

# Auton Residential Children's Homes

Newcastle • Sunderland • Darlington



## Auton Darlington Statement of Purpose

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# Auton Darlington Children's Residential Home

## Statement of Purpose

### Quality and Purpose of Care

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

Auton Darlington provides a safe and secure therapeutic living experience for up to six children of either gender, aged from seven to 17 years old on admission, where they can learn constructive and adaptive methods of dealing with negative experiences and emotions. We are registered with Ofsted as a children's residential home that may provide care and accommodation for children and young people with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD).

We offer permanent placements that provide a period of stability and support to children and young people, assisting them to move into independent living, move back home or into a foster placement.

Each individual placement is carefully assessed during our referral procedures, to ensure that the needs and outcomes of the individual child or young person can be successfully met, should they be placed with us. Special consideration is also given to the children currently being cared for at Auton Darlington to ensure that their care is not compromised and that the needs of all young people currently placed can be met.

#### **2. Details of the children's home's ethos, and the outcomes that the children's home seeks to achieve and its approach to achieving them.**

Auton Darlington Children's Residential Home aims to provide a safe, nurturing living environment where children and young people can feel valued as individuals with individual talents, strengths and capabilities. We seek to provide care and support that is ambitious and stimulating to encourage each child or young person to develop, thrive and fulfil their personal potential. We place the needs of the young people at the centre of all we do; promoting choice and independence in an environment that respects privacy, rights and dignity.

We seek to provide residential care that is outward facing and is committed to working with families and wider systems of professionals in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people in our care. We deliver a flexible, imaginative and individually tailored service that promotes equality and individuality.

We have an experienced and suitably trained staff team that is fully committed to meeting the needs of the young people. Our comprehensive range of policies and procedures ensure that all staff adheres to practices that safeguard the welfare of the young people and meet all legislative requirements.

### **The Aims of Auton Darlington**

- To provide a non-institutional therapeutic environment based on an atmosphere of approval and acceptance of the individual as a unique person with a background, personality and choices of their own.
- To create an atmosphere where young people can learn to value and develop personal relationships by providing situations and experiences that develop trust, self-esteem and mutual respect.
- To provide a child-centred environment to enable young people to receive positive role

modelling and guidance, through continuity of reliable relationships and consistent nurturing care.

- To assess the strengths and needs to create an individual placement care plan, which secures optimal outcomes for the young person in line with current legislation
- To provide a safe, non-judgmental environment to encourage age-appropriate development and a positive future.
- To maintain an effective staff rota to meet the individual needs of the children placed at the home.
- To work in close partnership with other agencies, in order to ensure the stability and well-being of the placement, along with optimal opportunities for the young person.
- To provide outreach support to the young person and their family members through contact with significant staff members.
- To offer support for a move to independent or supported living if deemed appropriate.

### **The Objectives of Auton Darlington**

To have in place a staff team:

- Who practice with an anti-oppressive approach
- Who provide a strong ethos of unconditional positive regard
- Who can nurture, care and offer a non-judgmental environment
- Who are aware of professional boundaries and have a good knowledge of child development
- Who offer a home environment, where children feel safe with boundaries and protection
- Who will act as role models, will be honest and open and who will offer the child and young people alternative methods of coping
- Who will act as advocates to ensure and promote the rights of the children and young people and to ensure that they are involved in discussions and decisions relating to their lives
- Who will positively encourage anti-discriminatory behaviours and attitudes
- Who will encourage acceptable behaviour enabling the children and young people to understand the issues of equality and diversity through house meetings, key worker sessions and daily living situations

### **Achieving Positive Outcomes**

At Auton Darlington, a high priority is placed on achieving positive outcomes for children and young people in our care. We strive to make a difference to the lives of our children and young people and wish to support the young person in maximising their potential.

Auton Darlington works closely with the child, family/significant others and care team in identifying appropriate long term goals for the young person through the review and consultation process. These goals or targets are then incorporated into the young person's individual placement plan and monitored closely via the young persons individual placement care plans. The young person is encouraged to participate in the development and review of their individual care plans, and is central to this process. The areas monitored are based on the quality care standards.

Auton Darlington measures the effectiveness of the targets set within the young persons care plans on a monthly basis. Care plan monitoring allows for the young persons outcomes to be measured numerically and analysis to take place to establish how the young person's outcomes are being met and whether the young person is on target for achieving their long term goal. This process allows us to identify strengths and highlight these to the young people, building on confidence and self esteem and celebrating success through appropriate rewards and positive consequences. Areas identified as not being achieved are considered carefully and highlighted



within multi agency reviews and reports to identify how this can be achieved in the future, again keeping the young person central to this process.

Auton Darlington is proud of the progress made by the young people in our care and the excellent outcomes they have achieved. We feel keeping the young person central to this process allows for them to take ownership of the targets set, a clear voice in how they are cared for and the outcomes they want to achieve and pride in their successes.

### **3. A description of the accommodation offered by the children's home, including—**

#### **(a) how accommodation has been adapted to the needs of children cared for by the children's home;**

Auton Darlington is a large detached house with its own private garden. We have a greenhouse and encourage the young people to participate in the growing of our own fruit and vegetables. The young people are also encouraged to help garden, grow flowers/plants and maintain the hanging baskets. The garden has many games for young people to play as well as picnic benches and a BBQ in the summer months.

The interior of the house is warm and spacious allowing for good individual provision. The young people have chosen the décor of the home and have personalised all communal areas. There is a large comfortable living room and dining room.

There is a large kitchen where young people are encouraged to bake and help with cooking meals each day.

There is a homework room which provides educational materials and resources to young people and has access to the internet with appropriate safeguards.

The home has a chill out room used for playing computer games, board games, arts and crafts or generally relaxing and having time away from the rest of the home.

#### **(b) the age range, number and sex of children for whom it is intended that accommodation is to be provided;**

Auton Darlington can accommodate six children of either sex aged from 7 years to seventeen years upon admittance.

#### **(c) the type of accommodation, including sleeping accommodation.**

All children and young people have their own lockable bedroom. There are six young people's bedrooms. 2 bedrooms are located on the second floor of the home and four on the first floor. Young people are able to choose their bedrooms where possible taking into account individual risk assessments and needs. The children are able to decorate and personalise their rooms. Young people have a lockable cupboard in their rooms to keep their valuables safe. Those young people who have medication needs can be supported to self medicate, if this is risk assessed as safe and appropriate by having a lockable medication cabinet in their rooms.

### **4. A description of the location of the children's home.**

Auton Darlington is a quiet residential area of Darlington in close proximity of the town centre and local amenities. The home is within walking distance of a leisure centre including a swimming baths. The town centre boasts a shopping centre, cinema and several restaurants. The home is within walking distance of several parks and playing fields as well as tennis courts.

Darlington Train station is a short walk from the home as are all bus links making local areas easily accessible from the home.

The home has developed a comprehensive risk assessment of the immediate local area in which

the home is placed to ensure the suitability of its location. This was developed in consultation with a variety of professional bodies and organisations including the local safeguarding children's board, neighbourhood police teams. PVP police teams, Darlington County Council, local councillors and the local residents group. This risk assessment has been shared with all persons whom gave input and all other relevant persons involved in the care of our children and young people, including family. A copy of this risk assessment can be provided upon request.

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

The cultural, linguistic and religious needs of young people will be identified during our thorough referral procedure. There are places of worship locally for all faiths and religions and the young people will be actively supported and encouraged to continue any religious or cultural belief system they may have. We recognise and respect each of our individuals' dignity, privacy, diversity and independence needs. Any linguistic needs will be identified at the referral stage and the home will ensure that the skills, language and understanding of the staff will meet the needs of the young person. Staff will support young people to seek information and advice on all cultures and religions if required.

#### **6. Details of who to contact if a person has a complaint about the home and how that person can access the home's complaints policy.**

Every child and young person has the right to complain about their care or any other issues affecting them while they are at Auton Darlington.

Copies of our leaflet "How to Complain" are given to our young people and are kept in the home; each young person is made aware of his/her rights and the procedures involved in both informal and formal complaints on their admission to Auton Darlington. This includes the details of who they can contact to submit a complaint. This is again revisited regularly during children's meetings.

The young people are provided with information and resources to enable them to submit a complaint about the home to an external organisation, should they choose to. This includes how to contact OFSTED, NYAS, Children's Rights commissioner, Social worker and IRO. Stamped addressed envelopes, pay phone and internet for Email have been provided to the children to enable them to submit a complaint, without the need to request assistance from staff. Should the child or young person require support to make a complaint, this will be provided and the child and young person consulted about who they would like to be supported from.

St Cuthbert's Care has a procedure for all Comments, Concerns and Complaints. This procedure is shared with a child's family and care team upon admittance and a copy of the procedure is sent to significant persons annually or sooner if this has been amended. A copy of this document is available on request. This document is held both in the home and additionally in electronic format, should this be required.

All complaints will be responded to immediately in line with the complaints policy and procedure. The level of complaints will be monitored on a regular basis by the home manager.

NYAS, an independent agency, will visit the home to carry out visits by an independent person on a monthly basis. The young people will be able to talk and give their views on any issues that may be concerning them through this process.

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

Auton Darlington is committed to working in partnership with external agencies and significant stake holders to ensure that our homes child protection policies are robust, transparent and developed in line with local and national policy and current legislation. Auton Darlington ensures

that the homes child protection policies are agreed by the relevant professional bodies and we do not work in isolation.

Auton Darlington works cohesively with local authorities to promote the safety of all young people in their care.

The homes Child Protection Policies are submitted to all significant stakeholders upon admittance of a child or young person and again upon any review made to this document. Manager regularly consults professionals involved in the care and protection of children placed in the home, as part of the homes monitoring process. This includes reviewing the homes child protection policies and inviting professionals to request literature or policies they require.

The homes policies and procedures are held within the home both in electronic and written formats. These can be provided to those who require these upon request.

### **Auton Darlington Safeguarding Policy**

Auton Darlington recognises and is committed to fulfilling its statutory and moral responsibilities with regard to the protection of children and young people from harm.

Auton Darlington adheres to the following documentation:

- The St Cuthbert's Care Safeguarding Children Policy
- The Auton Darlington Safeguarding Policy and procedure
- The Auton Darlington Sexual Exploitation Policy
- The Auton Darlington Bullying and E-Safeguarding Policy
- The Auton Darlington Children's Complaints Policy
- Darlington Safeguarding Children Procedures
- LSCB Safeguarding Children Procedures of those children placed outside of Darlington
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The DfE publication "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2013

The St Cuthbert's Care procedures are underpinned by fundamental values that are central to the work of the agency.

1. Respect for all persons
2. Confidentiality
3. Non-judgmental attitudes
4. Individual rights to self-determination
5. Non-discrimination

The children and young people will be encouraged to respect the safety of all members of the group.

The staff team will act as role models and will actively discourage behaviour, which may cause harm emotionally, physically and/or sexually.

All young people will have individual risk management plans that are regularly reviewed. It is standard practice for all bedroom doors at Auton Darlington to have alarms attached. This is an effective risk management strategy for all of the young people placed in the home.

Child protection incidents will be reported to the appropriate people concerned. The process of such reporting will strictly follow Safeguarding Procedures and will reflect the seriousness of the incident.

### **Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation**



Auton Darlington believes it is important all children and young people develop the knowledge and skills to make safe and healthy choices about relationships and sexual health to avoid situations that place them at risk of sexual exploitation. Children and young people who are sexually exploited are the victims of child abuse and should be safeguarded from further harm.

Due to the nature of sexual exploitation it is very common for children and young people not to recognise that they are being abused or coerced. Exploitation can involve varying degrees of coercion, intimidation and enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying (including cyber bullying) and grooming for sexual activity via introduction into 'party' lifestyles forming 'casual' social relationships.

There are noticeable links between young people involved in sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as running away from home or care, bullying, self-harm, drug and alcohol misuse. In addition some children might be particularly vulnerable to exploitation because of factors such as difficult or abusive childhood experiences or educational under achievement.

Auton Darlington are committed to working with other agencies such as Erase and Barnardos, and our local safeguarding children's board, to ensure robust policies and procedures are in place at Auton Darlington, to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation. This includes ensuring the home has an appropriate identified link with the local police in ensuring the homes procedures and responses are appropriate to the needs of the local areas in safeguarding our children and ensuring a police protocol is in place.

Auton Darlington liaise with the Erase team Darlington and other local areas our children may frequent to ensure that our knowledge of risk and risk areas remains current and up to date and ensure any intelligence gathered through our work is shared appropriately with those agencies responsible for safeguarding children at a local level.

Auton Darlington adheres to the following documentation:

- Auton Darlington Sexual Exploitation Policy
- Auton Darlington Safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation Procedures
- Auton Children Missing from Care policy
- Auton Darlington Missing from Home Return Keyworking Session
- Auton Darlington Agreed Police Protocol

Those children and young people identified as being at risk from Child Sexual Exploitation will have this risk clearly identified throughout their care planning to ensure appropriate measures are in place to safeguard. This includes a specific risk assessment, and risk of abuse through sexual exploitation, for children. This is developed as a multi agency response and strategies outlined are reviewed regularly.

All staff at Auton Darlington will receive training in Safeguarding Children against Abuse by Sexual Exploitation.

### **Missing from Home Procedures**

Residential childcare practitioners can be faced with situations where a child or young person may be missing from home or a variety of reasons. If staff members are aware that there is a likelihood that a young person may go missing from home they would talk to the child in order to gain a stronger understanding of their thoughts, wishes and feelings. In such situations responses will be made in accordance with the young person's risk management plan. This document determines if there is justification to hold the young person to avoid the likelihood of significant harm through missing from home. This decision will always be made in collaboration with the parties who have parental responsibility for the young person.

All children and young people should be aware that missing from home is not a positive measure for dealing with any difficulty. It is the role of the staff team to make the children/young people aware that missing from home is dangerous and places them at significant risk. Staff will be proactive in their approach and use their relationships with individual children/young people as a tool to support a learning process towards choosing alternative measures to deal with difficult situations.

At Auton Darlington, an emphasis is placed on reducing the risk of harm through this behaviour by appropriate staff support during these incidents. For those young people where missing from home is an identified risk taking behaviour, this risk is clearly identified within their individual risk management plans and appropriate strategies identified. These are individualised however for those children deemed at higher risk, should they attempt to go missing, the ethos within the home is to prevent this through intensive staff support. This includes observing the young person, to prevent leaving adult sight when they have left home without permission, with aim of being able to intervene to prevent harm should this be required. This has been a proven effective strategy and reduced incidents of missing from home significantly. This technique has allowed our young people to be given the clear message that staff care and will safeguard them.

The Auton Darlington's missing from home policy, procedures and protocols have been developed in partnership with our local police agency responsible for the coordination of Children missing from home or care.

Young people are encouraged to access independent advocates to discuss their worries and concerns when considering running away from home or upon return from running away. This forms part of our return home procedure. Auton Darlington recognises that young people do not run away for no reason.

Auton Darlington has developed a Missing from Home Return Keyworking Session . This is to be carried out when the young person has safely returned, has been warmly welcomed home and is calm and able to reflect on the behaviour. The aim of this procedure is to provide a learning outcome and to identify pull/push factors for the use of this behaviour as a coping strategy. It is primarily a safeguarding tool to establish risk of harm when missing. This is not an independent interview and does not replace the independent visit required by the homes policies, procedures and protocols.

The main aims of this procedure are;

- To seek an understanding of the young person's motivation for going missing
- To assess the risks to which they may have been exposed whilst missing
- To explore and advocate for the young person's current and future wishes and to access independent advocate on their behalf should they wish to.
- To explore with the young person positive alternative options to going missing in the future, so that if the same motivation/situation arises they have considered what action to take instead of leaving the home.
- Reduce risk taking behaviour



## **Bullying**

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else putting him/her

under stress. Bullying is aggression, physical, verbal or psychological, although not all aggression is necessarily bullying.

St. Cuthberts Care acknowledges the serious and often devastating nature of bullying and recognises it as a form of abuse. St Cuthbert's Care therefore views bullying as unacceptable and seeks to combat it within its child protection responsibilities. The agency is committed to combating this form of abuse by raising awareness of it among our staff and the children and young people in our care. This is in support of our core values, in line with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and is stated within our Safeguarding Procedures, that "all children have the right to protection from exploitation, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse".

Bullying can take place on a number of grounds including race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and can take many forms including:

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

The Auton Darlington Bullying policy provides detailed procedural guidance on countering bullying.

Auton Darlington has worked closely with the Bullying Intervention Group (B.I.G) in improving our service further in this area and we are very happy to announce that we have been awarded The Bullying Intervention Group BIG award. The B.I.G award is a recognisable award which demonstrates that a school or service takes bullying seriously enough to work towards accepted good practice. It gives parents and children/young people confidence in our approach to bullying and it will help improve outcomes and wellbeing

Auton Darlington has provided the young people with age appropriate information on staying safe from bullying in the form of a child focused leaflet. The young people helped develop this. It is regularly discussed in house meetings and forms part of the regular agenda. The children and young people fully participated in the work required to be awarded the B.I.G award and the Anti-Bullying Accreditation the home has received.

### **Views, Wishes and Feelings**

#### **8. A description of the children's home's approach to consulting children about the quality of their care.**

Auton Darlington is committed to enabling children to develop their personal potential by providing a staff team who are dedicated to using a child-centred approach in all aspects of their work. We encourage young people at Auton Darlington to recognise their own strengths, individuality and potential for development and independence. All individuals working with the children have adopted an empowerment model of practice, which aims to support them to make decisions about their lives and to influence the way Auton Darlington is run. The young people are central to the decision making of the home.

## Practical measures towards ensuring consultation

- **Communication**

Auton Darlington will never assume a child is unable to communicate their views and will ensure the necessary means are provided to enable children to express their wishes and feelings. The care team is committed to minimising barriers to communication in all areas of practice. This includes providing a comprehensive service which can adequately meet the needs of children where English is not their first language, or where a learning disability may impact upon their level of understanding and participation.

- **LAC review process**

Auton Darlington is committed to working in partnership with local authorities in order to ensure that all formal documentation is complete, including care plan records and review consultation papers. The care team recognise the challenge of enabling young people to actively participate in these processes and will work creatively in meeting the needs of individual children.

- **Children's meetings**

Auton Darlington supports young people to participate in a children's meeting on a regular basis. This is a forum to facilitate consultation about the running of the home. Staff record the contents of the meeting, and actively encourage the children to make their own record of the meeting. Both young people and staff provide agenda items to be explored within the group. This time is also used to plan events and celebrations in the household e.g. birthdays and religious festivals. Staff ensures that any actions are taken forward and feedback given to the young people about the outcomes of any request. This is recorded within the house meeting file. Key workers also ensure they seek consultation with the young people to enable them to participate in staff meetings and add items on the agenda for consideration. This encourages partnership working.

- **Key worker sessions**

The key worker or a significant other staff member will facilitate a one-to-one session on a frequent basis with the children. This enables children to give their views through the assessment process and promotes consultation. Their views on their placement is regularly sought. All sessions are recorded and available in a format the child will understand.

- **Care Planning**

Auton Darlington supports the young person to participate in their care planning by giving regular input into their monthly care plans and receiving feedback on a monthly basis on the achievement of their outcomes. This is individualised ensuring a child centred approach is taken and the young person is consulted on how and when they would like to give input into their care plans. This enables the child to be central to the planning of their care and gives them a voice on the outcomes they wish to achieve and an opportunity to celebrate achievement.

- **Contracts**

Any contract to support the placement will be written in collaboration with the young person

- **Advocates**

All young people at Auton Darlington will have access to an independent advocate who can be accessed through each placing authority.

- **Independent visitors**

Auton Darlington will actively encourage and support the allocation of independent visitors, when children have limited contact with parents or family members. Staff members will consult with the independent visitor where appropriate.

- **Managers consultation**

The registered manager seeks to gain the children's views of the home and the quality of care offered on a regular basis. When a young person gives feedback or makes suggestions to improve their experience of Auton Darlington, we ensure that they are listened to and where possible, changes made to support that young person.

Consultation takes place with the child, their family and care team on a regular basis to ensure that the quality of care offered by Auton Darlington remains to a high standards. This information is recorded within the managers monitoring reports along with the outcome from any suggestions made.

## **9. A description of the children's home's policy and approach in relation to—**

### **(a) anti-discriminatory practice in respect of children and their families;**

Auton Darlington recognises and values the diversity and the uniqueness of the individual. Not only the obvious differences we can see with our eye such as age, gender, race or disability but also the differences that we cannot see such as personality, socio-economic status, background, health, previous health experiences, education, social groups, sexual orientation, cultural beliefs, faith beliefs, expectations, behaviours and morals.

These unique characteristics are important factors in the process of identifying need. Consideration will always be given to each young person's racial, cultural and religious needs. The staff at Auton Darlington will actively seek to support the process of meeting such needs by facilitating visits to local places of worship and providing for any specific dietary needs, seeking to enhance understanding of significant cultures and support any appropriate cultural links with the community. Auton Darlington promotes equality of opportunity for all regardless of our differences. We recognise that equality is not about treating everyone in the same way; it is about treating everyone fairly, with respect and recognise that children and young people from different backgrounds may have needs that are met in different ways.

Through our Anti-discriminatory practice we promote the diversity and value of all our differences, promote self-esteem and positive group identity and promote the fulfilment of individual potential. This is central to our practice and ethos at Auton Darlington.

### **(b) children's rights.**

All Auton Darlington staff ensure that children's rights are promoted through all areas of practice, in line with present legislation within the 'UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child', principally:

- That the child will be treated in a non-discriminatory way
- That the views and wishes of the child will be respected
- That the child will always have the right to dignity, privacy and humane care

With rights come responsibilities and children will be encouraged to take as much responsibility for their behaviour as they are able. Behaviour that creates, or is likely to create, victims will not be condoned and will be managed in an appropriate manner

## **Education**

### **10. Details of provision to support children with special educational needs.**

Auton Darlington recognise that a significant proportion of looked after children residing in children's homes have special educational needs or have faced significant barriers to learning due to experiencing severe trauma, have mental health difficulties or have been excluded or out of education for significant periods of time. It may be necessary to address and work through past experiences and present needs before they can positively participate in learning activities and formal education.



All young people have an education care plan when accommodated at Auton Darlington. This plan will identify those young people who have an EHC plan. Auton Darlington will ensure that any targets and support plans identified within the child's EHC plan are incorporated into their education placement plan. This will support both the child and staff team to identify how they can offer individual support to the young person and what areas are to be monitored to measure effectiveness of support. This information is included in the child's placement reports for Looked After Reviews.

The child's keyworker will ensure there is good attendance at all education reviews including PEP reviews and EHC plan reviews. They will ensure they prepare for reviews by completing any required reports and consulting the child about their views and wishes prior to the meeting. Any changes to the child's education plan will be incorporated into the child's education care plans.

Auton Darlington work in close partnership with external professionals and agencies in providing tailored support for each child or young person. This includes the school SENCO, VHS, educational psychologists, teachers and mentoring staff.

**11. If the children's home is registered as a school, details of the curriculum provided by the children's home and the management and structure of the arrangements for education.**

Auton Darlington is not registered as a school.

**12. Where the children's home is not registered as a school, the arrangements for children to attend local schools and the provision made by the children's home to promote the educational attainment of children.**

Auton Darlington is fully committed to valuing and supporting the education of our young people.

- We have developed an education policy, which clearly outlines the manner in which we intend to promote and safeguard the education of our young people.
- Each of our young people has a detailed educational plan which highlights their educational history, specific needs and aspirations
- We will create an ethos conducive to educational success, both through raising the expectations of staff and young people. Celebrating all successes, ensuring educational equipment is readily available and developing incentives to engage and achieve in education.
- Each child has an education care plan which ensures access and stability with regard to education, acts as a formal mechanism to ensure regular, effective liaison between all key stakeholders, signals any particular need and establishes clear goals
- Key workers are charged with: taking an active interest in young people's educational progress, championing their educational needs, celebrating their successes and ensuring that they have access to the full range of educational opportunities
- Wherever possible children at Auton Darlington will attend local schools or alternative provision made by Darlington LEA. Staff at Auton Darlington will provide "in-school" support wherever possible and appropriate. If a child is excluded, an educational package will be provided and implemented by Auton Darlington staff with the support of their previous school placement.
- Auton Darlington work closely with the virtual schools and have linked with the 'Virtual Heads' for the Darlington local authority and also for other placing authorities. This allows for effective partnership working promoting positive outcomes for our children and young people.
- Attend all multi agency meetings and act as an advocate on behalf of the child where necessary. Complete any required reports in preparation of education meetings.
- If a child's progress is not in line with their agreed goals and their next steps, staff should

seek expert advice from education professionals such as the VSH, SENCO, learning mentor or teacher.

- The home will challenge a child's education or training provider if we do not receive sufficient support for the child to progress, as outlined in their relevant plans.
- We have a homework room at Auton Darlington that incorporates facilities for private study
- Staff support and encourage extra-curricular activities and hobbies to promote enjoyment and achievement outside school hours. There are many local clubs and youth groups our young people access within the local community. These help build young people's self-esteem and confidence and provide opportunity to help them meet friends of similar age and interests.

### **Enjoyment and Achievement**

#### **13. The arrangements for enabling children to take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills**

Auton Darlington believe that each child deserves a fulfilling childhood with a variety of leisure activities, hobbies, and holidays to provide them with a range of experiences to build confidence, self-esteem and enabling positive memories. Individual talents and interests will be identified and nurtured, with children and young people selecting activities based on their personal preferences and abilities, so far as is reasonably possible.

All young people have access to the leisure activities available in most homes i.e. television, radio, art and craft, board games, books, games consoles, internet etc. As well as promoting a positive ethos of play we encourage participation in age appropriate hobbies for example swimming, youth groups, football clubs and sporting clubs to name but a few. Our young people are very much involved in the local community groups and through this interaction they have built positive friendships, which has increased confidence and self-esteem giving them a clear sense of identity within their local community. Extra-curricular clubs and activities are also encouraged and supported. This may include musical instruments or drama clubs for example This is individualised according to individual preference. Each child is unique and as such we investigate a wide variety of activities to interest and inspire our young people.

Children and young people are able to enjoy day trips and holidays throughout the school holidays. This has included museums, amusements parks throughout the country, football matches and city visits. House meetings are used to plan holidays and day trips to ensure the young people are fully consulted. We have also purchased a six berth caravan which our children can use for holidays and short breaks. This is located within the Warkworth area in Northumberland. The site also facilitates camping which our children can enjoy should they choose to.

We have a member of staff at Auton Darlington who takes responsibility for co-ordinating activities with additional responsibility for accessing material for holidays, calendar events, and accessing the local community.

Upon admittance, Auton Darlington will seek to clarify the homes delegated authority to give consent to school trips, sleep-overs or the child's involvement in sporting, leisure and cultural activities. This information will be identified within the child's placement plan.

We believe in celebrating individual and group achievements along with any significant events that interest our children and young people. Our children and young people are central to the decision making of the home and are able to request specific celebrations central to their interests, views, cultural and religious beliefs.

### **Health**

#### **14. Details of any health care or therapy provided, including—**

##### **(a) details of the qualifications and professional supervision of the staff involved in providing any health care or therapy;**

Auton Darlington currently does not employ any individuals whose role is to provide specific health care for our children in our home. Auton Darlington is committed to working with local services and health agencies in sourcing required identified support our children and young people may need. This includes; CAHMS, SWITCH (drug and alcohol substance misuse workers) external health educators and local sexual health advisor and clinic. This list is not exhaustive.

##### **(b) information about how the effectiveness of any healthcare or therapy provided is measured, the evidence demonstrating its effectiveness and details of how the information or the evidence can be accessed.**

Auton Darlington will actively promote the health needs of the children and young people.

All children and young people will be registered with a GP and dentist unless otherwise requested from those with parental responsibility.

It is an expectation that all children and young people will undergo an annual medical as requested by *Regulation 7 of the Children Act 1989*. They will also undergo regular dental checks and eye tests.

The staff team will adopt a positive approach to health issues. We will provide a healthy and balanced diet, encourage, create and take part in regular leisure activities and advice in risks such as drug abuse, solvent misuse, smoking and sexual health matters.

All young people are offered the opportunity to become members at the local gym and swimming pool to encourage regular exercise and promote healthy living. Gym induction will take place to ensure the young people exercise in a safe way.

Where young people are admitted to Auton Darlington with specific health needs, we work closely with the young person's identified health care team in ensuring that the young person's health needs are met to the highest standards possible. Advice is sought from health in drawing the child's risk management plan and monthly care plans to ensure health is appropriately reflected. Training may also be identified and sourced in meeting specific health needs of a child.

The health needs and outcomes of our children and closely monitored through the young person individual health care plan targets. Staff monitor achievement of agreed targets daily and record this. This information is then evaluated monthly and measured for effectiveness through the homes care planning and monitoring procedures, as discussed in promoting positive outcomes. The young people give input into their health care plans and their views are clearly recorded. Once effectiveness has been measure and quantitative data agreed to measure effectiveness, senior staff will then review whether target is on goal to be achieved. Where there is concern that the young person is not achieving their health care plan targets, staff will seek support from relevant health provisional and work closely with the child to achieve future outcomes.

The homes effectiveness of its approach to health is measured using individual health care plans and monthly care plan monitoring reports. This information is included on the child's monthly summary reports which are sent to all significant care team members and family, as agreed during the child's admittance to the home. It is also included in the child's Looked After Reports to ensure complete transparency when meeting to review the health care of the child and agreeing future plans.

Additionally, effectiveness of the homes approach to health is monitored closely by the registered manager on a monthly basis when reviewing the quality of care for the home. The manager also consults significant stakeholders at regular intervals to seek their views and opinions on how Auton

Darlington performs in its quality of care, including its approach to health. This information is included in the manager monthly monitoring reports. This information can be accessed on request.

### **Promoting Positive Relationships**

#### **15. The arrangements for promoting contact between children and their family and friends.**

It is recognised that whenever possible, children and young people need regular constructive contact with family, friends and significant others. Building and maintaining positive friendships is important to our young people and as such, this is encouraged and supported at Auton Darlington. We encourage young people to have friends to visit for planned activities, tea, celebrations and sleep-overs.

The arrangements and conditions surrounding each child's contact are incorporated into the child's placement plans and the conditions are reviewed at regular intervals. Any contact restrictions will be clarified to ensure the protection of the child.

Children will be given appropriate practical support to facilitate all constructive contact, whether by visits, telephone, letter or email. Auton Darlington has a telephone available to the young people that enables them to make confidential and private phone calls to their placing social workers, IROs, Ofsted and various other support agencies without the need to consult or refer to staff.

After consultation with the child's social worker, and other appropriate professionals, written guidance will be available for staff in order to define children's and parent's rights and the right of significant others with regards to maintaining contact.

If visits or telephone calls are to be supervised to ensure safety to the young person or to other children, then this will be done in a discreet but professional manner.

If letters or emails need to be intercepted for the safety of the child, a written agreement will have to be in place between the home, child, parents and local authority.

Whenever possible appropriate participation in the home's activities will take place with parents, friends and significant others as long as there are no significant risks or restrictions to such participation.

A written record will be kept in the home, recording the date of contact and with whom. Contact reports can be provided to the placing social worker.

### **Protection of Children**

#### **16. A description of the children's home's approach to the surveillance and monitoring of children accommodated there.**

Each child is treated as an individual within Auton Darlington. It is recognised that each child will have differing levels of need and individually tailored care plans in place reflecting key controls and strategies required to safeguard the child or young person, support them to manage their behaviour in a variety of different settings and circumstances, supporting them in achieving positive outcomes. Part of this assessment will include the level of staff support required on a day to day basis. This will include the child or young person's ability to safely spend time in the community independently, the level of supervision required when spending time with peers in the home, the level of staff supervision required whilst in the home and the staffing ratio required to support the child in the community. This approach must be balanced and reflective of the child's wishes, feelings and level of risk and kept under constant review. This information is recorded on the child's individual risk management plan, which is reviewed regularly in a multi-agency setting to adapt to personal development, age and understanding. If a child requires supervision both within the home and community, staff will supervise and monitor that child as described.

The home has an internal alarm system in place which can be programmed to monitor individual internal and external doors in the home. This is used as a safeguarding tool to reduce risk within the home. This includes preventing young people leaving the home without staff knowledge during the evening. Preventing young people from entering each-others bedrooms without staff knowledge. Reducing potential safeguarding or bullying incidents within the home, for those children who require supervision. This also acts as a security alarm on external doors, as used in private properties, to dissuade people from illegal entry into the home. The alarms are used on an individual basis according to need and risk level. This is reflected in individual risk management plans. Placing social workers and/or families for children admitted to Auton Darlington have the alarms explained to them during their admittance procedure and written consent is sought for the use of door alarms. For those young people who do not require high level supervision and for whom this is not a strategy within the child's risk management plan, they are able to request that this is not used on their doors. This is their choice and this will be respected. Alarms are not used in the home as a replacement for staff supervision or support and the need for use will be regularly reviewed with the child, their family and care team on a regular basis to ensure use is proportionate. Alarms are not to be used in a manner that creates an institutional environment. External doors have alarms set each evening as a security measure, not as a monitoring or surveillance tool.

**17. Details of the home's approach to behavioural support, including information about:**

**(a) the home's approach to restraint in relation to children; and**

**(b) how persons working in the home are trained in restraint and how their competence is assessed.**

**Auton Darlington's approach to behavioural support**

Auton Darlington's aim is to provide a safe environment through which children/young people can enjoy sound relationships, interact positively with others and behave appropriately.

The culture and ethos within Auton Darlington is to place an emphasis on highlighting positive behaviours and choices through appropriate praise and reward to build our young people's self esteem and confidence. This allows opportunity to educate our children and young people on positive behaviour and expectations of society in a manner that offers unconditional acceptance and positive regard.

Auton Darlington recognises that there may be occasions where a young person's behaviour does not meet expected standards and alternative strategies need to be adopted in providing appropriate learning outcomes for the young person. In these situations, Auton Darlington strives to educate the young person on appropriate behaviour and highlight different ways in which the situations could be managed by the child. The young person is given opportunity to discuss the incident/behaviour with a trusted adult when calm to reflect on the incident/behaviour and explore triggers and alternative coping strategies. Within Auton Darlington these are called 'Coping Chats'. This information is then incorporated into the young person's individual risk management plan to support the young person in a more effective manner should similar situations arise.

Occasionally there may be a need to use more formal disciplinary measures. Auton Darlington feels that although there maybe situations where this is an appropriate measure to take, it is imperative that these measures are taken after the young person has been given an opportunity to adapt their behaviour (limit setting) and used rarely. In these cases, a 'restorative justice' approach, where possible, is preferred. It is recognised however, that positive behaviour management model is more effective at establishing a long term change in a child's behaviour.

**Behavioural Consequences**

Within Auton Darlington we promote positive behaviour by offering praise and support together



with positive consequences. These can range from a dip in the sweetie bag to a reward of an activity or outing of the young person's choice. It is recognised that rewarding good behaviour promotes positive behaviour and staff will work with each child to identify individualised strategies to manage behaviour issues and promote positivity whenever possible.

It is also recognised that some form of consequence will be necessary where there are instances of behaviour which would in a family or group environment be reasonably regarded as unacceptable. Where it is felt necessary to give a consequence for this behaviour, good professional practice indicates that these should be relevant and above all, just. Formal disciplinary measures should be used sparingly and in most cases only after repeated use of informal measures have proved ineffective.

The following consequences are used at Auton Darlington and young people give input into this decision making where possible and choose a consequence that is appropriate.

Consequences will include:

- Grounding – the period of grounding should be negotiated with the young person
- Loss of privileges – these will be negotiated with the young person and could involve loss of activity or individual one to one attention
- Reparation – this will usually entail the young person making a contribution for any non-accidental damage they may cause. Reparation will be deducted from their pocket money on a weekly basis until the damage is paid for. In any case, no more than a maximum of two-thirds of a child's pocket money should be used per week. The young person is also encouraged and supported by staff to replace or fix any damaged property where possible and appropriate.
- Extra chores – young people can choose an extra chore as an alternative to a sanction – e.g. picking up litter, gardening, helping the neighbours
- DVD ban
- Personal TV in rooms ban
- Internet access ban
- Earlier bedtime

This is not an exhaustive list and will be subject to individual need.

It is acknowledged that due to the complex difficulties of many of the young people we support, the effectiveness of each of the consequences may only be seen after a period of consistent implementation. The consequences will be monitored and reviewed each month by a staff team in order to evaluate the effectiveness. Staff will take the opportunity to discuss the topic of consequences at team meetings.

Where possible all examples of positive behaviour are praised and encouraged by the staff team and by doing so help the young people to be proud of their achievements and help build confidence and self-esteem.

Children and young people have the option to agree Achievement Plans with their key worker. These plans identify specific areas of development the children and young people would like to improve upon and a clear plan is drawn with positive incentives given to encourage and praise these achievements.

Rewards can also be given to a child or young person who displays behaviour that is so positive the staff feel warrants a reward. These are used to reinforce positive behaviours. Again good professional practice indicates that these rewards should be relevant and just.

Incentives and rewards will include:

- Verbal praise and encouragement

- Certificates and ‘thank you’ cards
- Sweets
- Additional privileges – These will be negotiated with the children and young people. This could include later bedtimes for example.
- Additional activities/holidays.
- Agreed financial incentives. These are not excessive and fit the purpose. This includes vouchers.
- Agreed rewards such as make up/games/toys/books or beauty treatments. Again these are appropriate and fit the purpose.

## **Restorative Practice**

Auton Darlington adopts the restorative justice approach to guide the way we support our children and young people. The fundamental premise of our approach is that our children and young people will be happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when the staff supporting do things with the children, rather than to them or for them, wherever this is possible. By using restorative practices in the day to day running of the home, it provides an environment where there is mutual respect and trust. It encourages children and young people to take responsibility for their behaviour in accordance with their age and ability. The expectation of standards of behaviour for all staff and young people is high. Developing safe, stable relationships with adults in the home is central to the ethos of the home and will support the development of secure attachments where appropriate over a period of time.

Staff will have the skills to respond to each child’s individual behaviour needs. Staff members follow the “IRRP” model which distinguishes the difference between restorative justice and restorative practice. Restorative justice practices are reactive, consisting of formal or informal responses to crime and other wrongdoing after it occurs. The IRRP’s definition of restorative practices also includes the use of informal and formal processes that precede wrongdoing, those that proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and wrong doing.

### **(a) the children’s home’s approach to the use of restraint with respect to children accommodated there;**

St Cuthbert’s Care currently practice Management of Actual or Potential Aggression MAPA is a BILD accredited form of behaviour management. MAPA promotes and encourages the least restrictive method in order to avoid Risk behaviour with is primary focus to intervene at the earlier stages in order to avoid risk behaviour and the potential for physical intervention. MAPA also has a clear emphasis on establishing therapeutic rapport in the form of the COPING model. This allows both staff and children to reflect on incidents or risk behaviour and identify patterns and strategies to support them in future.

#### **Management of Actual and Potential Aggression**

The key values underpinning MAPA are:

- Best interests of the service user
- Least restrictive methods to be used
- Prevent injury, pain and distress
- Maintain dignity
- Reasonable and proportionate
- Physical intervention is used as a last resort.
- maintaining *Care, Welfare, Safety, and Security*<sup>SM</sup>

However, the only 100% safe way to restrain is to not restrain. There is no tried and tested fool proof way to physically intervene and restrain any child. Physical intervention carries risk every time, for both staff and children. There are however ways of physically intervening that are much safer than others which are incorporated into the MAPA training package.

St. Cuthberts Care will always take the view that it best to prevent behaviours happening than to deal with the outcome of aggressive outbursts. With this in mind we actively promote and reward positive behaviour, identifying what works for each young person and incorporating this into their risk management plan.

**(b) how persons working in the children’s home are trained in the use of restraint and how their competence is assessed.**

All staff are provided with a two day MAPA foundation training package when they commence employment with St. Cuthberts care, with annual refreshers to ensure ongoing competence and assessment. Within St. Cuthberts care there are currently five MAPA certified instructors who are available for support and guidance. One MAPA certified instructor is based at Auton Darlington for regular advice and support regarding behaviour management and physical intervention. MAPA is regularly refreshed in staff meetings to review and devise strategies to best support and maintain the safety and wellbeing of our young people.

**Leadership and Management**

**18. The name and work address of:**

**(a) the registered provider (including details of the company owning the children’s home);**

**(b) if nominated, the responsible individual;**

**Organisation** St Cuthbert’s Care  
**(Registered Provider)** www.stcuthbertscare.org.uk

**Responsible Individual** Sheila Errington  
Deputy CEO and Director of Care Services  
St. Cuthberts Care  
St. Cuthberts House  
West Road  
Newcastle  
NE15 7 PY  
Telephone: 0191 228 0111  
Email: sheila.errington@stcuthbertscare.org.uk

**Qualifications**

Qualified Social Worker (social care registration number SW05343)  
Practice Teacher  
A1 Assessor / CTLLS  
NNEB  
CMS

**Experience**

- Overs 30 years working with vulnerable children, young people and families ‘in need’
- Family Assessment Practitioner for children and families engaged in court proceedings
- Deputy Manager Family Centre
- Manager of Family Centre

- Practice teacher for student social workers on placement
- Registered Provider for assessment supervised contact service
- Organisation Registered Provider for fostering services, children's homes, post adoption services
- Director of Developments
- Director of St Cuthbert's Care
- Director of Children & Young People's Services

**(c) if applicable, the registered manager**

**Registered manager: Katie Doyle**

Qualifications

Level 5 diploma in Leadership for health and social care and children and young peoples services  
MAPA certified instructor

Experience

7 Years experience in children's residential care.  
Certified MAPA instructor and company trainer in MAPA

**Inspection Service**

**Ofsted**

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

**19. Details of the experience and qualifications of staff working at the children's home, including any staff commissioned to provide education and health care.**

Position	Qualifications	Experience
<p>Manager</p> <p>Full Time- 37 hours</p> <p>Female</p> <p><b>05.05.2018 commence d maternity leave for 12 months.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 5 diploma in Leadership for health and social care and children and young peoples services</li> <li>• MAPA certified instructor</li> </ul>	<p>7 Years experience in children's residential care.</p> <p>Certified MAPA instructor and company trainer in MAPA</p>
<p>Deputy Manager</p> <p>Full Time – 37 hours</p> <p>Female</p> <p><b>Acting Manager to Commence as of 05.05.2018</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ level 4 leadership and management.</li> <li>• Social care diploma level 3</li> </ul>	<p>➤ 17 years residential childrens care experience including registered for 7years within Children's Residential Care.</p>
<p>Senior Residential Care Officer</p> <p>Full Time – 37 hours</p> <p>Male</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ level 3 children and young people.</li> </ul>	<p>➤ 2 years residential care experience.</p>
<p>Senior Residential Care Officer</p> <p>Full Time – 37 hours</p> <p>Female</p> <p><b>Acting Deputy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ Level 3 and 5 in Children and Young people</li> </ul>	<p>➤ 9Years Children's residential care experience</p>



<b>Manager to commence as of 05.05.2018</b>		
residential Child Care Officer  Full Time – 37 hours  Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ level 3 children and young people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 5 Years experience in children's residential care.</li> </ul>
Residential Care Officer  Full time – 10 hours Female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ level 3 children and young people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 7 Years experience in children's residential care.</li> <li>➤ 6 years experience as deputy manager.</li> </ul>
Residential Care Officer  Full time – 37 hours male	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ level 3 children and young people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Years experience in children's residential care.</li> </ul>
Residential Care Officer  Full Time – 37 hours female	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ level 3 children and young people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 4 Years childrens residential experience.</li> </ul>
Residential Care Officer  Full time – 37 hours Male  <b>Acting Senior to commence as of 05.05.2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 3 Advanced Diploma in Children and Adult services.</li> <li>• NVQ Level 3 Children and young people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 11 years experience in children's residential care</li> </ul>
Relief Residential Care Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVQ Level 3 Children and Young People</li> <li>• Social Worker Degree</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 10 years experience within Children's Residential and Children's Secure sector within a senior role.</li> </ul>

**20. Details of the management and staffing structure of the children's home, including arrangements for the professional supervision of staff employed at the children's home, including staff that provide education or health care.**

Auton Darlington staffing structure is as follows;

1 Manager

1 Deputy Manager

3 Senior RCO

3 Residential Care Officers

The staffing levels at Auton Darlington will be determined by the number of young people who are placed in the home at that time, however we will ensure that there is always a good child-staff ratio to enable staff to undertake individual work without compromising the needs of the group or administrative tasks.

The amount of staff on duty should be no less than one member of staff to two young people at any one time. Two members of staff will be on sleep-in each evening.

The home will usually be staffed when the young people are at school however there will be times when the home is empty as all members of staff are either out with the young people or implementing another area of their role. During such times staff will be required to work within the guidelines of relevant risk assessments.

If a situation arises where a young person is presenting significant risk to others or themselves it is possible that staffing levels will be increased. This will be at the discretion of the Director of Care. This may require additional funding from the placing authority.

Auton Darlington is strongly committed to the personal and continuous professional development of all staff. We are currently working with outside agencies to ensure that staff meets the Quality Standards for Children's Homes guideline for NVQ qualifications.

We provide a comprehensive in-house training programme and access external specialist courses.

Auton Darlington ensures that staff at all levels receives effective supervision, in accordance with anti-discriminatory practice. All staff will be allocated formal supervision each month. New staff members will have supervisory time allocated on a weekly basis; the induction programme will be the primary focus of this supervision. Staff members who work on a relief basis will have formal supervision every eight shifts.

The purpose of supervision is:

- To ensure management accountability, including allocation of work, management of time, monitoring records, completion of administrative tasks, setting of priorities while promoting consistency between the individual's work and the goals of the agency
- Case management discussion including review of the homes safeguarding policies and procedures.
- To offer professional consultation, with opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice
- To facilitate the supervisee's learning and professional development by providing feedback on his or her practices, including recognition of good work. The supervisor has a particular responsibility for building on good practice and attention to departures from it, and for ensuring that professional relationships and sound judgement in the work are maintained.
- Personal circumstances which affect the worker's professional activities should be acknowledged and discussed as appropriate.
- To acknowledge the stress inherent in working in a voluntary social care agency and to provide opportunities for dealing with this where appropriate, recognising that there are times where it is more appropriate for staff to access the St Cuthbert's Care Counselling Service.

Additionally, regular practice observations are carried out throughout the year to support development along with regular informal practice discussions.

The registered manager receives monthly supervision from the Director of Care Services.

**21. If the staff working at the children's home are all of one sex, or mainly of one sex, a description of how the children's home promotes appropriate role models of both sexes.**

Auton Darlington has a diverse staff team and has both male and female staff members.

**Care Planning**

**22. Any criteria used for the admission of children to the children's home, including any policies and procedures for emergency admission.**

**Criteria for Admission**

Auton Darlington will accept referrals where:

- The child is in need of an alternative placement, either where they are new to children's services or because their previous accommodation arrangements have broken down. Children who have previously been placed at Auton Darlington will also be taken into consideration.
- It is felt the child would benefit from a period of stability and individually tailored support before being supported to independent living
- There is an indication that the child would benefit from being accommodated to enable an assessment to be carried out to secure a future care plan to most effectively meet his/her needs
- An assessment has been completed and it has been highlighted that the individual may benefit from a therapeutic environment with an open-ended period of stability to work on individual targets and outcomes to secure a positive future
- The child/young person has an identified educational placement or is in a training programme if they are within the age range required by statutory legal requirements.

Admissions to Auton Darlington will happen in a planned way to ensure that the full referral procedure can be followed. We will consider emergency admissions if the existing young people's needs are not compromised. However, a full risk assessment would be in place prior to admission. Without exception the process can be tailored to suit the individual needs of the young person. If there is not a current vacancy, the child's name will be placed on the waiting list.

**Referral and Acceptance Procedure**

1. All referring agencies will be expected to complete a referral form and pre-admission risk assessment before the young person will be considered for the service. The home manager will contact the referrer within two days of receipt of the information to give feedback on the referral status.
2. An internal panel meeting will take place to discuss the referral. The purpose of the panel is to conclude the decision of admission, review all documentation and reach a decision
3. The home manager will inform the referrer within five working days of the panel decision.
4. If there is a vacancy in the service, a key worker will be allocated who will be involved in all stages of the admission process. Otherwise the child's name will be placed on a waiting list.
5. Where possible, the home manager and key worker will arrange a contact visit to spend time with the child to explore their understanding and expectations of the placement and gain a stronger understanding of their wishes and feelings. The young person will be encouraged to share their views and wishes to gain a sense of control during the admission period.

6. The child will then commence an induction process to the home, which will incorporate visits working towards an overnight stay if it is felt to be in their best interests
7. Time will be allocated to the child during each visit to answer any questions, queries or anxieties.
8. The home will also allocate time to liaise with professionals involved in the referral and with the child's family if it is appropriate.
9. The child's social worker will be expected to attend a pre-admission meeting before the child is admitted to the home. This will give the opportunity to share information and to obtain all relevant documentation for the child.
10. A mutually convenient date for admission must be agreed.

If a quicker admission is felt to be in the best interest of the young person this will be facilitated. However, prior to admission a comprehensive risk assessment will be in place and the young people already living at Auton Darlington will be informed.

### **Children with Special Needs**

All referrals will be considered in line with the criteria for admission.

Although we work with young people whose learning has been affected as a direct result of their experiences, the focus of our work is for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties therefore it is unlikely that we would be able to fully meet the needs of young people with severe learning disabilities or impairments.

## **23. Additional Matters**

### **Therapeutic Techniques**

The care plan in place for each young person will identify the most appropriate adult to carry out individual work with the young person if this is considered necessary. This will either be the key worker or another adult who has a significant relationship with the young person.

All individual work that is implemented at Auton Darlington will be based on social work intervention. If the assessment stipulates that a more specific level of intervention is required such as child psychotherapy this would be highlighted to the parenting body and a referral would be made to local health services.

Auton Darlington will work closely in partnership with the child's placing social worker and care team in identifying the appropriate method of individual work required and when would be the most optimum time to introduce this work, in collaboration with the child or young person. Auton Darlington, as part of the care team, will contribute to the identification of the appropriate individual to carry out any agreed individual work. In the event that the individual identified or requested to carry out the work is a member of the Auton Darlington staff team then we will be led by the care team and placing social worker with regards to this work. Where appropriate, training will be sought to enable staff to fully carry out this role/work to the best of their abilities. If another care team member is identified then Auton Darlington will offer support where possible and appropriate.

Examples of individual work may include:

### **Life Story Work**

*"Life Story Work is a structured approach to eliciting and recording the details of an individual's life with a view to identifying appropriate helping strategies." Bornat J in Davies M (pp196, 2000)*

Life story work may be implemented with young people to enable them to gain a stronger understanding of their life and identity, primarily focusing on transitions and key events that are

significant. A “Life Story” book will be produced as a written reminder of the important discussions that have taken place between the adult and the child about the people and events in their life.

### **Solution Focused Therapy**

*“Solution focused approaches have a very wide application their main advantage being the emphasis on listening to the service user’s story and focusing on exceptions which is both anti-oppressive and empowering.” Milner and O’Byrne (pp150, 2002)*

Solution focused work concentrates on understanding solutions rather than problems. It builds on a young person’s existing strengths and works towards future change. Research (see Parton and O’Byrne 2000 and Milner and O’Byrne 2002), shows that this approach has been of benefit to people regardless of ethnicity, age or gender.

### **Task Centred Practice**

*“Task centred social work is a practice method which provides a clear framework to guide professional intervention. It is a here-and-now, problem solving method which builds on people’s strengths.” Doel M in Davies M (pp345, 2000)*

Task centred practice is carried out as a focused piece of work with five specific stages, including entry and exit. It is a time limited piece of work offering approaches to problem solving, taking the young people’s needs into consideration to bring about change in their situation. Task centred practice is primarily about learning. It was first described as a method of helping people with the “problem of living” (Reid and Epstein 1972). It is a systematic model of social work with a coherent and explicit value base. It is anti-oppressive in that it addresses issues of power and oppression both in the encounter between the practitioner and the service user.

### **Attachment Theories**

*“Attachment theory is a theory of behaviour and personality development in close relationships. It offers an explanation of the origin of peoples emotional and relationship style.....It has now been developed and expanded to consider relationships and emotional behaviour across the lifespan. It is therefore relevant to work with all client groups.” D Howe in Davies M (pp25, 2000)*

If a move towards independent living is the agreed care plan, this area of work will focus on relationship skills and roles in society. The staff team will implement each individual’s placement care plan to enable appropriate interventions to be carried out.

It is also acknowledged that our skills, knowledge and professional judgement are critical in helping young people learn constructive and adaptive ways to deal with frustration, failure, anger, rejection, hurt and depression.

### **Quality Assurance - Service Delivery**

- There is an expectation that the local authority will implement frequent care team meetings to monitor and review the young person’s care plan
- The staff team will be actively involved in the Looked After Children’s review conferences
- NYAS, an independent agency will monitor and assess the care process through Regulation 44 visits on a monthly basis.
- The key worker will provide monthly summary reports to each social worker and parents if appropriate.
- It will provide both a summary of the month and a review of the implementation of the young person’s care plan.
- Auton Darlington will encourage and support each child to attend their LAC reviews and care



team meetings however if they choose not to do so staff will provide detailed explanations to highlight individual achievements and outcomes. Auton Darlington is committed to breaking down barriers preventing children from participating in their reviews. We endeavour to work with the young person to participate in the decision making process of their care through identifying individualised strategies according to the needs and wishes of the young person.

- A consultation form will be sent to each placing authority at the end of the assessment process to enable those with parental responsibility to share their views on the assessment process and report format
- Comments from parents and social workers are requested on a monthly basis (via the monthly summaries) throughout the placement to allow parents and placing authorities to share their comments, this will be coincided with the LA review
- Manager seeks the views and comments of significant stakeholders regularly through the implementation of the managers monitoring procedures. These views and comments are then incorporated into the development of the service to maximise the outcomes for our young people and improve the service and care they receive.

### **Review Policy**

The concept of review is a continuous process of planning and reconsideration of the care plan of the child. (*The Children Act 1989, Guidance and Regulations, Volume 4. Residential Care*), (*Chapter 3. Review of Children's Cases*).

Whilst children and young people are resident at Auton Darlington, The Children Act 1989 review requirements will apply:

*“Regulation 2 places a specific statutory duty on the responsible authority to review the case of a child who is looked after or accommodated in accordance with these regulations. Regulation 3 sets out the maximum intervals that may separate reviews. The first review should take place no later than four weeks after the date on which the child begins to be looked after or is provided with accommodation. The second review should take place not more than three months after the date of the first review. Thereafter, subsequent reviews should take place at intervals of not more than six months after the date of the previous review”. (The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulation. Volume 4 Residential Care Chapter 3.3.5)*

### **Requirement to review and frequency**

It is the responsibility of the home manager at Auton Darlington to support this process and ensure that relevant preparation takes place in order to satisfy the requirements of The Children Act and Regulations 4.8,9 and 10 as described below.

- The full participation of both children and parents (where appropriate) in the decision making process
- A structured co-ordinated approach to the planning of child care work in individual cases and
- A monitoring system for checking the operation of the review process

We will ensure that the child participates as far as feasible in their reviews assisting them to contribute their views and wishes to the process.

### **Key Worker**

A key worker is a named person who has a central role with a particular service user and who works within Auton Darlington

### **The Aims of the Role:**

- To promote efficient case management

- To create a named link for the service user and all significant others involved in their care

### **Responsibilities:**

The key worker aims to promote the general wellbeing of the service user by overseeing all aspects of their care including social, emotional, health and education.

### **They will be responsible for:**

- Gathering relevant information during the service user's stay which will inform review reports and assessment reports.
- Maintaining service user's file.
- The preparation of reviews in conjunction with the service user, including writing up reports and presenting them at reviews and planning meetings.
- The sharing of information to staff members, social workers and all significant people with the service user.
- Develop a positive working relationship with the service user with a view to supporting and addressing with them unresolved issues from past events, taking into account any therapeutic needs that may be identified.
- These specific responsibilities will be undertaken alongside the need to promote the welfare of all service users within the group

### **Evaluation process:**

The key worker will receive regular supervision from senior staff in order to evaluate their progress and identify further need. Sessions will be recorded and reviewed

### **Training and Supervision**

St Cuthbert's Care is strongly committed to the personal and continuous professional development of all staff. We are currently working with outside agencies to ensure that staff meets the Quality Standards for Children's Homes guideline for NVQ qualifications.

We provide a comprehensive in-house training programme and access external specialist courses.

St Cuthbert's Care ensures that staff at all levels receives effective supervision, in accordance with anti-discriminatory practice.

All staff will be allocated formal supervision each month. New staff members will have supervisory time allocated on a weekly basis; the induction programme will be the primary focus of this supervision. Staff members who work on a relief basis will have formal supervision every eight shifts.

### **Health and Safety**

All employees are expected to familiarise themselves with the St Cuthbert's Care Health and Safety policy as they commence employment. The agency ensures that all staff receives core health and safety training during their induction period. The young people at Auton Darlington also receive regular fire instruction.

Instruction on the fire system and its operation is carried out with each staff member on the first day of employment, for a second time within four weeks then quarterly thereafter. As well as statutory training on fire safety, staff will receive fire instruction via staff meetings covering areas such as: fire prevention, fire protection and fire procedures.

St Cuthbert's Care recognises and accepts its responsibilities as an employer for providing a safe environment for everyone involved with the service. St Cuthbert's Care has achieved the CHAS

award. The Director, the Agency Health and Safety Officer, Director of Children and Young People's Services, Home Manager and the Home Health and Safety representative have responsibility in their respective roles for the provision and maintenance of:

### **A safe working environment**

- Safe arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances used by employees
- Sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own safety and health at work
- Period reviews and updating of health and safety procedures within their work areas of responsibility and monitoring their effectiveness by regular checks and recommendations where appropriate.

The agency reminds all employees of their duties under section seven of the Health and Safety at Work Act to take care of their own safety and that of other workers and that of the people they work for and to co-operate with the Agency, enabling it to carry out its responsibilities successfully.

### **First Aid**

All staff at Auton Darlington receives first aid training to enable them to take charge in an emergency situation.

All first aid treatment will be recorded in the accident book.

The first aid box will be fully stocked in accordance with agency guidelines and is accessible at all times.

### **COSHH**

The agency complies with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1988, (COSHH), which requires employers to prevent or control exposure, to hazardous substances at work.

An assessment of health risks faced by employers and risk to service users' health from exposure to substances used in Auton Darlington will be carried out every six months. All substances used in the home will be assessed in terms of potential hazard and control mechanisms introduced as necessary. All new substances being introduced will be similarly assessed. Manufacturer's guidelines will be obtained and followed.

### **Accident Prevention**

Comprehensive risk assessments are carried out in relation to any hazard which may be a risk to Health and Safety on Auton Darlington premises. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and shared with the Health and Safety Officer.

### **Violence at Work**

St Cuthbert's Care endeavours to provide a safe working environment to all staff. All staff are trained in MAPA during their induction period then supported with refresher courses on a frequent basis.

Risk Management Plans identify and outline strategies to manage known behaviours the young people may display and are compiled from the young person's history and continual observation whilst in the home.

Should a violent incident occur the agency will ensure that the staff member receives appropriate support. This can be in the following form:

- On the spot supervisory or peer de-briefing
- Supervision to support reflective practice
- Access to the agency counselling service

Incident reports are required for all violent incidents; these are communicated to the Director of Children and Young People's Services, placing social worker and parents (where appropriate).

All details will be recorded in the accident book, as required by Health and Safety regulations.

### **Fire System**

In order to comply with Health and Safety Legislation and the requirements of the National Minimum Standards for Children's Homes, Auton Darlington has a fire alarm system and emergency lighting system.

Appropriate fire extinguishers and fire blankets are situated around the home; the type, quantity and location conform to the requirements made by the Local Authority Fire Services. Standard safety checks and tests are carried out by Auton Darlington staff and an external organisation that specialise in this area.

### **Risk Taking**

Although some of the young people we work with present high risks within some situations (going missing, disruption), we strive to support them to participate in as many activities as possible through taking calculated risks.

Staff accompany young people on activities are required to ensure that the health and safety arrangements are adequate and to always follow the young person's individual risk assessments alongside any activity risk management strategies.

