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Aims and objectives

A statement of the overall aims of the children's home, and the objectives to be attained with regard to children accommodated in the home

The Meadows is a registered children's home and school providing care, accommodation and education for up to eight children aged between 10 and 17 on admission. The Meadows is a warm, therapeutic environment; offering the child hope for the future.

Children are given opportunities through education, achievement and support, to plan for a better future. Children have the chance to put damaging and disruptive environments and experiences behind them; whilst maintaining their place in their own families.

The Meadows is a positive choice for children for whom residential care is the preferred option. Most placements are long term; shorter placements are available for children working towards independence or moving towards family placements.

The Meadows is owned by Country Care Children's Homes Ltd.

Country Care was established to meet the needs of children who have been identified as needing a period of residential care. During their stay we assess and address their needs through education, planned activities, individual direct work and group work. Our routines ensure safety and satisfaction.

At the end of their stay children are prepared for moving on and helped through that period. Post placement support and follow up work is undertaken as necessary.

The Meadows offers a safe, structured, stable and warm environment, which affords the child positive experiences; new, achievable challenges; success; and positive reinforcement. We create firm, recognisable boundaries and employ a consistent, structured approach within a safe framework.

Each child is treated as an individual and has privacy, freedom and choice. We encourage and assist the children to express themselves appropriately; assess their own situation; and take part in planning their own futures. Children work toward their own goals and learn to take control of their own lives. As they progress they will be reintegrated to mainstream education and a positive move on from The Meadows. We actively encourage and support children in developing their potential through higher education.

Objectives

- To provide a safe, stable, stimulating, structured and warm therapeutic environment.
- To provide caring and appropriate adult role models.
- To engage in individual direct work helping to focus on individual issues and helping the children to explore and understand their experiences and feelings and to enable them to move forwards and develop.
- To provide a high quality multi-faceted educational experience that will lead to re-integration into mainstream education.
- To develop the individual's self-esteem and build a positive self-image.
- To teach respect for self, others, and the environment.
- To teach a variety of new skills and teamwork as part of a cohesive group.
- To create achievable challenges for both the individual and the group.

Facilities and services

A statement of the facilities and services to be provided for the children accommodated in the children's home

The Meadows is a registered children's home with education. The Meadows was registered with Derbyshire Social Services in 1999, and in 2002 this registration transferred to the National Care Standards Commission and subsequently to the Commission for Social Care Inspection and subsequently to Ofsted.

The Meadows is an independent school registered by Ofsted and rated by them as "outstanding". The Meadows is an accredited examination centre for examinations up to and including GCSEs via AQA; we can also assess via the ASDAN scheme.

The Meadows is a licensed activity centre, licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority. The Meadows is also a Duke of Edinburgh Award training unit.

Country Care, the owner of The Meadows, holds the 'Investor in People' award.

The Meadows provides care 365 days per year; 24 hours a day. A structured programme of education, activities and individual therapeutic support is tailored and responsive to the needs of each child. This will include enabling and empowering the children to exercise choice and control over their life space and choice of activities, as their programme progresses.

For some children, residential care is the positive choice.

All staff are trained in the University of Cornell Therapeutic Crisis Intervention range of behaviour management techniques and interventions. These will be deployed throughout the day, as needed by the child. All children are offered Art Therapy with our Art Psychotherapist. Other psychological or therapeutic support is offered as identified in the child's Care Plan and Country Care's Placement Plan. However we are always conscious that any interventions must be carefully planned considering the needs of this child at this time.

Full professional reports are produced for each individual. At the end of their stay they will be prepared for moving on and helped through that period. Follow up work will be undertaken as necessary. This includes participating in Pathway Plans where appropriate. When children leave they are presented with a photo album that portrays their stay at Country Care and their achievements.

Our activities include adventurous, physical endeavours that are led by our multi-qualified outdoor education instructors. They include hill walking and mountaineering, gorge scrambling, rock climbing, abseiling, open canoeing, kayaking, sailing, horse riding, off-road biking, paddle surfing, coasteering, caving and mine exploration. Other activities include sports; making use of local resources e.g. fencing, football, rugby, netball, etc as well as local youth clubs, cadets, etc. We also make use of arts and crafts (including Art Therapy).

Some of these activities are challenging and arduous but are designed to give the individual the opportunity to attain personal achievement and growth and success through new and exciting experiences. These activities are of proven value in raising self-esteem and establishing trust, they also provide an excellent training ground for learning the value of

teamwork. As well as the educational and demanding elements of the activities they offer stimulation, motivation and a lot of fun!

The Meadows offers additional services including escort services, supervision of contact, court reports, outreach work, independence support, post-placement support, assessments.

Children spend time away from The Meadows. There are regular holidays and expeditions to different parts of the country. Children have been abroad and enjoyed sailing holidays. Children may also spend time away when they need time on their own away from the group. In addition to this children may, on admission, spend time away from The Meadows as an introductory period; giving them the chance to adjust to the change from one living situation and another. This is particularly important where the child is coming from a distressing background such as a family or placement breakdown or other traumatic event.

Specific programmes are developed for the individual child. For example one child spent weekdays at The Meadows, and weekends away from The Meadows with staff as they were having difficulty coping in the group during freetime.

Owners and Management

The name and address of the registered provider, and of the registered manager if applicable

The registered providers are: -

Pamela and David Cathcart, Directors

Country Care Children's Homes Ltd.

The Meadows

Beech Lane

Dove Holes

BUXTON

Derbyshire

SK17 8DJ

The registered Manager is: -

Robin Barker

Country Care Children's Homes Ltd.

The Meadows

Beech Lane

Dove Holes

BUXTON

Derbyshire

SK17 8DJ

The relevant qualifications and experience of the registered provider and, if applicable, the registered manager

Country Care Children's Homes Ltd

The Registered Provider is Country Care Children's Homes Ltd. The Directors are David and Pamela Cathcart who founded Country Care in 1999. The Meadows was opened in July 1999. The Directors take an active role in helping to run The Meadows. They both served with the Greater Manchester Police in the CID for many years. They were previously co-owners of a crisis intervention centre.

Robin Barker

The Manager, Robin Barker, is a qualified and registered social worker holding the ICIRC and CSS certificates. He has undergone further training in management, direct work with children and families, and other relevant areas. He has over twenty years experience in a variety of schools, children's homes, CHE's, fieldwork, crisis intervention and youth training and activities. Robin is a qualified, Full Associate Therapeutic Crisis Intervention trainer, accredited with the University of Cornell. He leads Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training for The Meadows and also co-ordinates joint training for other children's homes. By invitation, he has trained Social Services in-house staff. He has additional training in supporting staff following crisis interventions. He is an accredited trainer of Child Protection, Derbyshire SCB and NSPCC. Robin holds the Rescue and Emergency Care HSE First Aid certificate. He is qualified to teach and coach a number of sports and activities. He has extensive experience of outward-bound activities with children and young people and has taught water sports in the UK and the Caribbean. He holds the RYA/DOT Yachtmaster Offshore, Powerboat Level 2 with coastal endorsement and the VHF operator's licence. He has worked as a professional yacht delivery and charter skipper and has successfully completed many ocean passages under sail in small yachts. He is a former county captain of fencing. Robin is a Member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists. He is currently undertaking an MA with the University of Derby with the theme of Therapeutic Child Care. Robin Barker is a member of the Social Care Association and works to their code of practice. He has been with Country Care since the beginning in June 1999.

The Country Care staff team

The number, relevant qualifications and experience of persons working at the children's home, and, if the workers are all of one sex, a description of the means whereby the home will promote appropriate role models of both sexes

Manager Robin Barker is supported by as staff team comprising:

- Deputy Manager
- Head Teacher
- Senior Practitioner/ Art Therapist
- Five Senior Residential Care Workers
- Residential Care Workers including qualified outdoor education instructors
- Relief Residential Care Workers
- Three Teachers
- Housekeeper
- Groundsman

In addition to this, Directors David and Pamela Cathcart play an active role. The Manager's qualifications and experience are as stated above.

Rachel Dowle

Head Teacher Rachel Dowle holds a Bachelor of Education (Honours) degree in Secondary Science and the Post Graduate Certificate in Special Educational Needs. She has also studied Outdoor Education to degree level and holds the Mountainwalking Leader Award (summer), B.C.U Level 3 Coach award in Sea Kayaking, River kayaking and has completed the Level 3 training in Open Canoe, Archery Leader Award, Single Pitch Supervisors Award, Mine Leader (level 1 training), Cave Leader (level 2 training), R.Y.A. Assistant Sailing Instructor, powerboat level 2 (including the sea endorsement) and the Rescue and Emergency Care First Aid award. She also holds the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award and is a Duke of Edinburgh's Award Assessor. She has also completed a certificate in Counselling, and is currently studying towards a Diploma in Counselling and Psychotherapy and a Master's degree in Special Educational Needs. She has wide experience of teaching formal classroom education, field studies and outdoor education to all age groups in a variety of settings including a crisis intervention centre. She has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. She has been with Country Care since July 1999.

Deputy Manager

Matt Ryan is a very experienced worker and holds a Diploma in Psychology. He has NVQ 4, BELA, First Aid, Basic Food Hygiene and Basic Health and Safety certificates. He has experience of youth and community work helping to teach young people IT skills and music. He has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. He is currently studying the BA Social Work at Sheffield Hallam University. He has been with Country Care since January 2000.

Peter Russell

Senior Practitioner and Art Therapist Peter Russell holds a MA in Art Therapy, BA (Hons) degree in Arts Therapies, The Post Graduate Diploma in Art Therapy, the Certificate in Counselling Skills, First Aid, Basic Food Hygiene, Basic Health and Safety, etc. He has previously worked as a Residential Care Worker and is widely experienced. He also has his own art business, mainly conducted over the Internet. Peter is responsible for our art therapy programme. Peter Russell is accredited with the Council of Psychotherapists and is subject to supervision by his psychoanalytical mentor at the University of Derby. He has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. He is currently undertaking the PG Cert in Systemic Family Therapy with the University of Derby. He has been with Country Care since October 1999.

Norma Varnouse

Teacher Norma Varnouse Teacher Norma Varnouse Holds a BA Hons in Psychology, PGCE, MA in Special Educational needs and Advanced Diploma in Special Educational Needs, BELA and has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. She is currently working on her Doctorate. She has wide experience working in schools, as a private tutor, as a riding instructor and has lived and worked in a number of different countries. She is a member of the British Psychological society. She is a pianist and is actively involved with family and community. She has been with Country Care since January 2003.

Gill King

Teacher Gill King Joined the team in November 2006. She holds BA Hons in Mathematics Education, C&G 7307 Stages 1&2, BSc Hons in Zoology and 2nd MB Medicine. She has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.

Emma Bond

Senior Residential Care Worker Emma Bond has worked in a variety of schools and outdoor education centres. She holds the BTec National Diploma in Leisure Studies and NVQ level 2 in Sports and Recreation and NVQ levels 3 and 4 in Care. She holds First Aid, RYA powerboat level 2 with sea endorsement, Basic Food Hygiene and Basic Health and Safety certificates. She has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. She has been with Country Care since July 2000.

Neil Booth

Senior Residential Care Worker Neil Booth has worked with us as a senior since June 2007; he previously worked for us for two years before widening his experience in another organisation. He holds the NVQ 3, GNVQ Leisure & Tourism, Community Sports Leader Award, HND Golf & Leisure Management and Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. He has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis intervention training. He is currently engaged on NVQ 4 training.

Jane Hatton

Senior Residential Social Worker Jane Hatton is widely experienced in social care. She holds the DipSW. She also has a BA (Hons) in Social Science, Certificate in Counselling, Basic Food Hygiene, Basic Health and Safety and a First Aid certificate. She is currently undertaking her counselling diploma. She has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. She is an accredited practice teacher with Manchester Metropolitan University and Stockport College. She has been with Country Care since August 2000.

Sharon Cherry

Residential Care Worker Sharon Cherry is an experienced worker. She holds First Aid, Basic Food Hygiene, and Basic Health and Safety certificates and NVQ level 3. She has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. She has been with Country Care since December 2000.

Rachel Browett

Residential Care Worker Rachel Browett is an experienced worker having worked as a Residential Social Worker and as an Education Care Officer. She holds the BTEC National Diploma in Social Care, NVQ level 4 in care and NVQ level 3 in pharmacy dispensing. She has achieved her First Aid Certificate and successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. She is currently undertaking her Social Work degree at Stockport College. She has been with Country Care since March 2002.

Rachel Wain

Residential Care Worker Rachel Wain holds the CACHE Diploma in Child Care and Education and NVQ 3 and has previously worked as a children's play assistant. She has successfully completed TCI training. Rachel has worked for Country Care since May 2005.

Hayley Spencer

Residential Care Worker Hayley Spencer is an experienced worker who has previously worked in a crisis intervention team. She holds NVQ 3, a First Aid certificate and has successfully completed TCI training. Hayley joined the team in June 2004.

Rebecca Harman

Residential Care Worker Becky Harman also works as a part-time youth leader with Derbyshire County Council. She has also worked as a helper at two schools. She holds HND Business and finance, BSc Environmental Science and Policy, MSc Environmental Management, First Aid certificate, NVQ 3 and Introduction to Counselling. She has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. She has been with Country Care since August 2002.

Philip Doherty

Residential Care Worker Phil Doherty is a very experienced worker who has worked in a number of children's homes. He has worked with Country Care since November 2002. He holds NVQ 4, 1st Aid, BELA and ML training, BCU 2* kayak, RYA PWC, Basic Food Hygiene, Basic Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Gym Instructor and he has successfully completed TCI training.

Warren Sharpe

Assistant Teacher Warren Sharpe is also a professional photographer, gaining a distinction in Professional Photography Practice from The London School of Printing he also holds NVQ 3 in Care. He has travelled the world extensively and has a very active interest in off-

road biking. He worked in Sri Lanka as a relief worker following the tsunami disaster. He has successfully completed TCI training. Warren has worked for Country Care since May 2005. He is currently studying for NVQ 4.

Terry Watson

Residential Care Worker Terry Watson joined the team in December 2006. He was formerly joint managing director of an engineering company. He is now a student at Sheffield Hallam University where he is doing the BA social work course; he previously passed the Access to Social Work course. He has obtained the Health and Safety Certificate and has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training and is undergoing further training with Country Care.

Julie Scott

Residential Care Worker Julie Scott also works for Stockport Social Services; she joined the team in December 2006. She holds NVQ 3 Care, NVQ 4 Management, NVQ Assessor Award, Health and Safety, she has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training and a number of other relevant courses. She is currently undergoing further Country Care training.

Katie Ryan

Residential Care Worker Katie Ryan joined the team in December 2006. She holds HND Early Childhood Studies, BA Hons Early Childhood Studies and C&G teaching adult learners. She has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. She is currently studying the MA social work at Sheffield Hallam University

Samm Rich

Senior Residential Care Worker Samm Rich joined the team in November 2006. She is an experienced worker who has worked in a number of other homes and centres. She holds BA Joint Hons in Psychology & Childhood & Youth Studies, Counselling Skills, First Aid Certificate, Food Hygiene and Health & Safety Certificate and BSL Level 1. She has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. She is completing her ML in the near future.

Emma Scowen

Residential Care Worker Emma Scowen joined the team in May 2007. She also works in a local pre-school group and has considerable early years experience. She holds the NVQ level 3 and has done many relevant training courses; she also holds horse riding qualifications, First Aid and has passed the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training.

Emma Cundy

Residential Care Worker Emma Cundy joined the team in May 2007. She has experience of working with children abroad; her previous job was a childcare manager at a ski resort. She has successfully passed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training and is engaged on NVQ 3 training.

Lucy Mosley

Residential Care Worker Lucy Mosely joined the team in July 2007. She is currently undergoing NVQ3 and Country Care training.

Donna Wilkinson

Senior Residential Care Worker Donna Wilkinson joined the team in May 2007. She is an experienced worker and has worked in three other children's homes. She holds NVQ level

3 and is an NVQ assessor. She has attended many relevant courses and has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. She is currently engaged in NVQ level 4 training.

Dean Connolly

Residential Care Worker Dean Connolly Holds a GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism. He has worked at Butlins holiday camp and as a security officer. He is currently engaged in NVQ level three training and has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. He joined the company in September 2008.

Aksel Luleciler

Residential Care Worker Aksel Luleciler left a career in banking to join the caring professions in 2006; since then he has gained experience as a healthcare assistant prior to joining our team in September 2008. He is engaged in NVQ level 3 training and has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.

Gillian Hesp

Residential Care Worker Gillian Hesp holds the pre-service certificate in education and C&G Teachers Certificate. She is currently engaged in NVQ level 3 training and has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. She joined the team in September 2008.

Debbie Green

Residential Care Worker Debbie Green has experience of working with early years children and continues to work as a classroom assistant at Dove Holes School. She holds the NVQ3 Early Years Childcare and Education and has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. She joined the team in September 2008.

Cassie Downey

Residential Care Worker Cassie Downey is a qualified Social Worker, holding a first class honours degree in social work. She has experience of working with children in early years and as a health care assistant with the NHS. She joined the team as a student social worker in October 2007. She has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training

Linda Herridge

Residential Care Worker Linda Herridge is an experienced worker who has worked in a number of children's homes and other social care settings. She is the holder of the Preliminary Certificate in Residential Care, First Aid certificate, and NVQ level 3. She has successfully completed Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. Linda first joined us in 2001 and worked for us until November 2006, when she left to gain further experience. She rejoined the team in August 2008.

Sarah Edge

Housekeeper Sarah Edge is an experienced care worker. She holds First Aid, Basic Food Hygiene, and Basic Health and Safety certificates. She has successfully completed training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. She has successfully completed NVQ level 2 training and is now engaged on level 3 training. She has been with Country Care since October 1999.

Joseph Mikielewicz

Part time Housekeeper Joe Mikielwicz is well experienced in his craft and also works for Derbyshire County Council. He joined the team in January 2006.

Gender balance

It is our policy to ensure that there is a mix of both male and female staff on the Country Care team. Should there be a shortfall, we would consider advertising for staff of a particular gender, following the GOQ procedures.

Staff development and support

The arrangements for the supervision, training and development of employees.

Country Care has achieved accreditation as an Investors in People organisation; we achieved this in record time! We were highly praised at our latest assessment in January 2006. The report is available.

All staff are recruited, trained and supervised as required and advised by the National Minimum Standards and regulations. All staff receive induction training in excess of TOPSS Induction Standards. Staff receive training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, basic food hygiene, basic health and safety, child protection, childcare law, fire procedures, first aid and adventure activities. Country Care is committed to ongoing staff development, which is achieved by individual training needs analysis, structured professional supervision and by team building and education and individual courses including professional qualifying courses. Each member of staff has their own Personal Development Plan.

We are fully committed to staff development and training, and aim to have all our staff on training courses during the year. These include induction training, regular, professional training in: fire prevention and control, basic food hygiene, basic health and safety, First Aid, dealing with violence and aggression, Child Protection, the Children Act 1989 and other relevant legislation, guidance and reports, assessment and therapeutic skills and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. Staff are also involved in NVQ, DipSW and outdoor education skills training and qualifications to national governing body standards.

Staff are supported through supervision, briefing and debriefing, team meetings, annual appraisal and through individual attention to their training and development needs. Staff receive particular support through induction and during their trial period. Each member of staff has a designated supervisor.

Operations

The organisational structure of the children's home.

David and Pamela Cathcart are the directors of Country Care Children's Homes Ltd and carry on the business of the children's home. The manager, Robin Barker, who is a qualified social worker, is employed by and is accountable to them. He has responsibility for the day-to-day running of the home. He has line management responsibility for the staff employed at the home who comprise a deputy, a team of Residential Care Workers (five of whom are of senior grade), two teachers and an assistant teacher, an art psychotherapist

and qualified outdoor education staff. There is a pool of relief staff unique to the home to cover absence or to provide extra cover if necessary. The relief staff are trained and supervised in exactly the same way as the other staff.

In the absence of the manager or the deputy a senior residential care worker deputises.

There are two designated keyworkers for each child in placement. There are designated shift leaders for each shift. There is on-call back up advice and support 24 hours a day.

Regulation 33 visits – Dawn Clemson

Dawn Clemson is the Regulation 33 visitor for Country Care. Her reports are available for reading by all staff, social workers, inspectors, etc. Dawn is a well experienced and qualified social worker who has extensive residential experience.

External supervision of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Dominic Hodgkinson

Dominic Hodgkinson is the Manager of a long-term children's home. He has worked in a variety of residential childcare settings including crisis intervention and also long term care. He holds NVQ 4 and has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (version 4), Children Act, child protection, fire safety training, health and safety, first aid, and holds a counselling certificate. He is accredited as a Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Trainer (Version 5) with the University of Cornell. Dominic Hodgkinson is available for outside supervision and support for any staff using Therapeutic Crisis Intervention techniques.

The children

The following particulars

The age range of the children 10 – 17 years of age on admission; children of either gender may be admitted.

(a) The age -range, sex and numbers of children for whom it is intended that accommodation should be provided

Up to eight children may be resident.

(b) Whether it is intended to accommodate children who are disabled, have special needs or any other special characteristics; and

The children do not have 'special characteristics' as such; one common feature is that they have all suffered difficult life experiences and may be troubled and disturbed; exhibiting extremes of behaviour.

The children could be categorised as suffering from emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Many children placed with us have significant attachment issues or disorders. We have also dealt with a significant number of trauma cases including PTSD.

(c) The range of needs (other than those mentioned in sub-paragraph (b)) that the home is intended to meet

Many of the children may have shown mild learning difficulties. Country Care would not be a suitable placement for children with severe learning difficulties.

Children of any ethnic origin or religious persuasion may be admitted to the home.

Admissions

Any criteria used for admission to the home, including the home's policy and procedures for emergency admissions, if the home provides for emergency admissions

When considering the admission of a child attention will be paid both to their needs and background and to those of the children already within the home to achieve a balanced and harmonious group. Children of any ethnic origin or religious persuasion may be admitted to the home.

Children may either be accommodated by a local authority under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or subject to a care order. Remands may be considered.

- The placing authority must be supportive of the objectives of Country Care, including involvement in adventure activities
- The placing authority must be supportive of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.
- The child (and parents where appropriate) must be consulted about the placement.

There is sometimes short notice of admissions. However short the notice, admissions will be handled in a calm and structured way.

Children placed at Country Care are often in a period of upset or disturbance, such the breakdown of their previous placement. Admissions may be at short notice, or emergency admissions, but they will always be planned. Emergency Referrals will not be accepted unless there is a suitable staff team, available for the child. This includes ensuring that all necessary equipment, vehicles, clothing, are ready so that the child will not experience unnecessary distress or disruption. In most situations, including emergency admissions, the child will be visited in their current location, will be given written and verbal information about Country Care, and will be encouraged to discuss their feelings about the admission. It is the expectation of Country Care that the placing authority will actively support the child through this stage. Children may, on admission, spend time away from The Meadows as an introductory period; giving them the chance to adjust to the change from one living situation to another. This is particularly important where the child is coming from distressing circumstances such as a family or placement breakdown.

Children will always be given written and verbal information about Country Care at the earliest opportunity. This will include rules and expectations; that they may be held (restrained) for their own safety; about how to complain. A copy of the Children's Brochure is available on Country Care's website and can easily be downloaded.

The Admissions Form will be faxed, emailed or personally delivered to the placing authority that will be required to return this to Country Care prior to placement with as much information as possible completed.

Where the child is admitted less than 24 hours after initial referral, their situation will be reviewed as soon as possible and in any case within 72 hours of admission (including weekends and holidays) to ensure that the child has been appropriately placed. To facilitate

that review, the placing authority will be required to provide all necessary information. This will include clear decisions and protocols on managing contact.

Staff have specific instructions on managing emergency referrals in a calming way. It is recognised that pertinent information may have to be patiently repeated to the child as they may be non-receptive to engagement. The priority will be to ensure that the caring message gets through to the child. Children are encouraged to bring special possessions or photographs with them.

Many of the children placed at The Meadows are being placed out of their own area. In addition to our standard Admission Procedures, we also carry out an assessment to ensure that there is appropriate information sharing between agencies in the respective areas, and in particular children's health and education needs are met and they will feel safe and supported away from their home area. There is a focus on how contact with their home social worker and with their family and other significant people will be addressed. This follows the concerns raised in 'Safeguarding Children 2005'.

Focusing on the individual child

If the children's home provides or is intended to provide accommodation for more than six children, a description of the positive outcomes intended for children in a home of such a size, and of the home's strategy for counteracting any adverse effects arising from its size, on the children accommodated there.

Where any child or sibling group is admitted, there will first be detailed prior consideration of how this will affect the dynamics of the group of children already in placement, and each individual child.

This will include issues such as keyworking; choice; attention to the individuality of each child; privacy; and the possibility of bullying.

We only accept referrals where we consider that placement at Country Care will make a positive contribution to that child and his/her future life. We always consider how the placement of a particular child would affect the dynamics of the group of children in placement. We consider each child, and their particular needs and vulnerabilities. We consider the group interests and the interests of each individual child.

Care at Country Care is very child focused; with an emphasis on individual direct work with the child through keyworking and therapy. There are detailed monthly reports for each child, and regular reviews of Placement Plans and risk assessments. The children are discussed individually at the daily handovers, and during the fortnightly team meetings. There is detailed and considered debriefing after any incidents. All staff receive regular structured, professional supervision. All this helps to ensure that at Country Care we never lose sight of the needs of the individual child.

There will be times when children need time away from the group, and benefit from additional attention from staff, over and above their regular keyworking sessions. Children may spend time away from The Meadows, in small groups or on their own with staff. (2:1 staff/child ratio)

One to one time is spent with each child, each day. For example, this could be part of their education or part of their keywork sessions.

At most times there will be no more than seven children in placement at any one time. A typical profile of the group would be four or five children on medium to long term placements, with one or two children on shorter term placements.

The ethos of Country Care

A description of the children's home's underlying ethos and philosophy, and where this is based on any theoretical or therapeutic model, a description of that model.

We believe that for some children residential care is the positive choice. Some young people find families, either their own or an alternative foster family, difficult to cope with at a particular time. It may be easier to maintain and enhance family links from a residential base than from a foster placement. Additionally where the aim is to return the children home, it is preferable where possible to keep siblings together. Country Care can offer sibling groups positive support whilst working to return them to their own family, where this is in their overall care plan. Alternately Country Care can keep siblings together whilst a permanent alternative family is sought.

Children may have experienced damaging experiences and environments. Placement at The Meadows can help break links with delinquent networks whilst preserving, improving and maintaining valuable family ties. Where children are placed away from their home area we take particular care to ensure that they are safe and supported; and that they feel safe and supported.

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

The University of Cornell Therapeutic Crisis Intervention programme embodies a range of techniques and strategies drawn from several approaches – behavioural and interactional – which provides a framework for helping children through crisis, and teaching them better ways of coping.

Crisis as opportunity

The key element of our ethos is that children may come to us in crisis, and we treat crisis as an opportunity to effect lasting, positive change.

“During the period of upset of a crisis, a person is more susceptible to being influenced by others than at other times of relative psychological equilibrium...this is a matter of supreme importance: because by deploying helping services to deal with individuals in crisis, a small amount of effort leads to a maximum amount of lasting response.”

Gerald Caplan in “Prevention of Mental Disorders in Young People

Crisis is an opportunity for growth and we endeavour to make the most of that opportunity to help the children and young people develop better, more constructive, effective coping skills and strategies.

The caring environment

We are striving for a psychologically 'clean' environment within which there is sufficient love and affection for children to grow. Children need to feel treated with care, and so need to have their bodily comforts met.

"With a sense of physical well-being a person becomes more receptive and is, in fact, eager for experiences beyond the immediate bodily demands" Henry Maier 1979

"The children must get plenty of love and affection whether they deserve it or not: they must be assured of the basic quota of happy, recreational experiences whether they seem to have it coming or not. In short, love and affection, as well as the granting of gratifying life situations, cannot be made the bargaining tools of educational or even therapeutic motivation, but must be kept tax free, as minimal parts of the youngster's diet, irrespective of the problems of deservedness."

Fritz Redl 1952

"Youngsters need to find this evidence of the right to exist in difficult as well as good moments"
Henry Maier 1979

At Country Care we are proactive on showing and reinforcing the caring message to children.

"No attempts at influencing behaviour pathology can be successful if, at the same time, every party of the environment is not kept scrupulously 'clean' from the point of view of psychological hygiene."

Fritz Redl 1951

Friendship with influence – the adult as role model

The relationship between staff and child plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of our programme. There is a special quality in the relationship between the adult as educator and the troubled child. At all times staff must be seriously engaged in their efforts to help the child explore and understand their experiences and feelings and then to move forward. At one level this involves breaking the momentum of the crisis cycle by presenting the child with alternative ways of reacting rather than allowing a pattern of maladaptive ways of interacting to proliferate. Our staff will not react to the child's destructive behaviours in the way that the child expects/fears/wants. Our practice is to encourage more mature strengths, to teach the child better ways of coping with difficult feelings and situations.

The Aware Culture and the Arena of Safety

Country Care must be a safe, non-abusive environment for children and staff. We operate to an Aware Culture as described by Ray Wyre. All staff are supervised, supported and trained to ensure that they always operate within the Arena of Safety. There is no point to anything we do, if we cannot create and maintain a safe environment and emotional safe base for children. This is the starting point for all our recruitment practices, and for all our operational practices, policies and procedures.

Social Care Association and General Social Care Council

Country Care is a corporate member of the Social Care Association and is bound by the ethos and Code of Conduct of that organisation.

Country Care complies with and promotes the GSCC Code of Practice for employers of social care workers.

All staff are issued with their own copy of the GSCC Code of Practice for Social Care Workers and are required to comply with this.

The children's health

The arrangements made to protect and promote the health of the children accommodated at the home.

All staff take a pro-active role in promoting all aspects of the children's health and are required to comply with the policy on health and health education. All are trained to basic health and safety standards.

It is recognised that many children who enter residential care may not have had continuity of medical and dental care and it is our policy to ensure that health needs are assessed, monitored and met and that the children understand the importance of health care and learn to take responsibility for their own health in an age appropriate way. We ensure that health, dental and eyesight checks and assessments are carried out in accordance with the regulations and that health needs are actively considered at every review. In addition to this we actively promote the health care of the individual in the same way that a caring parent would do.

Prior to admission we seek the authority of the parents or those with parental responsibility to consent to routine or minor medical or dental procedures. This includes the administration of first aid. In the case of major procedures parental consent is sought except in the case where delay would be dangerous. A child over 16 years of age or of sufficient understanding may give consent to his or her own medical treatment.

An individual Health Plan is drawn up for each child; and this is regularly maintained and reviewed.

Parents or those with parental responsibility are routinely kept informed of their child's state of health, however in the case of an older child who is of sufficient understanding any request for privacy is taken into consideration.

Local GPs, dentists and opticians are used, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual and his or her parent or those with parental responsibility. Close co-operation is sought and promoted between the parties.

Accurate and contemporaneous health records are kept for each child. When a child leaves Country Care we ensure that relevant health records are forwarded promptly.

Medications are securely stored and handled. In the case of children over the age of 16 or of sufficient understanding they are in general entrusted with the retention and administration of their own medications where these are suitable for self-administration. Administration of medication by staff is recorded; logging date, time, dosage, reason for use of medication and signed by the members of staff.

Country Care is proactive in promoting the health needs of children, recognising that the intensive level of support offered to the child provides a good opportunity to reassess health needs, including those left unmet or inappropriately addressed. It is also a good opportunity to demonstrate the caring message to the child. Where basic needs have been met with a caring and nurturing environment as standard; this is more conducive to progressing to addressing the underlying problems with the child.

We have achieved the Healthy Schools Award in recognition of our work on healthy eating, nutrition and diet. We regularly test the fitness of the children and encourage them to take appropriate exercise and to rest and play also. We strongly discourage smoking and have an excellent record in helping children to stop.

Health Education, Sex Education (including HIV, AIDS and STDs) and Personal Hygiene are specifically addressed in the Life Skills and Personal, Social and Health Education sections of the Education Curriculum as well as in keywork sessions. Children's incentive schemes often include personal hygiene components.

Health and safety matters are taken with the utmost seriousness. All staff are trained in health and safety and there are routine, programmed checks.

Learning for life

The arrangements for the promotion of the education of the children accommodated there, including the facilities for private study.

Country Care's stated objective is to provide a high quality multi-faceted educational experience that will lead to reintegration into mainstream education.

We have a very highly regarded educational provision and The Meadows is a registered independent school via Ofsted and an accredited examination centre for exams, including GCSEs, via the AQA system; we can also assess using the ASDAN system. Our school provides a very high quality teaching and learning environment. There are two classrooms and a quiet room as well as toilet provision. These are decorated and equipped to a very high standard.

All children and young people of school age are required to attend school or such other provision as has been specified for them.

All staff at Country Care are committed to preparing young people for a successful life; making the most of the opportunities available for them. A holistic education in its widest sense is a priority for the children in our care.

There are situations where the educational needs and/or abilities of a child coming to Country Care have not been fully assessed or have previously been afforded a lesser priority due to their life experiences. We aim to provide each individual child or young

person with the particular help and encouragement he or she requires to achieve their full educational potential which will equip them as well as possible for adult life.

It is our experience that children and young people in care have often suffered from lack of continuity in their education and because of difficulties and disruptions earlier in their life are damaged and vulnerable. They often suffer from low self esteem and may have under-achieved in the past. It is our aim to give every child or young person as many opportunities to succeed as possible.

Our staff team, which includes three qualified teachers, an assistant teacher and qualified outdoor education instructors, can offer a wide range of skills and opportunities to the children in our care. Each child's Placement Plan is built around learning experiences that reflect that individual's needs. These experiences range from formal classroom teaching to challenging outdoor pursuits and the children will be encouraged to form links with the local community by joining local clubs and libraries and helping with community projects. Our classrooms provide a rich and stimulating environment with extensive resources including multi-media system and laboratory facilities. The opportunity for quiet study and the pursuit of personal hobbies and interests is not only available but actively encouraged.

Encouragement and support from parents improves any child's performance. Wherever possible parents will be actively involved in formulating the child's placement plan along with the individual, key staff at Country Care and other interested parties.

Many of the children who come to Country Care have encountered barriers to their educational growth. They may have been deprived of essential psychological experiences during their early life, which make it difficult to engage in the educational task. Family breakdowns often result in disruption and lack of continuity to school life. The experience of failure within the school environment can perpetuate a cycle of inadequacy, anxiety and an inability to cope.

At Country Care our Education Programme is designed to take into account the very unique needs of each individual. Our staff are experienced in working with a variety of teaching and learning styles within the educational and therapeutic environment and our flexible approach is designed to help each individual to learn to their fullest potential. The programme is intended to be broad and balanced and able to respond to a wide range of educational and emotional needs. We employ a holistic, "seamless" approach with teachers and care staff working together to provide a 24 hour educational and therapeutic experience.

Aims

- To diffuse anxieties and address inadequacies regarding education
- To build self-esteem and self-confidence
- To help the individual focus on a task which is separate to their own emotional lives
- To offer a broad and balanced curriculum based on the requirements of the National Curriculum, allowing for the individuals educational needs
- To reintegrate individuals into full-time education, ultimately into mainstream school

On referral to Country Care each child undergoes a comprehensive assessment of his or her educational needs. A programme designed to meet these specific needs is then formulated taking into account their age, educational background and development, and their ability to function within the group.

Pupil programmes are unique and vary according to individual needs. Some pupils will later be integrated into mainstream education at a local school. Others need to work in our school on a programme designed on the National Curriculum before they can be re-integrated into mainstream education. Younger pupils may need a more activity based programme which could include a degree of one to one tuition with outdoor education, which encourage the child to learn actively through their experiences.

Our teaching staff are qualified teachers as well as being experienced in many aspects of Outdoor Education, which allows a large degree of flexibility. Outdoor Education is an element that is available to all children in our care and is an effective medium for the Personal and Social Development aspect of our Curriculum as well as aspects of PE.

Certificates of Achievement courses are also available where appropriate, and IT skills are integral throughout the curriculum. The classrooms are well equipped with PCs and the Art Therapy room with Apple Mac computers so children have the opportunity to become literate in both types.

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Each child's education plan will be built around learning experiences that reflect that individual's needs. The opportunity for quiet study and the pursuit of personal hobbies and interests is not only available but actively encouraged.

The resources available at Country Care aim to have a high impact on each child's development. We aim to maximise the use of our own resources and of those available locally. We also have access to the careers service as needed for both children and staff.

Recreation and activities

The arrangements to promote children's participation in recreational, sporting and cultural activities.

Country Care is a licensed Adventure Activities Centre and participation in adventurous activities is an integral part of the programme. Activities are provided as an integral part of our education programme.

Country Care offers a wide range of adventurous activities including indoor and outdoor climbing, bouldering, mountaineering, kayaking, hill walking, gorge walking, orienteering, open boating, sailing, paddle surfing, off-road cycling, coasteering and abseiling, caving and mine exploration. These are part of the education programme and are complimentary to other elements of the National Curriculum. Children are also supported in activities during their leisure time.

Children participate in activities such as fishing, camping, swimming, cycling, walking, ice-skating, skateboarding, rollerblading, quadding, go-karting, dance classes, music and singing lessons and fencing.

Children are encouraged to read; to participate in art and crafts (including Art Therapy). Children are encouraged to explore their artistic potential through art and craft, music, poetry, song, creative writing, computer design.

There are educational visits to museums and galleries.

Children are encouraged to join in community activities such as youth club or climbing club, army and navy cadets and other interest groups.

Risk assessments are carried out for high-risk activities, including activities outside the scope of the Adventure Activities licence. There are stringent procedures in place relating to safety arrangements for children and staff and to leaving details of whereabouts and reporting in after an activity.

There is a planned activity programme for each individual child, as part of the education programme. This could be an individual Art Therapy session, or a group of children going climbing or kayaking with staff.

Listening to the children

The arrangements made for consultation with the children accommodated about the operation of the children's home.

In all cases it is the policy of Country Care that the child will be invited to attend and participate in planning meetings and reviews, with outside support if requested. At each meeting the child will be reminded of their right to invoke the formal representations procedures if they are unhappy or have concerns

There are regular children's meetings, and the children are encouraged to take part, and so contribute to the way the home is run. We also run a regular therapeutic community group.

Children take as great a part as they can in formulating their own Placement Plans.

Children are respected and treated as individuals and given autonomy and choice within the broad outline of the programme. The child is encouraged to exercise choice in areas where they can and, as the programme progresses, the element of choice and control by the child grows. For example; the children decided that they wanted separate bathrooms for 'girls' and 'boys'. This has been actioned.

Children help choose the menus, within a range of healthy eating options.

Children can choose how they manage their life space, within the confines of creating and maintaining a clean and comfortable environment. Children are encouraged to personalise their own rooms.

The children are encouraged to exercise self-discipline and to take part in formulating and maintaining the house rules, including setting consequences for unacceptable behaviours.

Each child has two nominated key workers. The keyworker's responsibilities include ensuring that the views of the child are heard. Formal keyworking sessions are scheduled at least weekly.

Part of the Country Care programme is to bring a sense of order, with routines that ensure safety and satisfaction. Where children are in crisis an element of predictability may be calming. Children need to know what to expect. However this does not mean adherence to a rigid programme. Children are respected and treated as individuals and given autonomy and choice within the broad outline of the programme.

We never forget that The Meadows is the children's home. The children have a say in décor. They have a say in who works with them. Applicants for posts are interviewed by children, as part of our day-long interview process. The children are listened to. It is instructive how often their preferences and decisions about potential staff coincide with our own.

An integral part of the Placement Plan is the consideration of whether Social Services should be requested to appoint an Independent Visitor for the child. Dawn Clemson, the Regulation 33 Visitor, spends time in private with the child on each visit.

Good order and discipline

The arrangements made for the control, restraint and discipline of children.

Maintaining control and discipline is of the highest importance. Our aim is to provide a safe, happy, warm and caring therapeutic environment for the children placed at Country Care.

Good behaviour occurs in situations where a high quality of care exists with good relationships between children and staff. This includes creating a pleasant physical environment, providing structure, discipline and supervision and creating opportunities for experiential learning and success.

**“A house that smiles,
props that invite
and space that allows”**

Fritz Redl et al.

Reasonable and appropriate boundaries and expectations of conduct are set and adhered to. Good behaviour and achievements are given positive reinforcement. There are Points systems where children can work towards specific goals. Children can also earn additional pocket money.

At Country Care we recognise that moments of crisis provide both danger and opportunity. By appropriately managing the danger we create an opportunity for growth. We help the child through the crisis in a way that restores the status quo, balance or order and we teach the child better, more constructive, effective ways of dealing with stress or painful feelings.

We define crisis as a time when the child has run out of or has never learned effective, rational, constructive ways of coping with interpersonal problems and difficulties.

Unacceptable behaviours are discouraged. In most circumstances verbal disapproval or reprimands are sufficient to maintain good order. When consequences are used they must be appropriate, just and relevant. For example, if a child deliberately breaks a window contributing towards the cost of repair and/or helping to replace the broken pane helps them to understand the consequences of their actions.

Other consequences could be the loss of privileges or treats, curtailment of leisure activities, additional chores or increased supervision. In all cases where consequences are used they are fully recorded in the log and approved by the senior member of staff on duty. The Manager frequently reviews the consequences log.

Physical restraint is used only to increase safety if there is grave danger to people or property. All staff are trained in the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention model of early interventions, de-escalation techniques, behaviour management and restraint in order to maintain the safety and dignity of all involved. In the event of a physical restraint full support is given to all those involved in the incident and a full written report is made and copies sent to the child's social worker. The report includes the views of the child. Children are

encouraged to add to the written record of the restraint using a report form that has been carefully designed to elicit their feelings about the incident.

The safety and well-being of the child is the prime consideration.

All restraints are followed by a Life Space Interview.

There are detailed recording requirements that must be followed whenever a consequence is imposed or there is a safety intervention involving physical restraint. There will always be a management overview of the effectiveness of the measure and whether alternative techniques could have been used. We also monitor overall use of interventions within the home, and regular guidance is given to staff in debriefings, in supervision, in team meetings, and in training.

Child protection

The arrangements made for child protection and to counter bullying.

Child protection

Country Care gives the highest priority to ensuring that the children in our care are safe. We operate within the Arena of Safety and Aware Culture and rigorous recruitment procedures are followed. Staff are supervised, supported and monitored. One to one working is controlled. There are clear lines of communication should any staff have any misgivings about any aspects of practice.

There is provision for 'no fault' suspension of staff following the guidance in 'Choosing with Care'. There is also a whistleblowing policy stating lines of communication if any staff have misgivings concerning any aspect of practice. Failing to report abuse or suspicions of abuse amounts to gross misconduct under our staff disciplinary procedures.

All staff receive comprehensive training in child protection procedures and whistleblowing upon induction. There is a copy of the Derbyshire SCB procedures within the home, and Country Care's own complementary Child Protection procedures are set out in the written guidance to Staff. Staff are advised of the importance of not asking what might be interpreted as leading questions of the child. Robin Barker and Jo Smith are child protection trainers and members of the DSCB training pool.

Concerns about child protection issues are reported to the Manager or on-call Senior, if the Manager is not available. It is the manager's responsibility to make any referral to the Child Protection team. The child's Social Worker will also be informed.

Prior to the implementation of the National Minimum Standards, protocols had already been agreed with Derbyshire Social Services about the circumstances in which a child protection referral will be made.

A log is kept of any child protection referrals.

Bullying

We have a robust antibullying policy. The children helped to produce the policy and help to review it via children's meetings. Consequences are imposed for bullying. Children have participated in agreeing the appropriate consequence to be imposed. Staff promote respect

for others, and this is included in the Children's Brochure. Staff are careful how individual incidents of peer aggression are handled to ensure that a strongly disapproving message of the behaviour is sent without alienating the 'victim' from his/her peers. Staff are aware of transitional times where bullying is more likely to happen, and are vigilant. Horseplay and play fighting are not tolerated.

Involving the children

Children are encouraged to speak to management about staff. They have free access to their Social Worker and are encouraged to raise any concerns with the Regulation 33 Visitor. Risk assessments (both generally and for the particular child) specifically address the risk of abuse, or of bullying, and risk management plans are followed.

Within the Education curriculum, children receive specific guidance on keeping themselves safe; including how to safeguard themselves from abuse and bullying, both inside and outside the home.

Absences from Country Care

The procedure for dealing with any unauthorised absence of a child from the children's home

There are detailed written procedures for dealing with children missing from the home. In addition to this there is a risk assessment for each individual child detailing the likelihood of the child attempting to abscond; and the risk of harm to the child and others should he/she go missing. The risk management strategy will include levels of supervision, and action to be taken should the child go missing.

In the event of a child being absent from Country Care without authority an immediate record is made of the time and circumstances of the child's absence and the senior staff informed. It may be appropriate in some circumstances to allow time for them to return of their own volition. In most cases there will be an identified degree of risk to the child or others and accordingly efforts are made to return them as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances, staff may look for the child themselves. In most cases they will also report the child to the police as a missing person. Social Services and (where appropriate) the child's parents are also informed. All the steps that are taken are recorded.

On the child's return all relevant parties are apprised of this. Staff should ascertain full details from the child as to where they have been, with whom and why they were absent. Should the police wish to interview the person an "appropriate adult" must accompany them. Every effort is made to settle the child back into the home. If consequences are appropriate they are applied and recorded and all paper work completed and reported as above.

The child is always offered an interview with an independent person, and consideration is given to whether the child needs medical attention.

Any allegation of abuse within the home would be referred under the child protection procedures.

Security

A description of any electronic or mechanical means of surveillance of children which may be used in the children's home

Sections of the premises (internal and external); outhouses and vehicles may be protected by security sensors and alarms. The intention is to deter intruders, or alert to their presence. Staff vehicles on the premises may also be protected by alarms. Fire doors (internal and external) may be fitted with alarms that sound when the door is opened; depending on the agreed requirements of the Fire Service. Currently the fire door to the fire escape is fitted with an alarm.

Children's bedroom doors are fitted with sensors that can be adjusted to alert staff if the door is opened.

Reasons for use include:

- **A non-intrusive way of monitoring that no-one (staff or child) enters the child's bedroom at night (this removes the need for visual checks by staff which can be disturbing for the child and run counter to our aims to replicate a family environment)**
- **The child feels safer: staff will know if anyone enters their bedroom**
- **The child will not need to approach the staff sleep-in accommodation if they need assistance in the night. Staff will be alerted by the sensor, and will get dressed and come to the child.**
- **Staff will be alerted if a child tries to abscond**

All children are aware of the use and purpose of door sensors, and that, depending on their Placement Plan and that of the other children in placement, these may be in use.

Fire precautions and other emergencies

The fire precautions and associated emergency procedures in the children's home

The Meadows is fully equipped with modern fire prevention, detection and fighting equipment in accordance with the guidelines specified by the county fire department and as agreed with the County Fire Officer. Fire procedures are displayed and all staff and residents receive training in accordance with the regulations; this takes place on their induction to the home and is updated at the prescribed intervals. Testing of equipment and systems and fire drills are also carried out in accordance with the regulations. All the above measures are recorded in a fire log book, which is kept with our Health and Safety portfolio. Fire safety is the responsibility of the Manager or a named member of staff specially designated for that task.

Fire poses a threat to life through fume, smoke, burning and structural collapse. The aim of the fire safety policy is to minimise the risk of fire by taking adequate fire precautions.

So far as is practicable, staff must ensure that children and any visitors are aware of any aspects of the fire safety measures which affect them. Any concerns must be drawn to her / his attention immediately; it is equally important to take measures to contain the effects of fire once started.

There are also daily checks of all premises to ensure that exits are clear and uncluttered, and that there is no obvious damage to fire extinguishers etc. It is the responsibility of the shift leader to ensure that staff and children know the procedures to be taken in the event of a fire.

All staff receive fire safety training on induction and at regular intervals. There are regular fire drills. The emergency lighting system is also regularly tested.

All staff receive training on how and when to make an emergency call on induction. There is also a major incident procedure detailing action to be taken in emergency situations. This includes following a standard checklist.

Staff away from The Meadows on expeditions or activities have to provide grid referenced locations and phone in at set times. There are set protocols for action where the contact call is not made.

Religious observance

The arrangements for the children's religious instruction and observance

Country Care is not affiliated to any religious group and welcomes admissions of children of any or no religious persuasion. Every effort is made to ensure that the children may follow their religious observances. E.g. by attending church, mosque, synagogue or temple or following dietary rules.

Enquiries are made into the religious and cultural backgrounds of the children as part of the Admissions Procedure and this is recorded on the case record. The child's Placement Plan details arrangements for meeting the child's religious needs. The importance of facilitating continuity of religious observance in accordance with the wishes of the child and their family is recognised; family and past carers are consulted as appropriate and may be involved in advising on dietary and clothing needs, attending religious services etc.

We have a firm policy of promoting tolerance for religious and cultural diversity and seek to ensure that children are aware of and respectful of the individual's right to follow their own beliefs in their own way. The intention is to ensure that at all times the prevailing atmosphere within Country Care will positively support an individual in practising their religion without embarrassment. The individual's needs for privacy will be respected and supported and special attention will be given to ensure that dietary and other particular needs are met.

It is recognised that the religious observances of an individual may be outside the direct experience of staff and our links with local groups. In such cases we will promote their

rights to religious observance involving families, external individuals or organisations or an Independent Visitor as appropriate.

Contact

The arrangements for contact between a child and his parents, relatives and friends

The importance of contact with parents, relatives, friends, those with parental responsibility and significant others is acknowledged and maintained, working in partnership with the relevant parties. Country Care supports the principles within The Children Act 1989 that such contact should be promoted. These principles are further promulgated in Patterns & Outcomes in Child Placement which says:

“policies and practice need to take seriously the now well established research finding that visiting is the key to discharge. Contact enhances the welfare of placed children and does not increase the risk of breakdown”.

Within the legislative framework decisions about contact will be made by the placing authority, subject of course to any order of the court. Nevertheless Country Care has a significant role to play in making contact arrangements work; in assisting the Local Authority to come to informed decisions about contact; and in facilitating informal contact between the child and significant others.

Where children are placed outside their home area, there is specific focus on practical arrangements that need to be put in place to ensure that children maintain supportive contact with their social workers, with their families and friends; and with their home area.

Arrangements for contact, and any restrictions in contact, will be agreed with the Local Authority prior to admission. We will record details of contact visits in accordance with the regulations; these will form part of the case record and be available to the Local Authority. We will keep the Local Authority informed of our views on the contact arrangements.

Where restrictions on contact have been agreed (e.g. that it should be supervised) Country Care will provide the necessary staff and facilities. There are ample facilities within The Meadows to make contact arrangements work, ranging from accommodating private contact within the child's own space to supervised contact. Parents, family and friends etc are welcome to share meals provided that this does not conflict with the contact arrangements or impede the smooth running of the home. Country Care aims to ensure that a welcoming and congenial setting is available for all visits.

The home has a private (payphone) telephone line designated for use by the children, this is in addition to the office phone so that the children can make and receive calls in private. There is a separate telephone room for the children. The names and numbers of Childline and the Ofsted inspector are printed in the Children's Welcome Brochure, and displayed by the telephone.

There are facilities to monitor calls, but this only takes place with the knowledge of the child, the prior approval of Social Services and as part of the child's agreed Placement Plan. Each child is given up to 60p per day telephone money. This is in addition to their pocket money. In individual cases the telephone allowance can be increased in order to facilitate contact.

In addition to the telephone allowance; children have planned access to free use of the telephone. Children can always phone Social Worker or family daily without using their telephone allowance. Contact with family members is particularly encouraged.

If a child has a mobile telephone a contract will be drawn up regarding its use; if the child is unable to adhere to the agreement the details may be changed or the phone withdrawn or its use supervised according to need.

We will facilitate arrangements for contact; including providing separate escort services where necessary.

Country Care has a significant role to play in making contact arrangements work; in assisting the Local Authority to come to informed decisions about contact; and in facilitating informal contact between the child and significant others.

Country Care will record details of contact visits in accordance with the regulations; these will form part of the case record and be available to the Local Authority. We will keep the Local Authority informed of our views on the contact arrangements.

Under no circumstances will refusal or restriction of agreed contact arrangements be used as a consequence.

Where a child refuses contact we will discuss this with them and offer counselling but will not facilitate contact against their expressed wishes. In such cases referral will be made to the placing authority.

Complaints and representations

The arrangements for dealing with complaints

Country Care recognises the vulnerability of children living away from home and how difficult it can be for them to make complaints, especially against adults caring for them. The atmosphere at The Meadows is conducive to children expressing their concerns and staff are committed to solving problems as they arise.

If the child is in agreement, comments and complaints can be made on their behalf; for instance by their independent visitor, through an advocacy service; or through their family.

Country Care has a full written complaints and representation procedure, which is shown and explained to every child on their admission; they are subsequently reminded of their right to complain.

In most cases the concerns of the individual can be resolved informally, without invoking formal procedures. Additionally children are actively encouraged to seek outside support

through their families, referring social services department, the Ofsted inspector, Regulation 33 Visitor or services such as 'Childline' if they have concerns that they wish to discuss.

There are child friendly comments and complaints forms. All staff have training on how to deal with a complaint, and who to report the complaint to. Staff are aware of the role of Ofsted and the Regulation 33 visitor.

There are procedures in place for addressing complaints made about the Manager or the Owners.

A log is kept of all complaints made and is available for inspection by Ofsted, the Regulation 33 Visitor and the children's social workers. The Manager reviews all complaints and records outcomes.

Placement plan reviews

The arrangements for dealing with reviews of placement plans

The placing authority is required to provide full details on admission, including their own Care Plan, PEP and the last review decisions. A detailed risk assessment is carried out at, or as soon as possible after, placement. Where possible, the child is involved in this. This information is used to inform the detail of the Placement Plan.

The child's keyworker is responsible for ensuring that the Placement Plan is kept up to date, and reviewed as necessary. The views of the child are always taken into account, and the placing authority is consulted about any changes.

The initial Placement Plan is circulated and agreed within 7 days of admission. Thereafter it is updated as necessary.

In addition to Placement Plans, Country Care provides Review Reports for the child's statutory review. Country Care will also take a proactive stance in reminding Social Services where reviews are delayed. It is our expectation that reviews are held at a place convenient for the child; preferably within the child's own life space.

In all cases it is the policy of Country Care that the child will be invited to attend and participate in planning meetings and reviews, with outside support if requested. At each meeting the child will be reminded of their right to invoke the formal representations procedures if they are unhappy or have concerns.

The premises

The type of accommodation, including the sleeping accommodation, provided, and, where applicable, how children are to be grouped, and in what circumstances they are to share bedrooms

The Meadows is a stone built former farmhouse offering ample accommodation and set within two acres of grounds including formal gardens and paddocks. It is situated in the Derbyshire village of Dove Holes, which is three miles from the nearest towns, Chapel-en-le-Frith and Buxton. The Meadows is situated in a quiet residential road. The village is on the main A6 link road and is well served by buses and trains; connecting to the national networks. The Meadows is situated within the Peak National Park. The Yorkshire moors and Staffordshire Moorlands are nearby. There is easy access to the shopping centres, museums and attractions of Manchester. Alton Towers is within easy travelling distance, as is the Welsh coast.

The Meadows has been sensitively converted to a children's home and additional features have been added (for example playing field, fishing pond, bouldering wall) to make The Meadows an exciting and stimulating place to live. The Meadows is indistinguishable from other dwellings in the village. The Meadows enjoys warm relations with the local community.

The Meadows has ten bedrooms and four bathrooms. Each child has their own bedroom although some rooms are large enough for two to share should that be appropriate, e.g. young siblings at their request and if it is felt to be of benefit to both of them. There is no need for siblings to share, unless this is a positive requirement of the Placement Plan for each child. Children are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms, and choose colour schemes. There is ample space in each bedroom for private study, although in practice children generally prefer to use the dining room table, the quiet room, or the study table in the main sitting room.

Children have the choice of bath or shower. Staff toilet and showering facilities are separate from provision for the children.

There are two sitting rooms (one of which is a quiet room) and a well-equipped games room. There is a family style kitchen, where children can help to prepare food. The dining room is the heart of the home. There is a large table where staff and children share meals, and which is fully utilised at other times by games, homework, or staff and children simply sitting quietly together. There is a private telephone room for the children.

There is ample room for the children to have space, and privacy for the staff to carry out direct work with them individually. There is also space for children to spend private time with visitors (where appropriate).

There is an annexe containing food stores and laundry facilities. Children are encouraged to help with their laundry.

In our newly built school block there are two classrooms that are well resourced with computer equipment, software, books and craft materials; a quiet room and a toilet. Children have controlled access to the Internet.

There is a workshop/ project room and equipment store. There is extensive adventure activities equipment including canoes, kayaks, climbing equipment and safety equipment. We also own a RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat) that can be used on both coastal and inshore

waters. There is an all terrain off-road vehicle for use on expeditions as well as more conventional vehicles.

There are formal gardens to the front and rear of the home. Children have the opportunity to have their own patch of garden if they wish. We have a large meadow, naturally!

There is a nature conservation area, where children have helped to build ponds. There is also a large fishing pond designed and purpose built for the children. Under supervision, they enjoy fishing in their own pond.

There is a large playing field, where children can play football and other ball games and where our sports days are held. There is also a hard surface play area including a basketball net. There is an indoor bouldering wall, designed and built for the children.

There is off-road parking for staff and visitors.

Photographs of the accommodation can be viewed on Country Care's website.

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

Details of any specific therapeutic techniques used in the home, and arrangements for their supervision

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

Country Care follows the University of Cornell Therapeutic Crisis Intervention programme (Version 5). This is a Crisis Prevention and Management System first developed in 1980, subsequently revised, and in widespread use in the UK, Ireland, USA, Canada and Australia.

The key rationale is:

"In our work in residential child care, the most important tool we possess in helping young people change, grow, and develop into well-adjusted members of society is ourselves. Our ability to relate to the young people we care for in an open, sensitive, consistent, and caring way is perhaps the single most important contribution we make. It is a fundamental assumption of residential treatment that the adults who spend the most time with a young person, regardless of who they are, can directly affect their behaviour and learning, and hence, growth."

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention 2001

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention embodies a therapeutic approach to crisis prevention and management designed to reduce the need to rely on high-risk interventions. The programme provides a structure to help make sense of a child's difficult behaviour. Staff are taught specific techniques to prevent and manage crisis situations. This includes understanding the distinction between situational and maturational crisis; the stress model of crisis and at what stages certain techniques can be employed; proactive and reactive aggression; the use of a variety of intervention approaches and specific behaviour management techniques (e.g. caring gesture, prompting, planned ignoring and positive attention, hurdle help, time away). Staff are given specific direction on active listening skills, managing non-compliant behaviour, and averting a crisis.

This includes diverting the crisis following the 'I ASSIST' principles, which are an extremely effective and powerful tool:

- I** Isolate the young person
- A** Actively listen
- S** Speak calmly, assertively, respectfully
- S** Statements of understanding precede requests
- I** Invite the young person to consider positive outcomes and behaviours
- S** Space reduces pressure
- T** Time helps young people respond to requests

Staff also employ the Life Space Interview, a therapeutic, verbal strategy for intervening with young people that was developed by Redl and Wineman in the 1950s. This is an intervention that occurs in the child's own life space, it uses their own reactions to difficult situations as a vehicle to change their behaviour and expand their understanding and insight into their own, and others, behaviour and feelings. The Life Space Interview can be used after any crisis event. It does not solve the problem; it is an ongoing strategy to help teach the child better coping skills. At Country Care all staff are consistent in the use of this technique.

- I** Isolate the conversation
- E** Explore the young person's point of view
- S** Share staffs view and summarise feelings and content
- C** Connect behaviour to feelings
- A** Alternate behaviours discussed
- P** Plan developed/practice new behaviour
- E** Enter young person back into the routine

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention also teaches a range of safety interventions, including releases and physical restraint. Physical interventions rest on the principles of a maximum

amount of caring with a minimum amount of force and the goal of de-escalating the situation by reducing stimulation.

Supervision and monitoring arrangements for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention

Written records are made of all Life Space Interviews and physical interventions. The Manager countersigns restraint forms. All staff are trained in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention techniques and receive regular updates. Any concerns about practice are initially overseen and addressed by Robin Barker, Manager. Robin Barker is an accredited Trainer with the University of Cornell. Robin Barker has also undertaken training in Recovery for Staff, which provides for how staff should be debriefed and supported after any incident. He has also passed the developing professional level skills module.

External supervision and support is also available from Dominic Hodgkinson who regularly visits Country Care. Dominic Hodgkinson is also an accredited trainer with the University of Cornell.

Art Therapy

Art Therapies are provided by Peter Russell, Art Therapist at The Meadows. He employs a range of accredited techniques, depending on the needs and feelings of the child. The Art Therapy space offers a wide range of materials for the child to explore including 2D and 3D computer art workshops. All sessions are conducted in private, and material is kept confidential (except under established protocols where a child protection matter is concerned). The Therapist contributes to review reports and Placement Planning and assessments and treatment. Peter Russell is accredited with the Council of Psychotherapists and is subject to supervision by his psychoanalytical mentor at the University of Derby.

Anti-discriminatory practice

A description of the children's home's policy in relation to anti-discriminatory practice as respects children and children's rights.

All staff are expected and required to fully promote Country Care's policy on equal acceptance of the diverse religious and cultural elements of daily living within the home and within society. It is recognised that resident children and their visitors may, through life experiences, harbour their own intolerance to others and may respond inappropriately. Such intolerance will always be addressed sensitively and in an age appropriate way. However, it will be addressed; whatever the circumstances.

We have a firm policy of promoting tolerance for religious and cultural diversity and seek to ensure that children and young people are aware of and respectful of the individual's right to follow their own beliefs in their own way and supported and special attention will be given to ensure that dietary and other particular needs are met. Diversity is valued and celebrated. Where we lack expertise or experience within our team we will always seek to involve others who can advise us and befriend and be a role model to the child.

There is advice in the Children's Welcome Brochure that Country Care requires respect and will not tolerate abuse or bad language. Anti-discriminatory behaviour and values is included in the Education curriculum. Children have been involved in setting consequences for

discriminatory language or behaviour. Although we believe in freedom of expression it is critical that racist/sexist and otherwise discriminatory remarks are always addressed. Staff have to be good and appropriate role models, and would be failing in this if such behaviour went unchallenged.

There are specific policies requiring staff to adhere to Country Care policies on equal opportunities, valuing diversity, and anti-discriminatory practice.

Revised 17th January 2009 (Children's Homes Regulations 2001)

To be reviewed by 17th July 2009