

INTRODUCTION

Our philosophy at Evolution Children Services is to place the needs of the young people at the heart of our service by promoting independence and providing care that respects young people's choice, rights, privacy and dignity.

Evolution Children Services aims to provide the highest levels of care and service to enable young people to achieve their goals. We do this by ensuring our staff are recruited, vetted and trained against a strict framework with emphasis placed on the quality and continuity of our care workers to provide a stable and secure environment for all young people.

We are committed to working flexibly and imaginatively with all other professionals and families to ensure the best interests of every young person in our care are consistently served.

Our policies and procedures are written to provide safe services and working practices that help protect both young people and their carers.

We recognise the need for client and family choice and proactively encourage involvement during the planning and delivery of care and ensure that the service is managed and delivered in a way which meets the needs of the individuals concerned.

We ensure all parties are kept fully informed at all times with up to date information which allows young people, their families or carers, to make informed choices concerning their care. Information can be made available in the most appropriate language or format required.

We are unreservedly committed to the principles and practices of equality. Our policy on equality and diversity is reflected in all aspects of our service to ensure we accommodate and respect all aspects of ethnic, religious and cultural groups being sensitive to their specific needs.

Our quality assurance programme ensures regular quality and performance appraisals are conducted with both young people and carers. In addition, our formal complaints, disciplinary, grievance and whistle blowing procedures ensure we are able to capture information to plan and implement on-going improvements to our services.

Number 60

Number 60 is situated to the west of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is a large terraced house offering a safe, warm and comfortable environment to five children or young people of either sex, between the ages of 14 and 18 years.

Ethos of Number 60.

The ethos of the home incorporates the following beliefs,

- That each young person should be viewed as an individual and that their views, attitudes and opinions are respected.
- That young people are experts on themselves, therefore they should be actively involved in decision making about their lives.
- That young people make mistakes; experience, help and guidance will empower and enable them.
- All practice and planning processes are focussed towards meeting the 'five outcomes' of the 'Every Child Matters' strategy currently being developed on a community based and national level.

Aims of Number 60.

- To provide the highest quality, young person friendly accommodation, that is safe, secure and responsive to a young person's needs.
- To work with each young person as a unique individual and develop a package of care appropriate to their age and level of emotional development, which will enable them to achieve and grow at their own pace whilst also providing them with the skills required to prepare them for their young adult lives outside of the 'looked after' system.
- To provide support which strives to deliver all of the outcomes outlined within the 'Every Child Matters' strategy, with reference at all times and with acknowledgment to, the fact that young people are central to the planning processes which shape their lives, and ultimately direct their futures. This can be achieved by providing support which will allow them to develop their self esteem and confidence by providing new opportunities and ways of looking at lifestyle choices and options through new experiences, and by acknowledging a young person's right to take risks in a carefully supported and assessed manner.
- To enable young people to make best use of the range of support services available to them, which are relevant individually in relation to their own communities and lifestyles.

These aims are achieved through providing the following:

Accommodation

The provision of quality accommodation offering comfort, homeliness, safety and privacy in a young person centered environment. The furnishings, décor, fixtures and fittings were accessed in consultation with young people who have experience of the 'looked after' system and their advice was sought in relation to, 'what makes a home homely' from a young person's perspective

Support

Evolution Children Services recognise the need for high quality, well trained and motivated staff. The Number 60 team will be available 24/7 to make a young person's experience within the home as positive as possible. Support for the young person will involve strategies geared to meet emotional, social and developmental needs, (mindful of the age range within the home), as well as practical support in relation to the development of life skills. The promotion of independence skills along with advice pertaining to health, wellbeing and personal safety will also be paramount.

Individual Support

Each young person will be allocated a member of the team who will take a lead responsibility as their key worker. Careful consideration will be given to this allocation and all possible attempts will be made during the referral and planned admission stage to ensure that the young person has the opportunity to meet his or her key worker and thus begin the process of relationship building and ensuring that at the time of any move, they will have a 'familiar and friendly face' to support them in what, for many young people can be a problematic, frightening and stressful process. The key worker in consultation with the young person will develop a support plan based upon individual need and focussed upon meeting the 'five outcomes' enshrined within the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, via the means of clear and unambiguous care plans and pathway plans. The key worker will also support the young person to maintain any links he or she may have with other agencies involved directly or indirectly with their care. The key worker will be expected to meet regularly, (usually weekly depending on agreement between the young person and their worker) and all plans, aims and objectives will be discussed to ensure that progress is monitored and that all issues are addressed in a focused and clear fashion with reference at all times to the young person's individual level of understanding and communication style.

Psychological support will be provided by our in-house psychologist as and when required. This may take the form of direct or indirect observation or assessment and also through the provision of support to staff and the implementation of workable strategies, developed by the team during training sessions.

Number 60 will also provide all young people with access to an independent advocate, facilitated by the 'National Youth Advocacy Service' (NYAS), via monthly visits from an allocated worker, who will if required; express any wishes or concerns and complaints raised by a young person. This process will be handled totally independently of the home and of Evolution Children Services as an organisation.

Resettlement

Leaving the 'looked after' system and moving into young adult independence is an extremely complex period of a young person's life. At Evolution Children Services we recognise the need to continue to offer support at this critical time and to ensure that any move is as smooth and problem free as is reasonably possible. Hopefully this supportive, proactive approach will increase the likelihood that future outcomes for the young person are positive and stable. With this in mind, we will work with our 16+ young people, where relevant, to move on to independent or semi independent accommodation with Evolution Children Services, a general needs housing association or a private landlord. When the move is completed, the young person will have access to our volunteering and befriending service for extra support, whilst also having access to our on call system at times of emergency or crisis.

DESCRIPTION OF ACCOMMODATION

The house is situated to the west of Newcastle. It is a large terraced building built in the 1930's. The accommodation consists of three floors. The ground floor comprises of one large living room. This area is designed to be a traditional living room, complete with soft furnishings, TV and library. There is a small room available on this floor which has been converted into a private telephone call facility. The kitchen is extremely large with a breakfast bar and a dining area capable of sitting up to eight people. A large utility area provides separate accommodation for laundry facilities, adjacent to this room is a further shower room. To the first floor there is a large room which has been converted into a large shower and bathing facility, This has been designed to meet the specific cultural and religious needs of the young people in our care. On this floor there are three large bedrooms, along with a second bathroom/shower facility and a separate toilet. On the second floor there are three further bedrooms one of which is a room which will be a designated staff sleep in room and for administrative purposes and will ensure the safe storage of personal information and other personal effects. All rooms have smoke detectors connected to a central system. Regulation fire doors are in place throughout. The décor and furnishings within the home were selected following advice and input from a group of young people with first hand experience of the 'looked after' system who were ideally placed to offer advice as to what makes a home comfortable and welcoming from a young person's perspective.

Location:

The house is ideally situated for all local amenities. There is a public park with a leisure centre, football pitches and tennis courts across the road from the home. There is easy access to local schools, colleges and a thriving and diverse shopping area is approximately 10 minutes walk away, whilst excellent transport links into the city centre are accessible on the doorstep (a journey of no more than 10 minutes), where the children and young people can access a wide range of varied and stimulating activities including, swimming and sporting activities, bowling and cinemas etc. A car will be available also for use for the children and young people and this will facilitate access to more specialist interests in and around the region or further afield.

ADMISSIONS PROCEDURE

Effective young person centred admission procedures, which clearly identify a purpose for the placement reduces the tendency for young people to drift. It provides an opportunity for young people to change through collaboration and mutual respect and will assist them in re-establishing themselves in the wider community.

Since we aim to maintain a balance at all times, the acceptance of a young person for placement will be determined following careful assessment and discussion between the management and staff team as a whole. The perceived ability of a young person to integrate into the existing group will be considered and evaluated via the perceived impact that the admission may have on the existing young people living within the home.

General Procedure:

Initial telephone contact with Evolution Children Services will be made by a local authority, social worker or placement manager.

During this initial contact it is essential to obtain as much information as possible about the young person's current situation and their particular care needs. Placements will only be offered to local authorities when a completed referral form is submitted accompanied by sufficient background information to allow a realistic assessment to be made concerning the viability of the placement.

Planned Admissions:

It is considered good practice for the allocated keyworker to visit the young person in their current placement prior to admission. Arrangements should also be made for the young person to visit the home, with their parents or carers where appropriate, as part of a planned introduction.

Following admission a placement agreement meeting will be held with all relevant parties, including parents or carers where appropriate, to draw up a written agreement for the placement.

In June 2007 the children's conference, 'Children on Care Standards, Your Rights, Your Say' highlighted the need for clear and concise information in relation to rules within the home. On admission the young person will meet with their keyworker and will be given an age appropriate information pack giving details of the homes rules and routines e.g. expectations, jobs, activities, complaint procedure etc. The young person will have the opportunity to ask any questions they may have at this stage. New residents will be expected to sign a contract to agree that they understand the rules and expectations of the home. Keyworkers will take responsibility for assisting the young person in their understanding of any information that is issued.

The underlying ethos and philosophy of Evolution Children Services is about helping young people feel safe, and confident enough to take control of their own feelings, actions, and lives. Once feeling safe, young people can sometimes demonstrate certain anti-social behaviours which are part of the process of beginning to let go. They may challenge and test boundaries, in an attempt to make some sense of their lives and the relationships around them. This is often because they have been let down by significant adults many times before. Support for a young person at this stage is very important, through having the opportunity to experience adults in a more positive light; it is possible for them to begin building trust, confidence and self esteem. As their confidence grows they will be able to

take a greater control over all aspects of their lives. Staff will always show unconditional positive regard for the child or young person, even at times of crisis. This will impact by revaluing young people who feel devalued in a society that has let them down, thus enabling them to be empowered and gradually take control.

QUALITY OF CARE

Staffing

What children want from care staff?

- Be able to look after our basic needs
- Keep them safe and happy
- Help, support and advise
- Listened to
- Treated with respect
- Treated as equals

‘Children on Care Standards’ Children’s conference 2007.

The list above outlines the views of children and young people in relation to what makes a carer a good carer. Careful consideration of these factors were observed when selecting the staff for Number 60. The team has been drawn together from a variety of backgrounds and have all been selected for their own individual skills and knowledge bases. All have shown the necessary personal qualities to enable them to provide support to children and young people, (and if appropriate their families) in relation to the often complex needs and challenging behaviours of individuals within the ‘looked after’ system. A rigorous and carefully planned recruitment process has been developed to ensure as far as possible, that the team is able to support in a positive and proactive manner. All new workers are subject to a six monthly probationary period. This will allow them to gain a greater understanding of the expectations within the home and the wider organisation as a whole. A clear set of benchmarks are in place to monitor and ensure that levels of expertise have been met and only then will a permanent working contract will be gained. Ongoing training and personal development is encouraged and clear career development pathways are designed to enable all staff members to continuously learn new skills and thus be able to offer a greater level of expertise to the young people in their care. A minimum of six days training a year is on offer to all staff, and further training of a more specific and specialised nature will be available in line with personal development plans for each individual staff member and the needs of the home as a whole.

Staff Structure:

Evolution Children Services recognises the need for appropriate, supportive staffing levels, not only in terms of health and safety requirements but also in relation to quality, purposeful, supportive and proactive childcare practices. With this in mind a team of ten staff have been recruited. These workers will be further supported by a manager and a deputy. Support will be provided on a 24/7 basis. As a basic guide, there will always be a minimum of three staff on duty. This level of cover will be constant at the point of the young people rising in the morning until bedtime. At all times staffing levels will be determined by individual support requirements of the young people in our care and can be increased accordingly by utilising staff from our relief pool of workers. All pool workers are subject to the same rigorous

selection processes and are provided with the same levels of supervision and training as full time team members. Staffing cover during the night will consist of one waking night support worker and one residential worker providing sleep in cover. The waking night staff will also have access to an on call system which will be either the manager or deputy manager on a rotational basis. The relief pool workers will also be available to cover holiday and sickness leave.

Qualifications and Staff Development:

All residential workers are NVQ level 3 qualified and greatly experienced in the residential field. All will be encouraged to continue with their training and development pathways within the field and it is envisaged that progression on to NVQ level 4 will be achieved in due course. The residential workers are backed up by a small team of 3 support workers. They will begin NVQ level 3 immediately and will hopefully complete this training within a six month period. 3 waking night support workers complete the team, again these workers will be engaged in NVQ level 3 immediately and completion expected within a 12 month period.

KEY WORKING

A key working system will be incorporated into systems of working as good practice. All individual work carried out will be focussed upon meeting all aspects of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, with reference to the five outcomes as bench marks for all practice. This will be achieved in an imaginative, holistic and inclusive manner, where the young people receiving care services are active participants within the planning, provision and evaluation of activities within the home and the wider community as a whole. The allocated key worker will ensure consistent care and development for each young person. Regular one to one sessions will be available to each young person, these sessions will enable the young person to have an active input into the development of his or her individual care plans, and decision making processes and general systems within the home.

CARE PLANS

All young people will have a regularly reviewed and up to date care plan reflecting their own individual needs, wishes and aspirations. The care plan will outline areas of assessed need and clearly and unambiguously outline methods needed to achieve these important issues. The recording of these plans should be in formats easily understandable for the young person and they should have regular opportunities to discuss the progress and focus of the ongoing plan. The manager will oversee the management of all care plans and will monitor their progress with key workers through the supervision process and the monthly regulation 34 inspections.

REVIEWS

Looked after Children.

Statutory reviews are organised and chaired by the young person's local authority of residence. Number 60 is proactive in ensuring that these reviews are held on time. A full and comprehensive report will be provided by each young person's individual key worker. The contents of the report will be discussed with the young person prior to the review meeting to ensure that they are fully aware of the issues up for discussion. All attempts to ensure that the young person attends these meetings will be made as Number 60 acknowledges the

importance of young people being fully involved in any planning process. However it is also recognised that some young people can find these situations uncomfortable and threatening. With this in mind all attempts will be made to ensure that full and proper representation for the young person will be achieved. This will be managed either via the individual key worker or by the appointment of an independent advocate accessed from NYAS. Internally, the progress of each young person will be monitored at core group team meetings. These would normally be chaired by the manager and attended by those individuals actively involved in the young person's care, and will usually take place on a monthly basis. Care team meetings involving other professionals will be called should it be felt that there were significant changes within a young person's life, which warrants re-evaluation of existing plans, or if it is feared that the placement is in danger of coming to an end.

RELIGION AND CULTURE

Number 60 will support, encourage and respect the religious and cultural beliefs and practices of any young person living at the home.

All efforts will be made to ensure dietary requirements, clothing, and religious observance such as prayer or attending significant religious buildings are accommodated.

Any issues that infringe the rights or fail to respect other young people at the home, relating to religion or culture will not be tolerated, and will be addressed promptly with discretion.

CONTACT

At Evolution Children Services we believe agreed contact with natural families, carers, siblings and other significant people in a young person's life should be encouraged. The maintenance and further development of existing relationships is seen as fundamental to positive outcomes for young people, allowing for stability and a sense of belonging. We recognise that some of our young people will need support to build upon these relationships and key workers will work in a proactive manner to support at all stages of the process. Where and when required, contacts may be supervised and detailed reports prepared to highlight positive and negative aspects, which could hinder or help further positive outcomes. All contacts will take place in a planned and agreed way, with reference at all times to the wishes and needs of the young person, but also mindful of possible child protection issues and the processes involved accordingly.

Key workers will play a fundamental role in the monitoring and evaluation of existing relationships. Weekly summaries will be prepared for parents, carers and social workers, and will highlight all aspects of a young person's care, focussing upon the outcomes outlined in the 'Every Child Matters' strategy. This will ensure that a process exists which promotes a sense of partnership and co-operation between all parties involved in the all round care of a young person and therefore increasing the prospect for positive outcomes.

SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Number 60 understands and recognises being healthy as one of the five key objectives of the 'every child matters' agenda. Whilst living at the home all young people will have access and be registered with a named general practitioner, dentist, and support to access other primary and secondary health services as required.

The home has clear policies and procedures to support, ensure and promote health and well-being for all young people in our care. This will encompass all aspects of healthy diet, whilst supported access into exercise and leisure activities will focus upon promotion of emotional and physical well-being.

Whilst respecting privacy and confidentiality for all young people, we also offer support and guidance in accessing a wide variety of support agencies including sexual health advice, support with drug and alcohol issues and access to services offering more specialised emotional and mental health issues.

All staff are experienced and knowledgeable in regards to health promotion and will endeavour to work alongside each young person, in an attempt to develop, stimulate and promote an interest in staying healthy, in both a physical and emotional sense.

EDUCATION

Education plays an important part in all of our lives. Unfortunately for many of the young people within the 'looked after' system there are a range of issues which hinder the educational development for the individual. Persistent absence or exclusion from the mainstream system is all too common. The main aim of the Number 60 team is to create an environment which stimulates and facilitates education and promotes learning in innovative and creative ways. Support for young people to access learning resources along with the provision of activities which offer new experiences will hopefully create a situation where young people no longer fear education, increase their sense of personal aspiration and view learning as a positive step which will increase their all round opportunities and individual life choices. This method of learning has proven extremely successful with young people who find the constraints of traditional classroom learning difficult to handle. Our education policy reflects this ethos and provides a guidance document that ensures that all young people have the opportunity to develop and participate in a range of educational opportunities both from the home, mainstream provision and the wider community as a whole.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

It is the responsibility of the manager to ensure that day-to-day safety of all persons residing at, employed in or in any other way using the premises.

Smoke alarms and an internal fire alarm system have been installed in accordance with advice from the Fire Officer.

It is the responsibility of the Home Manager to ensure that:

- The fire alarm is operational at all times.
- The fire alarm is tested on a weekly basis. A register is kept of the weekly fire tests, giving the date of the test and the signature of the person carrying out the test.
- Should a fault develop on the fire alarm system, this will be reported immediately to the service engineer.
- All staff are made aware of their responsibilities and duties regarding the prevention of fire and understands the procedure for evacuation of the building in the case of fire.

- Any equipment that is deemed as dangerous or a fire hazard is taken out of use, immediately labelled as such and is repaired or replaced.
- Maintain on a daily basis a register of visitors to the home.
- The residents are made aware of the importance of keeping staff aware of their whereabouts during the day, and of informing a member of staff of their return if they have been out.

General duties and responsibilities of all staff:

- Know the location of fire exits.
- Know the location of fire-fighting equipment and have a good understanding of their use.
- Know the correct procedure for calling the Fire Brigade in an emergency.
- Be aware of the areas in the home that are high risk in relation to fire.
- To keep doors closed at all times.
- Keep the fire exits clear of furniture and equipment.
- Ensure that residents are supervised at all times in the kitchen area.
- Ensure that the residents are aware and understand the dangers of fire.
- Report immediately any faulty equipment and take it out of use and label as such.
- Ensure that existing residents and new residents are aware of the procedures in the event of fire.

IN THE EVENT OF FIRE:

- Evacuate everyone from the building.
- Raise the alarm.
- Ring the Fire Brigade. Do not assume that someone else may have done so. Give them the name, address and postcode of premises.
- Ensure that all the rooms have been vacated. If it is safe to do so, tackle the fire with the fire fighting equipment.
- Shut all doors and windows.
- Go to the fire assembly point, taking with you the register.
- Ensure that all residents and staff are accounted for.

Fire drills are carried out in accordance with regulations and the needs of the home. All equipment is tested on a regular basis in accordance with the appropriate legislation. A nominated Fire Officer within the team ensures that all adults have an up-to-date knowledge of the equipment and procedures.

All staff, children and young people receive fire instruction as standard, and there is regular refresher sessions for staff, children and young people on a monthly basis.

Administration of Medication and associated training

All permanent staff have undertaken certificated Appointed Person 1st Aid Training and will receive instruction in medication administration.

METHODS OF CARE AND CONTROL

Philosophy

It is accepted that consistent guidelines and controls form an integral part of a young person's development. As a young person develops they gradually internalise these controls and reduce the need for external reinforcement.

General Principles

Staff are expected to manage and control the young peoples' behaviour. The need for sanctions is reduced by clearly setting boundaries of acceptable behaviour and achieving tight levels of consistent care practice. Acceptable behaviour should always be encouraged as a normal part of day to day living.

Use of Sanctions

Sanctions will only be used sparingly and after all other alternatives have been considered. If the need is felt to impose a sanction, the young person will be informed and the matter discussed with either the Home Manager or Deputy before deciding an appropriate sanction. Consideration must be given to the young people's emotional state, understanding of their transgression and the effect that imposing a sanction will have on future relationships.

Reasons for Sanctions

- Damage, such as damage to windows, furniture and decoration of the home.
- Criminal Damage caused outside the home - i.e. in the local community.
- An assault on an individual.
- If a resident refuses to go to bed, and/or disrupts other residents when they are trying to sleep.

This list is not exhaustive but gives guidance in relation to situations where sanctions can be legitimately implemented.

Permitted Sanctions

The following list comprises the only sanctions permissible within Number 60:

- The withdrawal of an extra privilege such as extended bedtime or special outing.
- The imposition of a chore such as washing the dishes. This will never detract from the dignity of the individual and will have a purposeful objective.
- Making reparation for damaged property out of their personal allowance. The amount will take into account the young persons financial commitments and in any event will not exceed 75% of their pocket money.
- The imposition of a 'grounding' for part of a day or the whole of a day. Grounding is a common and acceptable sanction, provided the child or young person is not prevented from leaving by being locked in or physically restrained and Children's Home Regulations 8 (2)(c), (restrictions on visits or communications) is observed.
- Curtailment of bedtime activities such as watching television or time spent on games consoles.
- Where the behaviour of a young person, when travelling in a vehicle, raises concerns for the safety of themselves or others, they will not be permitted to travel in the home's vehicles until such time it is considered safe to do so.

All sanctions must be recorded, dated and signed in the sanctions book and a copy placed in the young person's file.

Inappropriate Sanctions

- NEVER impose physical punishment on a young person.
- NEVER deprive a young person of food, sleep or medical help.
- NEVER deprive a young person of your care and consultation.

All staff should be aware that disciplinary action will be taken against them for the imposition of any of the above inappropriate sanctions.

Physical Interventions

Whilst strongly believing that all young people should have the main responsibility for their own behaviour, Number 60 recognises and understands that the young people in our care may sometimes demonstrate difficult or challenging behaviours which could require support or as a last resort, physical intervention. Subsequently all staff undertake CALM training with regular refreshers which offers a framework for dealing with challenging behaviours through theoretical and practical based training.

The emphasis of CALM training focuses on de-escalation of situations and the avoidance of situations which could potentially lead to flash points. This ethos is fundamental to Evolution Children's Services approach to physical intervention.

Physical intervention will only be used if all methods of dealing with a specific situation have been deemed unsafe and will only be actioned by staff that have completed both the theoretical and practical elements of training. The time period of any physical intervention should be as short as is possible, and all details of the intervention, fully recorded within the appropriate documentation and all relevant personnel notified of the incident. The young person involved will be afforded a debrief period following any intervention and the opportunity to discuss the situation, whilst considering the appropriateness and inappropriateness of the actions taken and any complaints which may result from the actions taken.

Physical intervention can only legally be used where there is belief that immediate action is required to prevent injury or prevent serious damage to property. The following criteria for physical intervention would therefore apply:

- When the young person is attempting to harm his or her self.
- Where this is substantial risk of physical injury to another young person.
- Where there is substantial risk of physical injury to a member of the public or a staff member.
- Where there is likely to be serious damage to property.
- Where serious damage is occurring.

Evolution Children's Services has a behaviour management and physical intervention policy and guidance document that goes into significant depth outlining good practice and our response to challenging situations.

All young people are made aware of our complaint's procedure and are informed about how to make a complaint.

We will always try to resolve a complaint at the lowest possible level, whilst respecting the seriousness of the complaint. All complaints are taken seriously and are recorded in our complaint's book.

The Manager meets regularly with young people from the home to provide an opportunity for feedback. Young people are advised that they can complain to:

- Adult members of the team including the Manager
- OFSTED
- Child-line
- NSPCC
- Their social worker
- The Host Authority
- NYAS

All complaints about the behaviour of staff will be investigated by the Manager, who will if necessary liaise with external agencies.

All young people have the right to an independent person to support and advise in complaints, and this right will be upheld at all times by the unit.

CHILD PROTECTION

Value Statement:

Children and young people being cared for must feel safe.

Carers must protect those that they care for from harm or abuse by taking immediate action to stop it and to follow the agreed reporting procedures, having received training in its use.

Children and young people must have confidence that those caring for them will protect them at all times.

Guidance

Everyone employed by Evolution Children Services has a duty to report incidents and allegations of child abuse whether internal or external, which involves the children and young people we care for.

All staff must ensure that they are clear of their responsibilities in child protection situations by reading and understanding the procedures and taking the necessary action.

A carer, parent, another adult, another child, a person known to the child or a complete stranger may perpetrate abuse.

Children and young people must be listened to. Any allegation will be taken seriously. Children and young people must receive full support and protection.

In the event of any subsequent investigation the child or young person will be kept fully informed throughout the process. Evolution Children Services employees will act immediately once they are aware that a child or young person is suffering or has suffered abuse, informing the Manager or Deputy who will follow procedure.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation of abuse will be suspended immediately, pending an internal investigation.

The Host Authority has a legal responsibility to deal with allegations of abuse and conduct any subsequent investigation.

General Guidance for Staff:

The ensuing procedures are intended for dealing with any alleged abuse of children or young people within the residential setting by a member of staff and must be read and understood in that light.

In all situations the Manager will be informed in the first instance, who will then inform the responsible individual. This reporting must occur immediately once possible evidence is received that a child or young person is suffering or has suffered abuse.

Definitions of abuse can be found in full policy and procedures.

In all cases it is essential that the child or young person is listened to, protected, fully supported and kept informed about what is happening and what will likely happen next.

Remember once the internal reporting procedure has been followed, it is the child or young person's Placing Authority and the Host Authority who have to decide whether to investigate or not. They have a legal responsibility to deal with the matter.

The Manager following discussions with the Placing Authority will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the Police.

In every situation of alleged or actual abuse everyone has to give prime consideration to the child or young person's welfare and safety.

All staff receive training in Child Protection during their induction to the company.

BULLYING

Value Statement:

Exerting power through intimidating others is not acceptable. Some of the young people in our care may try to bully others in order to feel better about themselves.

It is our responsibility to be continually aware of the possibility that bullying may occur in the home or in areas external to the home.

We must offer protection to those who are bullied and guidance to those who bully.

Guidance:

Staff need to try and understand and acknowledge that a young person's network exists and be prepared to discuss it with the young people, in an honest, non-intrusive, but open manner when necessary and not to be afraid of it.

Forms of Bullying include:

- Verbal teasing
- Physical confrontation/attacks
- Theft or destruction of property
- Isolation or marginalization
- Racism

Whilst the welfare of the victim is of prime importance, the perpetrator also has needs, which must not be dismissed.

Bullies behave in the manner they do, partly because of difficulties in their own lives, e.g. feelings of inadequacy, unhappiness, or they may have been victims themselves. Their unacceptable behaviour needs to be understood and then appropriately dealt with by staff if the cycle of bullying is to cease.

Staff who work with and support children and young people in the care system, will, if achieving good practice, be vigilant (but not overbearing) about vulnerable children and young people's need to be protected, should the problem of bullying arise.

If there is an open and honest ethos within the home, the subject of bullying will be discussed at staff and residents' meetings and with individuals and groups of children and young people from time to time.

Staff need to talk frankly and openly with children and young people about bullying and must also listen to their views.

All in the home need to know and understand that incidents of bullying, no matter how small, will never be overlooked.

There is a clear policy on what measures will be taken to deal with bullying in the home and the type of support that will be available to both the victim and perpetrator.

Procedure - Staff:

If an incidence of bullying arises, staff will:

- Establish the facts of the incident by undertaking a full investigation and talking with all those involved, having ensured the continuing safety of the child or young person(s) who was bullied and deal effectively, yet sensitively, with the incident in accordance with the homes policy on bullying.
- Complete an incident report. Inform the Manager, child or young person's Social Worker and parents where there are contact arrangements.
- Make an entry of the incident in the running logs of those children or young people directly involved and inform their key workers, in order that any follow up work can be carried out, including any amendments to the placement plan.
- Assess and deal with any damage e.g. personal injuries, physical damage (property), and loss of possessions.
- Offer appropriate support to the victim and perpetrator.
- Raise the matter at the next team meeting and discuss learning points for the future and how effective, or not, the present intervention and subsequent follow-up work has been.
- Staff must remain vigilant at all times in order to reduce incidents of bullying.
- Staff must challenge all inappropriate behaviour, whether it leads to bullying or not and be aware of the fact that some children or young people set themselves up as victims of bullying as part of their behaviour pattern. Incidents, which may fall into this category, must still be recorded.
- When a trend or culture of bullying becomes apparent to staff, consideration should be given to addressing the issue in a key worker and group session.

Child Protection:

Staff need to be vigilant regarding possible child abuse issues, inter-peer abuse and child protection in relation to bullying.

If staff are uncertain in deciding whether a bullying incident(s) falls into a child protection category, they must bring the matter to the attention of the Manager or the Deputy. Staff may also contact the child or young person's Social Worker, the local Child Protection Unit or the local Inspection team.

Procedure - Manager:

- Have a written policy in the home regarding bullying, strategies to deal with such incidents and the necessary support available for victims and perpetrators.
- Will, from time to time, place bullying on the team meeting agenda in order that all staff are aware of the need to be vigilant in this area, ensuring that incidents are always challenged and staff work to the company's Policy and Procedures.
- Will instruct staff to make them aware of any concerns they may have regarding child protection implications arising from bullying.
- Will ensure that procedures are adhered to in recording incidents of bullying at the home and that the necessary people have been informed.

ABSENCE OF A CHILD WITHOUT AUTHORITY

Young people who are absent without the consent of those who are caring for them must be protected.

The responsible authority must provide to Evolution Children Services any information on the likelihood of the child or young person absconding and the following questions must be addressed

- History of absconding.
- Risk of going off with a stranger.
- Risk of crime.
- Child or young person's legal status e.g. accommodated, care order, remand etc.

Risk assessments will be written and studied before placement commences.

Evolution Children Services, during staff induction, will discuss with all staff the following procedure;

If the young person absconds during office hours the senior worker will contact the Placing Authority of the young person to discuss the situation. Details surrounding the

circumstances of the young person going absent should be given such as, was the young person upset in any way when last seen, any likely police involvement and any other relevant information.

If the problem arises out of hours, then the senior worker should contact the On Call Manager, which will advise them of the appropriate course of action to take.

Social workers, parents and the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) should be kept updated, and notified of the young persons return.

Police involvement:

- If the young person is thought to be in immediate danger, then details should be given to the police by telephone.
- The police response will depend upon the young person's legal status. If the young person is on a Care Order, the police will actively search for, and can 'arrest' the young person. Anyone harbouring a young person can be prosecuted - including the parents.
- If the young person is accommodated under Section 20, the police can only detain a young person for his or her own safety.
- The responsible social worker should be notified or message left.
- When a young person returns, notify all relevant people immediately.
- The young person should have food, drink and sleep and should be welcomed in a positive manner.
- Staff should talk about why they went missing.
- The young person should be encouraged to discuss their experiences whilst absent.
- The young person should be able to ring a social worker if possible.
- If the young person discloses concerning information, a senior member of staff should be informed who should then notify the placement authority.
- Incident sheets and daily logs should be filled in by staff on shift and should be forwarded to the social worker.
- Duty Workers should inform the On Call Manager when a child absconds and when the young person returns.

REGULATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

The aim of any childcare service provider is to ensure that the highest possible standards of care and support are available to all the children, young people and families accessing their services. Evolution Children Services as an organisation and Number 60 as a home acknowledge that to achieve this aim, then a clear and well structured process of regulation

and quality assurance needs to be in place to ensure that all practices are monitored and evaluated to enable this paramount goal to be achieved. A range of methods will be implemented at Number 60 to ensure that all efforts are made to ensure positive outcomes for all young people accessing our service.

As a registered children's home Number 60 will be subject to rigorous inspection via the Ofsted inspectorate team, this will be backed up on a monthly basis through regulation 33 inspection by a named individual independent of the home and organisation as a whole.

Resident's Meetings

This forum will offer children and young people the opportunity to have an input in relation to everyday issues pertaining to their lives. They will have direct responsibility for the creation of agendas and be able to influence the decision making process within the home. These meetings will take place fortnightly and minutes will be recorded and distributed with clear instruction as to who has responsibility to ensure that decisions are acted upon.

Keyworker Meetings

These formal and informal sessions will be a source of information exchange. The child or young person and their key worker will be able to discuss the ongoing progress of any individual care plans and look to develop other areas of work felt necessary or indeed requested. These sessions may be of use to those children or young people who find the group setting identified above, rather intimidating and can address concerns and suggest improvements in a less formal arena.

End of Placement Questionnaires

It is important to get an understanding of the overall experience that a child or young person has had from their time in your care. With this in mind, a child centred and reader friendly questionnaire has been developed for use. This document will hopefully help the team to identify from young person's perspective, 'what was good' and 'what was not so good'? about their time at Number 60. Support can be offered for children or young people who may have difficulty with written formats and alternative methods of information gathering can be considered.

Access to Independent Advocates

All children and young people will have access to an independent advocate from NYAS. A representative from this service will visit the home on a monthly basis and again offer the children and young people a forum to make suggestions, voice concerns and generally air their views in relation to the home and its day to day running. Any issues can then be addressed by the advocate who can flag up topics raised with the staff and/ or management.

Questionnaires

The communications taking place between a service and other professionals directly involved in the wider care of a young person is extremely important. Free flowing, open and honest dialogue is needed if the maximum level of support is to be achieved. This working relationship is also extremely relevant in relation to families and carers. Supporting a young

person and achieving positive outcomes with them is greatly enhanced if families feel that they are included and are considered seriously within any planning processes. As a result their views are extremely important. A questionnaire circulated on a six monthly basis which focuses upon their experiences of interactions with staff at Number 60 and their views on the standards and levels of care provided to their young people, will hopefully provide a good bench mark in relation to the effectiveness of our performance whilst offering insights into possible areas for improvement.

Supervision

Evolution Children Services as an organisation recognises the need for a structured and focussed process of supervision for all staff. All full time workers will be expected to receive supervision on a monthly basis (minimum). This will allow them to focus upon their own personal practice, the practices within the home as a whole as well as identifying training and support needs on an individual and collective basis. The process will be used by management to assess work performance and the effectiveness of the home in meeting the needs of the young people in their care. Learning objectives and effective practice objectives will be set and fed into a wider personal development process.

Staff meetings

This forum will take place on a fortnightly basis. This will give the whole team an opportunity to discuss and reflect on all aspects of their work and daily activities within the home. Update and feedback from key workers in relation to the young people they currently hold responsibility for, will enable the team as a whole to be comprehensively informed in relation to ongoing work, and any developments in relation to all young people. This process will support the links and information systems already in place within the home i.e. recording systems, handovers etc.

Personal Development and Appraisal

The need for a well trained, well motivated staff team is extremely important in the relation to positive outcomes for all young people. The development of a clear, and focussed process which aims to promote staff development and ensure that the aims and objectives of the home and organisation as a whole are achieved, is imperative. Through the process of supervision it is possible to begin to develop a personal development strategy for each individual. This process will be ongoing and allow the team to continuously develop a range of skills and abilities that enhances their practice and help them to work with and support young people more effectively, whilst also helping themselves to develop a career path that will allow them to experience a range of roles and situations that lead to progression should they wish to do so. This overall process will then allow for a situation where an appraisal system becomes part of the annual evaluation of the individual and the service as a whole. Jointly agreed aims and objectives become useful tools and make the service more responsive to the support needs of young people, through continuous development of staff and service.