision on an informal basis, which will be responsive to specific situations and events.

Supervision will be viewed within the context of personal development and will require employees to take a degree of responsibility in setting objectives for themselves. It will also be an opportunity to reflect and review their practice.

In order for supervision to be a productive process there will be key areas, which will be addressed:

- Methods of working with young people.

- Key worker/care co-ordinator responsibilities
- Degree of personal involvement, feeling, concerns, and stress
- Setting and maintenance of standards
- Feedback on performance
- Discussion of strategies to manage young people's behaviour
- Specific incidents, which have arisen, and learning opportunities arising from them
- Action planning regarding individual young people
- Ongoing professional development and training
- Any personal issues which may be impinge on performance

## **16. Appraisal**

All staff will be required to complete an annual appraisal with the Registered Manager and where appropriate will also have additional review meetings.

The purpose of the annual review will be as follows:

- To review performance against job description and the homes aims and objectives
- Assess ability to work as part of a team
- Assess ability to work within the core values and philosophy of care of Austen house
- Assess ability to work within the policy and procedures
- To provide an opportunity to praise performance
- To discuss any difficulties, how and why they arose, and seek solutions
- To prepare and agree an Individual Performance Plan which is linked to the overall team plan, this will include actions aimed at meeting outcomes, possible constraints and time frames

## **17. Anti- Discriminatory Practice/valuing Diversity**

Austen house will promote equality of opportunity with due regard to gender, race, disability, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation. We aim to promote within our core values and principles the belief that valuing diversity is central to providing a positive ethos and culture within the home. This will be achieved through:

- Maintaining and reviewing all relevant job description and job person specifications to ensure they clearly identify equality issues.



- Short listing of all applicants will be done against the criteria laid down in the person specification. All applicants with a disability who meet the person specification will be given an interview.
- Robust recruitment and selection processes that will test the applicant's commitment to and understanding of equality issues.
- Ensuring staff induction processes provide them with awareness of different forms and levels of discrimination and practice.
- Creating an environment which positively encourages young people and staff to challenge all forms of prejudice and raise their concerns in relation to issues of equality.
- Equalities issue will be regarded as a live issue and will be discussed regularly at team meeting and young person's meetings.
- Ensuring the service reflects a positive diversity of images that strengthen and nurture the identity of young people and assists them to value diversity.
- To ascertain the young people's ethnicity, religion, language and other social identities and actively seek opportunities for them to meet their needs.
- The environment facilitates staff and young people in raising concerns about the practice relating to equalities issues.

## **18. Safeguarding Children/Child Sexual Exploitation Policy**

Austen House will ensure that the protection of young people from abuse is central to our work. Close co-operation between agencies is essential within the Safeguarding Units guidelines in order to protect children.

### **Child Protection Policy**

All staff will receive child protection training within their induction period which will provide them with clear guidance and procedures in the event of a child protection issue arising. All staff will have a working knowledge of the relevant regulations and their practical application in relationship to their roles and responsibilities. This will include the following:

- Understanding of what constitutes abuse
- Supporting a culture where employees are alert to the signs of child abuse, to know how to respond and what action to take
- To understand the role of other agencies

- Ensuring that employees are aware of local Safeguarding procedures
- Ensuring that employees are aware of the importance of sharing information
- Provide staff with knowledge of the importance of recording
- Importance of listening to what the child is saying, reassuring them that they are right to talk to about what is happening
- Importance of not questioning young people as this may result in evidence being compromised

The first point of contact will be with the social worker or duty officer of placing authority.

Staff will have the contact details of a named person within the local Safeguarding Unit (LADO) whom they will be able to communicate with should an issue arise.

In situations where the child is in immediate danger the following procedure should be followed:

- a) Respond to secure the immediate safety of the child. This could include medical attention, police etc.
- b) Consult with a member of the management team. Do not delay if this will place the child at risk.
- c) Provide a full written report.
- d) Contact the child's social worker and placing authority
- e) Contact the local Safeguarding Unit (St Helens)
- f) Contact the young person's parents, where this is appropriate and the social worker has been informed

Referring a child for whom there is concern. This could include the following:

- a) Observing a suspicious mark on a child
- b) Observing sexualised behaviour
- c) Relating something a child says to other recent events. Discerning a pattern which gives cause for concern
- d) Where there are concerns that a child is engaging in harmful behaviour

The Registered Manager will then discuss the allegation with the social worker and local Safeguarding Unit and a decision made as to what course of action will be taken, for example,

- a) Police Involvement
- b) Member of Staff suspended from duty

- c) In exceptional circumstances, whether the young person will need to move for their own protection

**Austen House comes under the jurisdiction of the St Helens Safeguarding Team. Our Local Authority Designated Officer is Paul Jenkins – 01744 456 600**

All incidents of suspected abuse will be recorded contemporaneously along with the outcome of any investigation. OFSTED will also be informed.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Building Bridges has an induction, training and development programme which ensures all staff have the skills and knowledge required to fully support young people in staying safe. A key principle which underlies the work we do with young people is that we will be proactive at all times, focusing our attention on prevention, early identification and intervention to disrupt the activity of perpetrators.

Young people who are Looked After are at high risk of child sexual exploitation. Ensuring that we have a workforce that is competent in this area is a continuing priority for the organisation. Training will explicitly focus on providing staff with the necessary skills to identify young people at risks of sexual exploitation, to recognise the indicators of sexual abuse and potential perpetrators and their roles and responsibilities in protecting young people and keeping them safe.

Induction and training Includes the following and learning outcomes for staff will include the following;

Identifying young people at risk of child exploitation

Direct work with young people in children's homes ultimately focuses on the strength of relationships we build. The work we do in developing resilience, building trust, developing self-confidence and self-esteem will assist young people to make positive choices and stay safe.

It is important that all staff are clear that children and young people do not always acknowledge that they may be in exploitative and abusive situations. It can take a considerable period of time for workers to develop trusting relationships with young people in helping them recognise that they are being sexually exploited by challenging their perceptions.

Indicators of child sexual abuse;

A young person regularly coming home late or going missing

Sexualised behaviour and or risk taking behaviour

Unaccounted explanation for monies or goods, such as mobiles, drugs or alcohol.

Associating with unknown adults or other sexually exploited children.

Experimenting with drugs and alcohol

Poor self- image, eating disorders or self-harm

Young people getting into cars with unknown adults

Reduced contact with family friends and other support networks

Disclosure of physical or sexual assault.

Reports of involvement in CSE (this will often be provided by other residents and may initially be soft information).

Deterioration in behaviour.

The different types of perpetrator(s) and grooming styles

Challenging myths and perceptions of perpetrators via case studies

Developing an understanding of government guidance, the legislative framework and local protocols relating to child sexual abuse

CSE and the law

Research and government guidance regarding CSE

Ensure that all staff has a full understanding of internal procedures within Building Bridges relating to preventing and protecting young people at risk of child sexual exploitation

## Building Bridges CSE Policy and Procedures

Recognise ways to effectively identify and engage with children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation. The link between CSE and young people who go missing from Care.

Research has shown that children and young people who are missing or continually absent from care are at greater risk of child sexual exportation. All staff should be aware that young people who fit into this category may well be involved in child sexual exploitation and that reducing episodes where young people go missing from care is a significant preventative factor. Staff working directly with young people can minimise the risk of young people going missing and potentially placing themselves at risk of CSE by understanding young people's patterns of absconding and triggers for absconding.

Develop as much understanding as possible regarding networks of friends and families and contact details. Have regular contact to establish safety and welfare when young people are missing. Ensure that the importance of staying safe is continually addressed in key work sessions and young people's meetings. Ensure that return to care questionnaires are completed and that issues raised by young people are addressed.

The "CSE Champion" will take a lead role in ensuring that the issue of CSE is continually addressed in team meetings and development programmes throughout the year. New information and research relating to the subject will be continually disseminated and shared with all staff. Feedback will also be given relating to local activity of perpetrators. Practical strategies to manage these issues will continually be addressed.

## 19. Institutional Abuse Protocol

There have been a number of government reports (Utting Report, 1997) (Pindown) highlighting the vulnerability of young people living away from home. It is therefore of paramount importance that young people and staff have a clear understanding of the procedure and the process involved in any investigation of institutional abuse.

A. The Institutional Abuse Protocol aims to ensure timely and appropriate action.

B. All allegations of abuse of child/children by a professional, member of staff, or anyone contracted to do work within the home will be taken seriously and treated in accordance with St Helens Safeguarding Children Procedures (Section C) and the Company's Institutional

Abuse Protocol. It is essential that staff that are independent of the home, organisation or institution examines all allegations objectively.

C. Where allegations of abuse are made against a member of staff, the following procedure should be followed:

- Allegations should immediately be reported to the Registered Manager or Deputy Manager, if the Registered Manager is unavailable
- A full and comprehensive written report should be recorded on the young person's File
- Social Worker, Team Manager or Duty Social Worker of the child's placing authority should be informed
- The Local Safeguarding Unit (St Helens) should be informed
- Parents /Carers where appropriate

D. Young people and staff should feel supported and confident that all complaints will be treated seriously and fully investigated. Whilst this may be difficult if an allegation is made against a colleague, it is important that staff remain objective and do not convey any personnel feelings with regard to the complaint

E. Where an allegation is made against the Registered Manager the Responsible Person as well as the above should also be informed. Staff will be provided with clear written guidance as to how to respond if a complaint is made against the Registered Manager

F. The Registered Manager will then discuss the allegation with the social worker and local Safeguarding Unit and a decision made as to what course of action will be taken

G. Member of Staff suspended from duty

In exceptional circumstances, whether the young person will need to move for their own protection

H. Registered and Deputy Managers/Residential Staff should also liaise with the following to keep them fully aware throughout the investigation.

- Young Person
- Director Building Bridges (Care Homes) Ltd
- Parent/Guardian with parental responsibility
- Social Worker
- Police (If there is Police involvement)
- I. A Strategy Meeting will be called to consider the allegation and plan the investigation and any issues have disciplinary and or police involvement.

J. The Strategy Meeting will reconvene at appropriate stages to consider the progress of the investigation. If a member of staff is suspended from duty they will be informed of the reasons for this by the Registered Manager within 24 hours. They will also be informed in writing. Every effort will be made to proceed with the investigation as quickly as possible. If suspended from duty the employee is required to have no contact with colleagues or young people within the service whilst the investigation is ongoing.

K. Staff will be given information with regard to organisations that may be able to offer support and advice. In addition staff will be encouraged to contact their trade union who will provide information, support and representation if requested.

## **20. Activities**

All young people will be encouraged to take part in a range of recreational activities and encouraged to develop positive ways of spending their leisure time. It is particularly important that young people develop friendships and interests that involve them in the wider community. These will be strongly encouraged. However there will be activities which will centre around the home, these will include the following:

- Group activities - These will be organised on a weekly basis and will largely be determined by the needs of the group and any issues in relation to group dynamics.
- Young people will have weekly input into any organised activities via the young person's meetings. Group activities will also be organised during school holidays and to celebrate birthdays, Christmas and other culturally appropriate celebrations etc.
- Individual Activities -Young people will also be encouraged to become involved in individual activities, which relate to their own particular interests and hobbies. Young people will be given opportunities to spend individual time with their key workers.
- Holidays - Regular holidays will be organised which will largely be activity based to encourage physical exercise, self-esteem and help young people build self-confidence.

## **21. Parental Involvement.**

Maintaining family contact, improving relationships, and sustaining contact with their communities are vital in providing effective interventions with young people. Parental involvement (unless specified within a young person's Care Plan) will be strongly encouraged within Austen House. This will involve:

- Regular communication; parents /carers will receive a weekly update with regard to their child
- Parents/carers will receive a monthly report which will outline their child's progress
- Any concerns for the child's safety will be reported to parents/carers as soon as is practically possible
- Parents/carers will be invited to the home to see the child as frequently as possible
- Parents/carers will be asked to attend all appropriate medical, school appointments in relation to their child along with the key worker
- Parents/carers will be encouraged to attend Core groups and Statutory Reviews. In situations where they are unable to attend they will be informed of the outcome

- Where contact is occurring staff will request feedback as to how the contact visit has progressed. Staff will provide advice and support during such visits.

## **Parental Consultation**

Parents will be involved in the Annual Review of the Home and will be asked for feedback with regard to their views and opinion as to how the placement has progressed.

## **22. Smoking Policy**

**There is a no smoking policy at Austen House.**

The health and wellbeing of children in care has historically been shown to be poorer than their counterparts in the wider community. It is therefore of paramount importance that the environment and culture of the home supports a pro-active approach to positive health styles. This will be supported by the following:

- Young people and staff will not be permitted to smoke in the building
- No member of staff will be permitted to smoke within the presence of a young person
- Staff may not supply young people with cigarettes/lighters in any circumstance
- Staff will not socialise with young people whilst they are smoking

There is recognition that many young people who enter the care system may already have a history of smoking and that this may be linked to coping strategies when they are distressed.

Staff may on occasion decide that a young person requires their support whilst they are smoking. This should be recorded and discussed with their colleagues on duty and a manager. Access to smoking cessation groups will be provided for young people and staff.

## **23. Fire Drills and Fire Precautions**

In accordance with Health and Safety Regulations and the regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005), all staff and young people within the unit will be made aware of what is expected of them in the event of a fire or fire drill, and in relation to fire prevention measures. We will ensure that on their day of arrival, new residents and staff will have individual instruction regarding:

- Procedures in case of fire
- Procedures in case of bomb threats
- Information on type and operation of fire extinguishers
- Operation of the fire alarm and emergency lighting
- Location of the gas and electric main switch
- Alternative methods to be used to alarm others of outbreak of fire
- Physically escort new residents and staff through all escape routes, ending at assembly points

Duty staff should:

- Check all unprotected fires to ensure no burning
- Check all waste paper bins ensuring smoke etc. is not present
- Ensure all electrical equipment is switched off, and if practical to do so disconnect

See that all gas appliances are switched off

- Check all staff rooms and general rooms for misuse of smoking materials
- Ensure alarms, emergency lights, and extinguishers are available at all escape routes, and in working order
- Ensure all fire doors are closed, escape route is clear, and escape doors can be freely opened
- Before retiring to sleep-in quarters, staffs are to remind each other of their agreed duties, should an alarm be sounded

### CCTV

Austen House has CCTV installed to monitor movements externally around the building to ensure that the highest standards regarding security are maintained.

## **24. Complaints Procedure**

It is our belief that it is intrinsic to the development of positive residential practice that young people's views and opinions are valued. Young people will at all times have access to external agencies such as a youth advocacy service, OFSTED and placing authority's responsible personnel.

On admission, each young person will be given information regarding the Homes Complaints Procedure, and given a copy of our information relating to how to make a complaint.

It is hoped that many of the complaints that young people wish to make can be dealt with effectively and sensitively within the home by the Registered Manager. However there will on occasions be times where a young person may disagree with the outcome of a complaint

The complaint process is as follows:

**Step 1 -** Speak to a member of staff, this may be your key worker/care co-ordinator. Discussing your problem may help to resolve the matter at this stage.

**Step 2 -** If you wish to peruse the matter further you have a number of options available to you at this stage. You may wish to discuss the matter with somebody not connected to the home such as a youth advocacy worker, independent visitor, Care Standards Inspectorate, or your social worker, you can ask them to advocate on your behalf if you wish. Their telephone numbers will be posted in young people's bedrooms and in the young person's telephone box at all times.

**Step 3 -** If after discussing this with any of the above you are still not happy with the matter you can speak to the Deputy Manager or Registered Manager. Your complaint will be considered and you will be given a written decision regarding the complaint within seven days. Your complaint will be recorded within Complaints Record Book along with the Registered Managers Response.



Step 4 – If you disagree with the Registered Managers response you will be encouraged to make a written complaint which will be forwarded to the complaints section of your placing authority.

Complaints against the Registered Manager will be dealt with by the Responsible Person

Young people can also contact the following organisations to access complaints;

**OFSTED**

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
SC406636  
Tel: 0300 123 1231

**Voice for the Child in Care**

Tel: 0808 800 5792

**NYAS – National Youth Advocacy Service**

Tel: 0580 564 570

**25. Facilities within the Home**

Each young person, who resides at Austen House, will have their own bedroom and access to washing facilities. The bath/shower rooms and toilets are shared.

The kitchen area is shared and can be used by young people to both learn and practice new skills in preparing and cooking food.

The laundry areas consist of an automatic washing machine and tumble dryer. An Iron and ironing board and a sink for hand washing are also available. It is expected that young people will make use of these facilities on a regular basis.

Young people have their own young person's telephone line, it is a cordless phone giving them privacy when making calls.

Austen House has the following facilities;

- SKY TV/free view/radio
- DVD
- Computer/internet safety site access
- Reading Materials
- Magazines/Daily Newspapers
- Console games
- Games
- Books
- Games Room
- Visitors Room – where young people can bring family and friends to the Home

Each young person will be assigned key workers/care co-ordinators who will take the lead responsibility in implementing the care plan.

Each young person will be actively encouraged to take part in aspects of their life and plan for the future. Young people will be encouraged to be actively involved in the local community.

## **26. Young Persons Meetings/Consultation**

Young people will be fully involved in the running of the home and are included in the following:

- Recruitment and selection - young people will be involved in the interviewing process for new members of staff
- Team Meetings – Young people will be asked to nominate an individual to attend the team meetings. They will not be involved in any discussions involving individual young people
- Revision of the Young People's Guide

### **Young Person's Meetings**

Young Person's Meetings will be held weekly. They will provide young people with the opportunity to be fully involved in decision making within the home. The meetings will discuss the following:

- Permanent Items for the agenda
- Bullying
- Weekly Menu
- Any immediate issues surrounding the care they are receiving.
- House ground rules.
- Furnishing
- Activities
- Holidays

The meetings are primarily intended to provide young people with an opportunity to air their views and opinions. Young people will be asked to add items to the agenda and these will be discussed before any items raised by staff.

Any issues raised will be discussed within the team meeting and a decision given to young people at the next young person's meeting.

### **Consultation**

It is recognised that not all young people feel confident in expressing themselves and that

they may need encouragement and support over a period of time to develop skills in putting across their views and opinions. Young people will also be able to discuss their views with their key worker who will raise any issues for them. A suggestion board will also be placed in the dining room and young person's IT room so that our young people will be able to write any issues or requests on the notice board they may wish to discuss.

## **27. Care Planning Process/Role of Key worker/Care Coordinator**

All young people will be assigned a key worker. The main role of the keyworker is primarily to act as a facilitator and coordinator whose role is to ensure that the young person's needs are met.

The roles of the key worker are as follows:

### **Pre –Admission Meeting:**

- To attend a pre-admission meeting with a member of the management team
- To visit the young person if possible in their current placement to explain within an informal setting what Austen house is all about
- To gather as much information as possible from the young person and current carers.

Examples include:

- What upsets the young person, or triggers emotional upset
- What do they like to do?
- How do they deal with stress or difficulties?
- What appears to work with the young person in helping them gain control
- What doesn't work?
- Are there any particular triggers throughout the day that raise the young person's anxiety i.e. bed times, mealtimes
- Who are the significant people in the young person's life
- How do they feel about the move?
- Do they have any questions?

## Admission to the Home

Placement moves are extremely difficult for young people. It is therefore extremely important that they are managed to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. If they are disorganised it will appear to the young person that little thought or preparation has been given to their arrival. A poorly planned move can set the tone of a placement. The role of the key worker is crucial at this stage. They will undertake the following:

- To prepare the young person's file. Liaise with social worker, carers etc.
- Prepare bedroom for the young person and make sure that it is tidy and welcoming
- Purchase welcome card for the young person  
Ensure that time is spent with the young person
- Observe interactions with other residents
  
- To take the lead in a number of areas such as liaising with parents, social worker and school.
- They will have an in-depth knowledge of the young person's care plan and ensure that this knowledge is communicated with the rest of the team
- To have weekly key worker sessions with the young person, to discuss ongoing issues, set targets for the week, review the previous week. Prepare a written report of the discussion.
  
- Advocate on behalf of the young person
- Attend Core Groups, Statutory Reviews and complete preparation work with the young person
- Prepare a summary of issues affecting the young person's placement, what has gone well, difficulties, possible key areas in the week ahead that may be problematic. Present these at the team meeting
- Attend a weekly meeting with a member of the management team to give a report on progress, discuss strategies.

A formalised behaviour Management Plan will be developed at week four and will incorporate information gathered from initial assessment.

Review of placement will occur at three monthly intervals. At this point we will prepare a detailed report outlining progress against our intended outcomes for the placement. The behaviour management plan will be reviewed and incorporate ongoing issues.

## 28. Arrangements for Health

Every young person has the right to have their health needs met and to be supported in making age appropriate choices in relation to their health. This will be supported by:

- All young people will be required to register with a general practitioner. Additionally they will be given the option of registering with a dentist and optician. They can however remain registered with their current doctor, dentist or optician if they wish to do so.
  - Residential staff will encourage young people to keep all medical appointments and where appropriate staff will support the young people in attending. Young people will be informed of their right to see the general practitioner privately
  - All young people will be scheduled to have statutory medicals
  - Health care arrangements should be included in every young person's Action Plan, which will be continually reviewed and monitored
  - Discussion will take place with individual young people in relation to the storage and administration of prescribed medication
- In the case of emergency medical assistance, staff will, where appropriate, administer first aid. If further treatment is required then an out of hour's General Practitioner service or hospital accident and emergency service will be sought
- Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds will have their health needs understood and met.
- Young people will receive advice on healthy lifestyles and be encouraged to take part in exercise, sport and relaxation
- Young people will have their health needs met in a way which is sensitive and safeguards their privacy, gender and individuality

#### Sexual Health

Young people will be provided with individual advice and guidance appropriate to their age, relating to sexual health. This will incorporate the following:

- Sex and Relationships
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Sexuality
- Hygiene
- Contraception
- Abusive Relationships

## 29. Education Policy

Outcomes for Children in Care are extremely poor in comparison with their peers within the wider community. Education is not only important in providing young people with academic skills but also important in developing social skills, friendships and dealing with ordinary frustrations along with their peers.

Our policy regarding education will be clearly outlined to young people before they are admitted to Austen House. A considerable amount of time and energy will be centred on supporting, encouraging and motivating young people within some form of educational provision.

We will ensure the following:

- All young people will have an individual education plan linked to their Care Plan
- All young people will have their educational achievements praised by staff
- Staff will liaise with schools on a daily basis to monitor attendance
  
- Young people will be provided with facilities to complete homework with a suitable environment
- Incentives will be linked to school attendance and there will be clear sanctions in place for non - attendance in education.
  
- Young people will be provided with opportunities to enjoy different types of learning
  
- Young people will be encouraged to attend school clubs and activities
- Staff will attend parents' evenings and will develop positive relationships with linked mentors within schools.
  
- All young people have the right to a good education and it is our responsibility to ensure that the young people who are in our care receive this.
  
- It is the responsibility of the children's home to ensure that we provide a learning environment which supports their development. This includes ensuring that they have access to a range of educational resources to support their learning.
  
- We have a duty to keep in regular contact with the young person's school or educational placement by telephone and by visiting, this should be done each morning to make sure that the young person has arrived at school safely and do that you can keep up to date with the young person's progress. It is also good for the young person to see that we are all working together. You will also need to attend events that are held at the school to support the young person.

- Young people who are in care can find it difficult to remain in school and are often excluded, if this happens you will still need to support the young person to either return to school or continue that support in the home, this will include discussing with the social worker if there are any resources that would help us to work with the young person at home. We will also provide the young people with educational materials that they will be able to work from at home until they return to school.
- Young people who are not in full time education will have to work towards an education programme during the day in the home. There is a programme that the young person will work from, this programme is structured and will be done with staff on duty. The programme will include English, Math or Science in the morning and a practical lesson in the afternoon. If the young person does not complete the morning programme they will need to complete it in the afternoon
- The work that we carry out with each young person needs to be positive and should always encourage young people when they are doing well.
- We need to be aware that young people in care have low self-esteem and by giving them school work to complete is going to be very difficult for the young person. You will also need to explain in a sensitive manner to the young person the work they will be doing and involve them in setting the day up, this will help the young person to accept that they will be doing school work and also make it more enjoyable, always praise young people even if it is for just getting up to come down to start the day

### **30. Children's Rights and Responsibilities Policy**

**Children's rights and responsibilities will be integral to the care practice within the home and will be promoted in the following ways:**

- Young people will have access to independent advice and advocacy
- Young people will have opportunities to be involved in preparing for meetings including core groups, reviews and opportunities to discuss the issues that are important for them.
- Ensuring that young people are supported in voicing their disagreement about decisions
- Young people will know what files are kept about them, have access to them, will be given support in reading them
- Young people will be given opportunities to discuss any concerns about the quality of care they are receiving, that is, young person's meetings, and key worker sessions

### **31. Contact with Family and Friends**

Staff at Austen House value the importance of young people maintaining family relationships and social networks from their communities of origin. Young people will be actively encouraged to maintain contact with their family and friends unless this has been specified within the young person's care plan.

Members of a young person's family and their friends will be encouraged to visit the Home. However staff would appreciate a degree of notice in order for a room to be made available to ensure that any visits can be as private as possible. There may be individual circumstances when this may not be possible and other factors will influence contact such as a young person's legal status or child protection issues. In these circumstances, contact will be arranged via statutory reviews and core groups.

There may be occasions when visits may be inconvenient or the behaviour of visitors is unacceptable. Staff will advise young people that these visits will not continue and may need to be re-arranged. Refreshments will be available should they be required during the visit.

Writing materials can be made available should a young person wish to keep in contact with family or friends by letter. Staff will provide assistance if required.

Austen House has a separate telephone line for the young people to contact their family and friends. The phone is cordless which ensures that the young people can have privacy when taking and make calls.

## **32. Behaviour Management Policy**

The 1989 Children Act clearly highlights that a major factor in managing the behaviour of young people are the quality of the relationships between staff and young people. Research also highlights the importance of developing a positive ethos and culture within the Home.

However given the nature of the work involved with young people we must accept that there will be times when young people will test the boundaries set by adults and will refuse to co-operate with individual requests and with general house rules.

Changing young people's behaviour which has evolved over a period of time involves a significant amount of input and time. The focus of this will be the development of positive relationships with the young person. Managing young people behaviour involves applying measures, which are safe and acceptable and likely to aid the management of young people's behaviours.

Relevant Legislation:

- 1989 Children Act
- Department of Health - Guidance on permissible forms of control in children's residential care 1993
- The Control of Children in Public Care: Interpretation of the Children Act 1989
- Children's Homes regulations and Quality Care Standards 2015
- Care Standards Act 2000

Austen House has developed its behaviour management systems over a number of years and have continuously evolved to meet the complex needs of the young people we look after.



The majority of the young people we look after have experienced extremely chaotic lives; and have not experienced consistency or appropriate boundaries around their behaviour.

The policy starts with the belief that positive change in young people's lives is only achieved if the adults working with them are able to build up positive relationships and if staff working in our homes are able to be consistent and resilient when dealing with young people who are chaotic. In practical terms this means:

1. When a young person is initially placed, we have a clear understanding that their behaviours may be volatile. Young people will often be in crisis and it is common for the home to experience a high level of damages caused, threats of physical violence and high absence rates. During this period we attempt to stabilise the young person by providing respect, structure and routine from the outset, by giving the young person clear information on the rules and safeguards in the Young Person's Handbook and the message that the Home is willing and able to manage these behaviours. This focused work can take many months before any improvements are seen.
2. We begin the process of understanding the young person, what their coping strategies are: What are the triggers to their behaviour escalating? What strategies work and why do they work, as well as those that do not, aiming to develop their seeing of alternate strategies.
3. Young people will often identify individual workers they like; this can provide a clear opportunity to begin to allow the young person to begin to build relationships and trust. This is often a crucial tool in achieving change for young people. Young people will resist building relationships and will frequently present behaviours to break down their placements.
4. Rewarding young people's positive behaviour (even if only minute improvements), and also in ensuring young people understand what is acceptable and what is not and that there are clear consequences for poor behaviour for example loss of privileges, reparation, additional chores, closer supervision and apology.
5. We also have strong risk management systems which ensure that staff are clear regarding appropriate actions and strategies in response to managing risk and challenging behaviour in the home. All incidents are recorded, some in specific records such as sanction or restraints, including the views and perspective of young people, and notified as appropriate to family, social worker, police, safeguarding/LADO and Ofsted and for health and safety matters RIDDOR. Information and updates in response to strategies are shared across staff the staff team through incidents reports and daily handovers.
6. We negotiate appropriate guidelines for staff, with the person with Parental Responsibility, for the care and control of the young person and these will form the core of Risk Assessment and Behaviour Management Plan, for example, outlining appropriate times and safe travel for the young person to return to the home, taking into account their age, maturity, experience and vulnerability.

7. A focus on setting individual strategies, targets and incentives within each child's individual Behaviour Management Plan, which are completed at least monthly and identify Individual targets and strategies that will be used. Behaviour management plans are then discussed at team meetings and targets identified within the plan are assessed to determine whether we are achieving outcomes in these areas. Weekly updates, monthly reports, behaviour management plans are given to social workers to ensure that we are evidencing the work we do with young people. Placement plans are reviewed following all Looked after Children's Reviews ensuring that placement objectives are identified, and that we have a clear plan for each child. Behaviour Management Plans focus on the Every Child Matters outcomes, staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and economic well-being.

### **Incidents of Violence**

Our aim is to have very little police involvement and physical restraint is used very rarely in the homes to manage incidents.

Incidents of violence and aggression are managed proactively within the risk and behavioural systems of the home and keyworkers have a key role as do social workers and those with parental responsibility. There is a clear focus on de-escalation and conflict

resolution based around Team Teach and restraint is an intervention of last resort. The vast majority of incidents are dealt with internally with a range of strategies, targets, incentives and sanctions use to manage young people's behaviour. Following an incident the risk assessment is revised to consider factors such as severity, triggers, any injuries, police involvement and so on. Staff behavioural standards are set out in the Code of Conduct. Violence against other young people is covered in our Bullying Policy and is treated as safeguarding matter and risk assessed. Assaults against staff are extremely low in both homes.

Young people are given a clear message that violence is unacceptable and there is an immediate response from management and staff in response to such incidents. Young people in the Home have good relationships with staff, and also mirror that violence is not acceptable.

### **Secure Accommodation**

Section 25 of the Children Act 1989 forbids the use of secure accommodation, except in closely defined circumstances. The use of secure accommodation can include locking a child in a room or a part of a building to prevent him/her from leaving. Other measures taken to prevent a child from leaving a building may constitute the use of secure accommodation and be viewed as a restriction of liberty.

### **Assessment and Care Planning**

All young people accommodated will have a Care Plan and Placement Plan. The Care Plan should incorporate and address issues relating to behaviour management. In compiling and reviewing information there should be a full discussion with regards to the strategies used to manage and address young people's behaviour. Young people's involvement within this process is crucial in providing them with a clear understanding of rights, responsibilities and consequences in relationship to their behaviour. It is essential

that there is regular communication between everybody involved in the care of a child. Wherever possible decisions made should be subject to agreement between all involved.

## Physical Restraint

The use of physical restraint will only be used when staff are sure that all other strategies have been considered. Staff will need to demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to diffuse the situation and when they have considered the risk involved in intervention as opposed to the risk of non-intervention. Physical restraint should only be used as an immediate course of action in the following circumstances:

- To protect another person from immediate danger e.g. where it would be reasonably assumed that non-intervention would result in injury to that person
- To prevent a child taking any action where they would be likely to harm themselves
- To prevent serious damage to property

Knowledge of the child and history in relationship to previous incidents could impact on the judgement as to whether restraint should be used in these circumstances.

All incidents of physical restraint should be recorded and include the following:

- Events leading up to the use of physical restraint
- Members of staff involved
- Reason why restraint was used
- Alternative strategies that were considered/used
- Debriefing with the young person

A member of the management team will provide staff with debriefing following all incidents where physical restraint has been used.

Permissible forms of control in children's residential care are outlined in the following:

- Children's Home Regulations 2001
- Care, Control and Responsibility Policy – Building Bridges Ltd
- The control of Children in the Public Care; Interpretation of the Children Act 1989 (SSI 1997)

In certain circumstances it may be necessary to exercise reasonable sanctions, especially when boundaries are being tested and broken. However the focus will be on rewarding

positive behaviour. Sanctions should only be enforced after there has been a cooling off period for all involved.

### **Strategies used by the Home to manage young people's behaviour and improve outcomes.**

The focus of the Homes approach regarding how we help and support young people is to ensure that we continually have high expectations of young people and set realistic but appropriate targets for young people. We have a strong focus on preparing young people in their transition for leaving care and emphasise the importance of young people understanding that it is important that they have the skills needed when they leave care. The Home has implemented various strategies in an effort to promote positive behaviours, one of which is an incentive reward scheme which promotes learning new skills, motivating young people, assisting them in becoming independent. Incentives include an additional £5.00 pocket money for attendance and engagement in education. Staff and young people agree specific targets from Behaviour Management Plans that they focus working on for a period of seven days; this is then reviewed with young people in key working sessions, feedback and praise is given. Additional incentives can be earned.

Young people are also offered the opportunity to engage in semi-independent living skills this offers the option of earning incentives; these are saved up on a daily basis and the money young people save can be used to purchase items they may need when making the transition into leaving care or used on an activity of their choice.

Additional rewards can be agreed and discussed with young people and their key worker. The Home also uses the following sanctions to support young people to modify behaviour. These include delayed pocket money for non-attendance in education, loss of educational bonuses.

The withdrawal of travel allowances and or supervised spending of pocket money, for continued absent from care episodes.

Reparation is to be offered for criminal damage caused in the home. Loss of privileges, such as removal of electronic equipment from bedrooms, loss of activities, suspension of incentives for a period of time depending on level of damage, Loss of travel to friends. If a young person persistently continues to smoke in their bedroom then supervised pocket money may be considered. If young people use alcohol or illegal substances persistently supervised pocket money can be considered.

This list is not exhaustive and sanctions are based on the individual needs of young people.

They should only be enforced after discussion with a member of the management team. All sanctions imposed will be recorded.

Young people should be given an opportunity to record their disagreement with any sanction imposed. Reviews of sanctions should be clearly planned and indicate the circumstances in which sanctions will be removed.

### **33. Religious and Cultural Observance**

All young people will be supported in developing an awareness of their religious and cultural backgrounds. Issues in relation to religion/belief and culture will be considered within each young person's care plan. Staff will liaise with local church or group where appropriate and arrange contact with parents/family to participate in religious services

Staff will also provide information and access to relevant literature concerning religion and cultural practices for both staff and young people as required.

Provision will be made for young people wishing to attend religious services, and support will be provided to allow young people to follow religious or cultural practice including specific dietary needs or clothing requirements.

Staff will provide help to any young person with any confusion or misunderstanding about people of different ethnic /cultural backgrounds /groups, which may arise in placement.

Staff will support young people, in taking pride in all elements of their cultural heritage.

### **34. Anti-Bullying**

There are significant concerns about the impact of bullying within residential units. The problem is one which is ongoing and requires considerable focus in the development of effective preventative strategies.

It is therefore necessary to continually adapt anti-bullying policies. The following provides a baseline for good practice within Austen House:

- Giving clear and consistent messages that bullying is unacceptable
- Regular discussion within team meetings, young person's meetings, parents and appropriate associated professionals as to what constitutes bullying
- Ongoing review of practice within the organisation to identify factors which may be having an impact such as:
  - Areas of the building where bullying may be more likely to occur
  - Times of the day, such as staff handover times when opportunities to bully may increase.
- Early identification of vulnerable young people through prior knowledge and staff observations
- Communication is extremely important in countering bullying, staff will therefore ensure that: All incidents of bullying, responses to these incidents and the outcomes will be recorded in the young person's case file.
- All incidents will be verbally communicated to colleagues at shift handovers. There should additionally be discussions as to possible strategies to manage this behaviour.

- All incidents will be reported to a manager as soon as is practically possible.
- Young people within the unit will have regular opportunities to raise the issue of bullying, this will involve the following:
  - Designated time within young person's meetings to discuss the issue
  - Young people will have access to external agencies to raise any concerns they may have about bullying
  - Encourage discussion of feelings and experiences. Acknowledge their distress
  - We will develop clear strategies to support the young person being bullied
  - Strategies or sanctions, which depend on ridicule or punishment, are unlikely to affect any change in the behaviour
- Development of strategies, which allow the young person opportunities to think about their behaviour
- Supporting young people in communicating effectively in conflict situations
- Supporting a conflict resolution model
- Positively reinforcing non-aggressive behaviour

Ultimately all young people must be accountable for their behaviour and understand that bullying is unacceptable. It is extremely important however that positive strategies should be developed to manage this behaviour.

These ensure that young people and staff are aware that an anti-bullying ethos is central to the homes philosophy of care and not merely a reactive response.

### **35. Missing from Care/Absent from Care/Prevention Policy**

#### **Responsibility of Carers**

#### **Reporting Procedures and the Role of all Agencies**

The Home will record all incidents of missing, absent or away of placement without authorisation, they will also report a child missing or absent to the police according to this policy. The Home should clearly identify within the child's risk assessment the strategies which will be used to prevent a child going missing, action to be taken by Residential Child Care Officers if a child does go missing or is absent from care.

The police will prioritise all incidents of missing children as medium or high risk. A risk assessment is undertaken for each missing person on every separate occasion they are reported as missing. Due consideration will be given to their age, vulnerability, capacity or

learning difficulties of the young person and risks of sexual exploitation. Where a child is recorded as being absent, the details will be recorded by the police, who will also agree review times and any on-going actions with person reporting.

### **Review of a Continued Missing Episode**

Throughout the missing episode, the Home in conjunction with the Police is responsible for on-going enquiries, risk assessment and proportionate actions. In the event of a continuing missing episode good communication and close cooperation is essential to ensure that any significant concerns are identified and appropriate safeguarding action is taken. When a child has been missing for a period of 48 hours it may be appropriate to undertake a case review meeting, which should be arranged and with police representation including the Police Missing from Care Co-ordinator.

### **Return of the Child**

Where a child is returned or has returned 'home' of their own accord it is the responsibility of Residential Child Care Officers to contact the Police and confirm that the missing child has returned.

It is the responsibility of the home to arrange any necessary transportation for the child to return to their home. In exceptional circumstances, in the interests of the safe and speedy return of the child, the Police may agree to requests from carers to assist. In all cases, once the child has been located, the Police will need to ensure that the child is 'safe and well' and to check for any indications that the child has suffered harm; where and with whom they have been; and to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by, or against, them.

Additionally, in matters of sexual exploitation, or any other situation which indicates that the child may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, a referral must be made to the Local Authority in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

### **Strategies to prevent/reduce and minimise Missing from Care and unauthorised absences within the Home**

Prior to any placement, a written Placement Information Record (PIR) should be completed, outlining expectations about how it will meet the child's needs, how positive routines will be maintained, and how they will be supported to achieve their potential. Every looked after child must have a care plan, subject to regular review, that sits alongside the PIR.

This process must include an evaluation of whether a child is likely to run away. Where this is likely, strategies should be put in place to minimise risk.

Each looked after child has a care plan based on a full assessment of the child's current and future needs, including potential risk to self or others. The care plan will therefore

take account of any risk that the child may go missing in future and any factors which may increase the risk to the child should they go missing. Children's residential and fostering service staff should contribute to this assessment. All information should be included in the placement plan and in the child's care plan. Appendix 2 contains a Missing from Care risk assessment this is required to be completed with the relevant staff and young person and reviewed on a monthly basis or as incidents occur

This assessment should include information on the following:

The likelihood of the child going missing

The child's view;

Consideration of the measures that can be taken to prevent the child going missing;

The level of supervision / support that care staff propose to provide for the child;

The views of parents/carers on their child needs and the action that needs to be taken if the child is absent;

The risk of harm to the child and his/her vulnerability if he/she is absent;

Consideration of any external influences which may result in a child's removal without consent;

The likelihood of the child being harboured;

Note the prevalence, from current statistical information, of 14-16 year olds going missing;

A trigger plan (action plan), applicable to that child, should be formulated to cover the event of the child going missing.

The residential unit manager / should consider the most appropriate ways to meet the above requirements and whether it is necessary and appropriate to discuss 'running away' and the requirements of this protocol with the child.

### **When the Looked after Child goes absent**

Categories of absence have been agreed between the Police and the Local Authority.

- absent,
- away from placement without authorisation
- missing, or
- Absconded / Unlawfully at Large

In deciding the category of absence, all staff must consider the circumstances of the child and their absence. This will include detailed consideration of:

- The circumstances of the absence.
- The child's care plan.
- The age of the child.
- The maturity of the child
  
- Any physical or cognitive disability of the child.



- Any continuing or urgent need for the child to have medication or other medical treatment.
- The legal status of the child.
- Previous behaviour and history of the child.
- Is the current behaviour out of character?
- Danger posed by the child to themselves or others.
- General vulnerability of the child.
- The child's tendency to drug/substance abuse.
- Whether the child is perceived as running to, or running from, someone or something.
- Any circumstances within the placement, say with carers or other residents that may be relevant to the absence.
- The risk of offending.
- The influence of peer groups, families or friends.

Predatory influences on the child. These may relate to others wanting to use the child for crime, sex or drugs.

- Any known risk of abduction.
- Environmental factors including weather, time of year, community events or tensions.

Children who are absent from their placement can be a matter of considerable concern to their carers and there is a need to locate them and ensure they are safe. The children can be thought of as being at risk on a continuum, with their being little cause for concern at one end, and with significant cause for concern at the other.

Children who are a few minutes late home from school would not normally give rise to concerns; they may have missed the bus, or they may be exhibiting normal adolescent testing out, to establish the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, or to show their disagreement with aspects of their placement. It is not helpful to consider every momentary absence as warranting a formal missing person report.

However, at some point, depending upon the child and the circumstances, the child's absence will give rise to justifiable concern and require a formal missing person report to the Police. Whilst there can be no substitute for a considered judgement, based on a sound assessment of the child and the circumstances, it is the purpose of this framework to assist carers to structure their thinking with regard to the categories of absence. This decision should not be taken in isolation; residential staff should consult with the senior member of staff on duty and liaise with the child's Social Worker or EDT staff.

The situation should be kept under constant review and changes in circumstances taken into account. If the child is receiving support from CAMHS professionals, Educational Psychologists and so on, it may be advisable to discuss the case with them. However, if they are not readily available a decision must be made on the basis of the best available information. In cases of doubt it may also be appropriate to discuss the case with a local Police supervisor.

Each case must be decided on merit and a formal missing person report to the Police

may be actioned earlier in some circumstances than in others. Indeed for a small number of young people it may be appropriate to immediately report them as a missing person.

Normally this will have been previously agreed as part of the Care Plan because of the child's vulnerability.

The fact that the child may have gone missing on a number of previous occasions does not reduce the risk. In fact, children who repeatedly go missing are often being enticed away from their placement by activities that they see as exciting or by predatory influences.

Furthermore, short absences may be as risky as lengthy ones. The categories and consequent actions are outlined below:

### **Away from placement without authorisation**

Clearly some children are absent for a short period and then return, with their whereabouts known to the carer. Sometimes children stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose to test boundaries, or accidentally. Examples of situations are: running away after a dispute, failing to return on time, staying at a known location with a friend and this could be classed as away from placement without authorisation.

If the carer assesses that the child is at risk due to any factor/s known to the carer, then the child should be reported as missing without delay and the believed risk communicated to the Police.

If the assessment of the carer is that there is no apparent risk for their immediate safety but the child is away from their placement without authorisation it is still important that staff/ carers record these incidences as away from placement without authorisation in the child's record.

In addition to this staff/ carers should always start a dated/timed record of their contacts, risk assessment and decisions throughout the episode from the point that they are aware of the child's absence, in case the level of risk changes and decisions are auditable. All episodes of away from placement should be recorded by the carer and reported to the relevant social worker at the local authority.

If the child's whereabouts are known or suspected, the staff will decide whether to allow the child to remain at that location, albeit temporarily, or to arrange for their return. If the decision is to arrange their return and there is reason to believe that there may be public order difficulties, Police assistance will be sought. Police assistance in these circumstances does not mean that the child is categorised as absent or missing.

The responsibility for managing this type of absence remains with the staff of the residential home or carer. It is not the responsibility of the Police to influence or determine the decision regarding whether a person is missing or away from placement

without authorisation.

It is expected that the first response by providers of their care along with any relevant staff from their responsible authority, which could include the child's Social Worker in circumstances where a child is late home will be to take all steps a responsible parent would take, to try to locate the child and assess the situation.

A clear assessment will be made by the home in each individual case as to the length of time that elapses before a child who is absent becomes categorised as missing. An absence must be kept under regular review by the appropriate home.

The Home will consider whether the period of absence is out of character for the child, whether the circumstances of the disappearance would now render the child at risk of harm, for example: whether the child requires medication at a set time or where the weather conditions have severely deteriorated. In these circumstances the child should then be reported to the police as missing.

## **Missing**

If the decision is that of the child being 'missing' then staff will telephone Merseyside Constabulary (**101**) and inform them that a child is missing from their establishment / home, giving details of the location where the child was last seen, the circumstances in which the child is missing, any immediate concerns that there may be for the child's safety and the reasons why they are being reported as 'missing'. They will also contact the EDT of the Placing Authority and notify the young person's social worker by email if out of hours, and parents or guardian if appropriate. The host authority should also be identified by email. The carer will provide information to the police about any risk factors associated with the child on the missing person form.

Staff will request that the Police 'incident number' is given to them. The Police 'incident number' must be recorded.

In circumstances where a child is reported missing from a residential home, the shift leader will ensure that the following basic actions are undertaken;

Conduct a thorough search of the premises (For a child missing from a foster placement (not a residential children's home), a premises search will be undertaken by Police officers).

Speak to any known friends and relatives where child may be.

Speak to other residents or other persons who may be able to assist with the investigation

Carers must also inform without delay:

The parents/those who have parental responsibility (unless indicated otherwise on the care plan)

The Social Worker or the accountable team manager

The Emergency Duty Team if out of hours and the social worker and accountable team manager the next working day

### **Absconder / Unlawfully at Large**

A child is to be considered as having 'absconded' or being 'unlawfully at large' when he / she is absent from their placement without permission and is subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process (e.g. where the child has appeared before a youth court and has been remanded into Local Authority accommodation). A child in this category must be reported to the Police without delay.

If the child is under the age of 16 years the Police will treat the matter as BOTH a missing child case AND an unlawfully at large case. This means that it will be necessary to provide detailed information to the Police.

When the child is traced however, it is likely that they will also be arrested or dealt with by the Police in relation to any offence or breach. It is essential however, that they are also viewed as a child in need of protection and safeguarding, and any risks exposed to during their absence must be reviewed.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Carers and the child's Social Worker will be responsible for liaising with the Police, taking an active interest in the investigation and passing on all information, which may help to inform the investigation and assist in protecting the child while absent or missing.

Carers and the child's Social Worker should continue to make appropriate enquiries with other residents or by telephone with all persons who may be able to assist with the investigation unless they are requested not to do so by the Police. All information gleaned from these enquires should be passed to the Police.

Once a child is reported missing to the Police, the Police will have primacy in respect of the investigation to trace the child.

The Police will normally conduct all physical enquiries away from the premises from which the child is absent.

Throughout the process in this policy, residential carers and social workers must keep a full record of all actions taken and messages received and given.

### **Review of continued missing episode**

When a child has been missing for a period of twenty four hours their social worker should inform the relevant senior manager as per the Local Authority protocols via the usual line management route.

Throughout the missing episode, carers and the Police will continually review the case. After the child has been missing for five days, or earlier, if deemed appropriate, an urgent case review meeting will be held. It will involve Police officers, carers, the child's Social Worker, and any other professional involved in the care of the child. The meeting will

review:

What action has been taken so far by the Police and professionals

What action needs to be taken by the Police and professionals

Decide whether the child should return to that placement when located

Consider any other relevant information

Whether further such review meetings will take place and the time scales for such review meetings (it is suggested that a period of at least every five days thereafter or earlier, if deemed appropriate).

### **Return of the child**

Where a missing child is found then they should normally be returned to their placement. It is primarily the responsibility of the home to return a young person to placement. There may however be particular circumstances where the home has to liaise with the police and local authority to provide assistance.

Where a child is returned or has returned of their own accord it is the responsibility of the carer to contact the Police and confirm that the missing child has returned.

In circumstances where a missing child has returned to their residential home but has not been seen by a police officer, the Police will normally accept confirmation from care professionals that the child is 'safe and well' without the need for an officer to attend the home and visit the returnee.

If it is apparent, upon the return of a child, that they have been the victim of a crime whilst absent, or that they may be in danger or at risk from any person arising out of circumstances that have occurred whilst they were absent then the Police must be called and asked to attend without delay.

Additionally, in matters of sexual exploitation, or any other situation which indicates that the child may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, the allocated social worker must be informed.

### **Return interviews**

All young people should be offered the services of an independent advocate or given the opportunity to speak to a professional who is independent of the home following any missing from care episode.

When it is not practicable for a return interview to be conducted by the most suitable person, or an independent person, it is better that an interview is conducted by a nominated care professional than no interview being conducted at all.

The purpose of the interview is:

- To better understand the reasons why the child went missing
- To explore the circumstances which led to the missing episode(s)
- To inform future prevention strategies
- To inform any future missing person investigation should that person go missing again

- To learn of the activities, associates, risks and victimisation involved in the missing episode, and where possible to address those risks with appropriate and proactive strategies such as the use of the harbouring warning notices under the Child Abduction Act.
- To identify and address any harm the child has suffered – including harm that may not have already been disclosed as part of the safe and well check.
- To provide information on how to stay safe if they choose to run again; including helpline numbers

Appropriate safeguarding procedures should be followed where there are safeguarding concerns for example:

Where the child has been hurt or harmed whilst they have been missing (or this is believed to have been the case)

Where there is known or suspected risk of sexual exploitation or contact with persons posing risk to children.

## **PREVENTION STRATEGY**

### **Response to escalating concerns**

If a child has run away two or more times actions following earlier incidents should be reviewed and alternative strategies considered. Access to and timeliness of independent return interviews should also be reviewed. The registered manager should consider asking the placing authority for a review of care planning meeting.

Where there are concerns in relation to a child going missing multi-agency meetings should be in place and followed in line with child protection procedures, as good practice, to address these issues and to ensure the right information is shared with agencies.

There will also be links through local authorities CSE risk assessment and risk management.

Formal review of care plan meetings, in response to escalating concerns must take place in the event of repeat episodes of children going missing and following the first missing episode if there are concerns in relation to sexual exploitation.

For these meetings to work, and thereby improve our collective responses, appropriate attendance and clarity of purpose are essential. The first stage intervention meeting will take place after five episodes within a 90-day rolling period. This level of intervention meeting is the crucial stage in avoiding serious escalation and must, therefore, be given high priority by all concerned.

### **36. Delegated Responsibilities**

The Home will support young people to have opportunities to engage in wide range of activities and will carry out all checks that a reasonable parent would in regard to activities, and overnight stays in line with statutory guidance on entrusting decision making to carers of Looked after Children.