



Heather House



Statement of Purpose

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Caring For Children

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.

- Heather house may only provide care and accommodation for up to 5 children.
- Heather house may provide care and accommodation for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD)

Heather house has been established to provide a high-quality nurturing environment for children, for whom it is either confirmed or suspected to have been survivors of sexual abuse and who may subsequently have developed sexualised behaviour to varying degrees as a result of that abuse. Whilst this issue is the primary concern, these are often multi-troubled children and young people who may present a variety of unpredictable problems.

We draw on local services and those of their placing authority and use their expertise to support the young person to deal with any specialist needs they may have.

Further details can be read in our Recovery and Intervention Plan and therapeutic approach documents.

All staff are familiar with and implement an awareness of the pace model of care as a generic model of practice. This is then built on additionally with our own therapeutic approach, developed over 35 years backed with a research paper by Dr Jack Kennedy and an assessment system also covered within the research paper.

Mission Statement

To provide the highest quality of care, the most appropriate resources, delivered with professionalism.

Aims

' To provide the highest quality care to enable children to overcome the difficulties and traumas of the past. Thereby providing a firm foundation from which they can grow through adolescence into adulthood as successful human beings, able to function in, and contribute, to society'

Ref: D. Bartlett 1991

- To stop the cycle of abuse continuing
- Avoid all kinds of offending behaviour
- Look after themselves - keeping safe from harm
- Maintain positive relationships
- To be engaged in meaningful daytime activities, i.e. education, training, voluntary work
- Free of services, i.e. not relying on social services
- To be employed and become a tax payer, contributing to society
- To become a good parent themselves

David Bartlett, Managing Director (2010)

Objectives

' To provide a safe, sympathetic and stimulating environment, together with a complex care programme appropriate to the needs of each individual child, delivered by suitable carers committed to re-parenting the children in our care'

Ref: D. Bartlett 1991

To stop abuse of any kind
To allow children/young people time to recover
To allow children to be children and enjoy the remainder of their childhood
To create a supportive learning environment
To provide skills and increase general knowledge

David Bartlett, Managing Director (2010)

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

The home provides a therapeutic approach based on the following values:

- Environment - The home is designed to be a 'high' quality, positive and functioning environment staffed by experienced and competent carers. The layout and furnishings are in keeping with being, as much as possible, like a 'normal' home, with the emphasis on being un-institutional and helping young people reach a normal developmental pathway, living in and functioning within the community.
- Values - The staff running the home promote high expectations of presentation, behaviour, respect and attitude to others. Along with educational achievements and ambitions for the future.
- Activities - Young people are to be involved in a lifestyle that continually encourages engagement in a wide variety of activities of a social and leisure, educational and therapeutic basis.
- Assessment - Young people's progression is continually assessed and changes in arrangements made to meet their ongoing needs.

3. The arrangement for enabling children to enjoy and achieve, including how the children's home promotes their participation in cultural, recreational and sporting activities.

All children and young people are encouraged to experience a wide range of activities to explore aptitude and ability. This will include many that take young people out of their comfort zone. These may include the following, which is not exhaustive:

- Outdoor activities - Walking, camping, bike riding, climbing and fishing.
- Farm activities - Horse riding, caring for animals, working on the farm, planting trees and gardening.
- Sports - Football, badminton, running.
- Social and leisure - Using local resources, going out for meals, going to theatre, cinema.
- Holidays - Visiting our holiday homes and whenever possible, on the occasion during their time with us we aim for a trip abroad to experience other cultures and broaden horizons.
- Education and cultural visits - Museums, art galleries, national trust properties and landmarks.

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

At Pear Tree we have a robust admission policy that ensures we have all the elements in place to ensure that any young person gets the best care possible from us and their religious beliefs are given the utmost respect.

Nearly all the young people referred to our service have very little understanding, knowledge or exposure to a religion of any kind and as many, also have poor school attendance this has been missed within education also.

For young people residing at Pear Tree, importance is placed upon providing basic education of all faiths, with Christian beliefs and key events explained and celebrated, e.g., Christmas, Easter which all young people at Pear Tree are encouraged to experience attending either a local church/school carol concert or Durham Cathedral.

In addition to this, all young people attend Remembrance Sunday Service, by way of exposure to religious observance and to stimulate thought and discussion regarding events in history and current affairs. Key dates of other faiths are included on our year planner, which all young people receive and are encouraged to recognise and celebrate.

5. The arrangements for promoting contact between children and their family and friends.

For any child, living away from home can be difficult under the best of circumstances. It is Pear Tree's policy, whenever possible, to continue to promote contact between children and their parents and significant others. Members of staff should be reminded of their role in this process and be involved in reminding children of the options open to them in terms of telephone calls, arranging meetings, writing, sending cards, etc. The only time this situation should not be encouraged is if there are specific concerns raised by:

- The Local Authority Social Worker,
- Any form of psychological or psychiatric assessment,
- The Court, or
- When information from the child gives strong indication to the fact that family contact would undermine their sense of stability or security.

We should then, therefore, be seen to represent the child's views to the agencies concerned without either passing judgment or having preconceived ideas about the information that is presented to us. Actual arrangements for meeting parents and other family members are different for each child and made with the guidance of the local authority.

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

As Pear Tree homes work with such small groups of children and places as it does, such importance on positive relationships, programmes and the running of the homes are regularly reassessed on the basis of feedback positive or negative, from the children we are looking after. Whilst this is often sought through informal discussion and close working relationships with young people concerned, each of the Pear Tree homes has an expectation to hold their own house meeting on a monthly basis where issues such as this can be opened for discussion and where appropriate, acted upon. In addition, someone independent of the running of the home inspects the provision on a monthly basis.

A six-monthly questionnaire is sent out from the Managing Director with a stamped addressed envelope. The replies are listened to and acted upon when necessary.

7. 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; and

b) Children's rights

Pear Tree does not tolerate discriminatory practice under any circumstances and always respects the rights of children, young people and adults in whatever capacity. Please see Guidance and Good Practice.

8. 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;**
- b) The age range, number and sex of children for whom it is intended that accommodation is to be provided;**
- c) The type of accommodation, including sleeping accommodation.**

The home is established to look after five children or young people of either sex between the age of 8 - 18. However, in exceptional circumstances a young person may stay slightly beyond their 18th birthday if an agreed plan is in place. The children / young people are selected on the basis of:

- a) Level of abuse experience (or suspected)
- b) The difficulties the child has experienced as a result of the known or suspected abuse, as well as emotional, behaviour and mental health difficulties.
- c) Risk assessments and care plans considered appropriate and suitable. Under no circumstances do children ever share bedrooms.

The home is designed to be as normal and domestic like in nature as possible. Providing a sympathetic caring environment within a residential care context, but avoiding an institutionalised manner where the focus is on nurturing and providing high expectations in terms of values, a wide range of activities including educational activities and appropriate help and support when difficulties arise. The home at Heather House has a living room, dining room, kitchen, four nice sized bedrooms with en suite facilities a sleep-in room for the member of staff looking after the children, and a separate self contained flat adjoining the home, which can be utilised for a variety of uses.

9. A description of the location of the children's home.

Heather House is in Cockerton which is a suburb of Darlington, a town in County Durham. It is situated immediately to the north-west of Darlington town centre.

The original village layout, known still as "Cockerton Village", remains recognisable. This is mainly due to the village green and surrounding houses and cottages being well preserved. The village is also largely covered by the Cockerton Conservation Area, which is managed by Darlington Borough Council.

A selection of mostly independent retailers are based around this area with some chain stores such as a Co-operative food store and a Post Office. There is also, a chemist, opticians, a florist, a fruiter, bakers, butchers, a discount food store, barbers, cafés, estate agents, insurance brokers and financial advisers.

The local hospital, dentist and doctors are all within fifteen minutes walking distance, the town centre is well serviced with a leisure centre, swimming pool, parks and cinema, as well as good shopping centre.

Cockerton Library has been housed in an award-winning building from 1970.

There are several churches on and adjacent to the green, including St. Mary's CofE, Holy Family Roman Catholic and Cockerton Methodist Church.

The area also has good public transport links to the town centre being just a 5-minute bus ride away. Further afield, Darlington has a train station with links north Durham and Newcastle, south to York and beyond, as well as east to Stockton and Middleborough. It is also only 2 miles from junction 58 on the A1 giving good links to the whole region by car.

While being in the suburbs of a large town the surrounding countryside is only a five minute drive away with many pleasant walks and for those looking to explore, good access to the Tees and Wear Valleys and the north Yorkshire moors all accessible within 45 minutes.

10. Details of the children's home's policies for safeguarding children, preventing bullying and the missing child policy.

Pear Tree does not tolerate bullying of any kind and always takes steps to a) prevent bullying from occurring b) deal with issues that may lead to, or regretfully resulted in, bullying taking place. The ethos and culture of the home is continually managed and monitored to ensure unambiguous messages are made that bullying is unacceptable and only respect, consideration and care for others is.

Pear Tree has detailed and comprehensive policies to deal with disclosures of abuse and to ensure bullying does not take place. These policies are robustly enforced and Pear Tree ensures that in every event it liaises with the Local Authority, either the home authority from where the young person has come from or, the host authority in the area in which the home resides and recommendations acted upon.

Ofsted are also notified of any safeguarding incidents.

In the event that a child protection issue is identified this is always brought to the attention of the House Manager and Head of Service. In the event that the issue includes the House Manager or Head of Service, the staff are instructed to notify the child's Social Worker and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board directly. In every event the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Local Authorities Social Worker are to be notified.

Should a missing-from-home incident occur we will look to understand this behaviour, identify triggers and develop children's abilities to reduce this behaviour in time. We also endeavour to educate our young people in terms of the risks that they present during such occasions and risk assessments are carefully considered when young people are identified as maybe being vulnerable to others, or they represent risks which may affect others. In the event that young people are missing / absent without leave, a detailed procedure is in place which members of staff follow to ensure that all relevant people are notified of their absence and, where necessary, the police are advised to look out and return, whenever possible. This runs in line with the Philomena Protocol in place and used by Durham Police.

On return, the young person is always visited by somebody independent of the staff team, to try and ascertain the reasons why they were missing from home. A safe and well check will also be carried out, this is undertaken by the police, being requested by the home. If a young person continues to go missing frequently it may result in a possible review of placement due to the impact on the home and the other young people who reside there.

To access the home's child protection policies please contact Sean Cooper, Registered Manager 01325 480760 or Pear Tree Head Office 01388 776799

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

Pear Tree primarily cares for children that fall within three categories:

- Survivors of sexual abuse.
- Sexually reactive children, who are responding with sexualised behaviour without understanding why.
- Young people with sexually harmful behaviour.

Of course, this range of children present varying needs and degrees of risk and it must be noted from the beginning that we can offer places in a number of different homes.

Emergency admissions.

Whilst it is regretful that we are unable to take emergency admissions as we can only take children and young people in a planned way after thorough assessment. However on occasions this can be done promptly, in some circumstances within 24 hours.

12. The arrangements for dealing with complaints.

Pear Tree operates a very clear Complaints Procedure where young people, other Agencies and members of the public are encouraged to make complaints, where appropriate, which can be dealt with either formally or informally. In every event it is the organisations policy to record these complaints and take action when required. Staff are to encourage young people to make complaints when there is good reason and help them to record their feelings, concerns or anxieties. When necessary an investigation will be carried out and recorded with the findings and outcome explained to those concerned.

Pear Tree takes all complaints seriously and endeavours to provide a robust system to ensure that complaints are dealt with effectively and actions taken, where necessary.

In the first instance the Registered Manager, Sean Cooper or the Managing Director, David Bartlett may take steps to try to resolve the complaint at an early stage.

If the person is the manager of the home and is the subject of the complaint the issue should be referred to a colleague of the same management level or higher.

In the event that you wish to make a complaint regarding the Head of Service, this should be referred to Ofsted and LADO.

The address for Ofsted is:

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Telephone No: 0300 123 1231

Details for the LADO can be provided upon request from Pear Tree Head office.

Pear Tree full complaints policy if applicable can be requested from Pear Tree head office: Contact details - Head office: 01388 776799 info@peartreeprojects.co.uk

Children's Behaviour

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

In homes that care for children who display sexualised behaviour or present a risk to other children, a specific risk assessment for the use of a sensor on the landing between the children's bedrooms or individual bedroom door alarms is carried out. It is explained to children at the point of admission that:

- It is there to reassure children that no-one will be able to enter their bedrooms without a member of staff being made aware,
- As some of our children have been victims of malicious allegations, that they cannot be accused of entering another child's room without a member of staff being made aware of this fact, and
- The measures taken are by no means there to inhibit any child's movement. Children may come and go freely to use the toilet etc. and be encouraged not to feel inhibited by the noise of the sensor. The sensor should only be used on an evening or at a time when it is felt that a child or children may be particularly vulnerable.

Members of staff should also be reminded that young people are not permitted to frequent other children's rooms for any reason.

A consent form signed by the Local Authority Social Worker is to be in place for each young person.

14. Details of the children's home's approach to behaviour support, including information about –

a) the children's home's approach to the use of restraint with respect to children accommodated there;

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

Whilst the organisation has high expectations in terms of behaviour and expects staff to implement boundaries, control and physical restraint of young people is only used as a last resort. All staff within the home have been trained in the 'TEAM TEACH' system of holding young people when necessary. In all occasions it is expected that staff will use the minimum amount of force necessary and only when necessary. Team Teach training is refreshed every year.

Following every restraint, a review of the incident takes place by the Registered Manager and Managing Director.

To access the home's behaviour management policies please contact Sean Cooper, Registered Manager 01325 480760, or Pear Tree Head Office 01388 776799.

Contact details

15. 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;
- c) If applicable; the registered manager.

The home is run by Pear Tree Projects Ltd under the guidance of David Bartlett, Managing Director, Toy Top Farm, Houghton Bank Heighington, Darlington, DL2 2UQ, and the House Manager Sean Cooper, 2a Moorlands Road, Darlington. DL3 9JR

Education

16. Details of provision to support children with special education needs.

Please see Pear Tree's Policy for Special Education needs and Pear Tree School curriculum.

17. Where the children's home is dually registered as a school, details of the curriculum provided by the children's home and the management and structure of the arrangements for education.

N/A - Please see 18.

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

On admission, in liaison with other agencies an assessments of a young person's educational needs takes place, this also includes and is dependent on the young person's individual risk assessment and in some cases their current school provision. In the event that they are able to attend mainstream school or college a suitable place is sort in liaison with the local education authorities looked after young person's advisor. In the event that a young person's risk assessment considers this unsuitable then an admission into Pear Tree School is automatically provided.

Young people above school age, who can't attend independent work or training, are provided with on-going education and training as part of the Pear Tree School Curriculum.

In September 2005 our school was registered, and the overall Ofsted Award was 'Outstanding' since then the school has maintained this award. In September 2022 the school transitioned over to The Independent School Inspectorate body. In 2023 the school received its first initial inspection and not only met all requirements but exceeded in them.

In addition, within the home there is a quiet room set aside for reading, homework etc and computer facilities are also available.

Health

19. Details of any health care or therapy provided, including –

a) Details of the qualifications and clinical supervision of the staff involved.

b) Information about –

i) How the children's home measures the effectiveness of its approach; and

ii) The evidence referred to by the children's home to demonstrate the effectiveness of its approach, and how this information can be accessed.

The Recovery Programme described earlier demonstrates a "Therapeutic Approach". We do not provide any therapeutic techniques and try to keep our approach as simple as possible. We have a long lasting and well-established working relationship with the Child and Adolescent Community Forensic Service (formerly known as Kolvin Unit), part of Newcastle N.H.S Trust, where children are regularly referred for help and good working relationships with the local CAMHS team.

- All of the children within the first month of admission are registered with the local G.P, which is Blaketts Medical Centre, Bondgate, Darlington, 01325 380640.
- Their eyes are tested by the opticians, The Village Optician, 47 West Auckland Road, Darlington DL3 9EL 01325 489684
- They are registered with the dentist Lance Robson Dentist, Woodland's Road, Darlington, 01325 462268
- In every case children have a care plan agreed with other agencies and work is undertaken to comply with this.

Regular check ups are always maintained.

The effectiveness of this approach is monitored in each young person's Care Plan and Looked After Review Form.

Staffing Matters

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

All staff have either completed or are working towards the following mandatory qualifications:

Advanced Safeguarding Children Level 2

Online Safety and Harms

Prevent Duty

Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness and Criminal Exploitation Awareness

HSE Emergency First Aid at Work

QCF Level 3 diploma for residential childcare/Children, young people and families practitioner (residential) Level 4

QCF Unit - Administration of Medication Control & Administration of Medication or Opus Safe Handling of Medicines Foundation Level 2 Course for Children's Services

Food Hygiene Level 2

Health & Safety - Including Manual Handling for Employees

Fire Safety Awareness

Team Teach

Information Governance (GDPR)

Pear Tree Training

Managing Sexually Harmful Behaviour

Safeguarding

Who Care's Training

Recovery & Intervention

Pear Tree School Curriculum

Join Up

Care Plans and Risk Assessments

Please refer to our training matrix which shows a full list of all training for each member of staff.

The introduction gives an outline of Pear Tree's history; the Managing Director is David Bartlett.

In 1986, David Bartlett, like many other young people, through circumstances, was forced to make his own way in the world, and as such, with the help of the Princes Trust, and Enterprise Allowance Scheme, became self-employed as a professional painter and sculptor. Although only 20 years of age, this occupation brought him to the attention of a number of establishments and David began teaching as a lecturer within Darlington Arts centre, Bishop Auckland Technical College, and then later, for Further Education in Cleveland, which also included St Luke's Psychiatric Hospital in Middlesbrough, and the regional secure Unit. Although unqualified, David became a full-time lecturer in Art 3-D Design at Bishop Auckland Technical College in 1988, and later as a result of successful workshops operated by Northern Arts, was recruited by Aycliffe Young People's Centre, where he was to spend 2 ½ years within the secure unit. In 1989 – 1990 he completed his first year Certificate of Education.

Although teaching began to provide a regular income, David also continued to run a successful business and in 1989 he purchased a number of properties that were later to be used by the organisation to become known as Pear Tree. During his time at Aycliffe Young People's Centre, it became abundantly clear that there were many young people for whom it was felt institutional settings were not the most positive and productive. The staff room was full of ideas from teachers who had been involved for years, wishing that they could start their own organisation. It was of a direct result of these experiences and working with a number of children in particular, at Aycliffe Young People's Centre, that the idea of

developing a school on a farm where therapeutic activities coupled with sensitive caring environment could be most productive. This idea was floated by David and taken up by a number of people with contacts within the Local Social Services Department.

Subsequently, the first Summer schemes were started in the summer of 1990 as described within the introduction, and in the spring of 1991, at the age of 24, David Bartlett left Aycliffe Young People's centre to work full time on developing the organisation, that would become known as Pear Tree and has been 'on duty' ever since.

Fixed Staff Team

SEAN COOPER

POSITION: Senior Registered Manager, Duty Manager

Date of Employment: 16.11.98

I started working weekends on a dairy and arable farm at thirteen and then at sixteen while still at school I took a part time job in a supermarket.

When I left school in 1983 I started a, trainee manager's course in the retail and warehousing sector, when I finishing the course in 85, I worked as a warehouse manager for four years which is where liking to sort, organise and tidy came in handy.

Because of my love of the outdoors in 1989 I decided on a career change and started to work in the outdoor industry as an outdoor instructor, I completed training in several different areas, mountaineering, climbing, kayaking etc.

The work often meant travelling to work away for long periods of time and when in 1995 I married I decided to settle back in the North East and once again I worked as a warehouse manager. In 1998 when the opportunity arose to work in the area using my outdoor skills again, I came to work for Pear Tree.

I started work with Pear Tree as an outdoor instructor as part of the childcare team.

In 2001 I was promoted to Duty Manager and in 2004 to House Manager. My first house was the Conifers in which I worked with a group of young people seeing them through their move from Pear Tree to independence. At which time the house was closed as part of restructuring.

I then went to Penally in August of 2005 and work as a Manager there until November 2006 when I was moved to Heather House.

The love of the outdoors has always remained and I continue to enjoy outdoor activities and being outdoors and on occasions I do still try and get out with the young people.

I have now been with Pear Tree since 1998 and in that time I have looked after a lot of young people. I feel that my knowledge and understanding of young people has grown and continues to grow daily. With that has come has come a greater understanding of the model of child care that Pear Tree provides and it is a model that I whole heartedly believe in because it is simple and effective, Protect – Engage – Occupy – Relate – Influence.

This makes coming to work easy on a morning, I get to work with young people and help them grow and develop. And yes, while at times this is challenging it is always interesting and rewarding.

Certificates:

HSE First Aid

Lifting and Moving Things (Manual Handling)

Child Protection Level 1

Safe Handling of Medication Training
Equality and Diversity – Level 2
NVQ Early Years Care and Education Level 4 Management in the context of early years
Assessing Candidates using a range of methods
Registered Manager’s Award
OCR Stage 1 Computer Literacy and Information Technology
BTEC National Diploma in Leisure Studies
Managing Allegations Against Staff
Tackling Bullying
OCR Level 2 certificate in IT User Skills
Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation
Female Genital Mutilation: Recognising and Preventing FGM
Understanding Child Attachment
Nov 17 2014 - Attended a seminar delivered by Dr Bruce Perry - The impact of trauma and neglect on the developing child
NSPCC - Safer recruitment in education
Channel General Awareness module
Understanding Pathways to Extremism and the Prevent Programme
An Awareness of Type 1 Diabetes in Schools and other Settings: Basic Level
NSPCC - Keeping Children Safe Online
Child Sexual Exploitation - Awareness training
Awareness raising session - Attachment difficulties
Reflective Practice Training
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
Channel General Awareness Module
Lateral Flow Testing Training
Child criminal exploitation and county lines

SHELBY WILSHER

Position: Deputy Manager/Acting Duty Manager/ SRSCW, Date of Employment: 14.3.18

After leaving school I completed my A-levels and went on to study psychology and counselling at university. I completed several certificates during this time in hiking, climbing and kayaking. Throughout my time at university I also discovered an enjoyment of cooking; I like to be the hostess and to provide for others. From school and throughout this entire time I also worked as a lifeguard and completed my gym, personal training and swimming teaching qualifications. From studying my degree, I felt that I would like to work within children’s psychology or a job within mental health however I was also eager to begin a job I could consider a career and the amount of years I would need to keep studying just wasn’t viable.

After university I spent more of my time working within the gym and as a swimming teacher which I wholeheartedly enjoyed but again I didn’t feel this was a job I could progress in. During this time, I had been volunteering with the local rainbows and girl guides and helping with art activities and reading at the local primary school. It was these activities which I enjoyed the most and through this I felt that I would be best suited to working with children in some way.

Within my personal life a lot of my hobbies involve being outside, my favourites being hiking and kayaking. I also come from a big close family, and I feel this has benefited me greatly, the support and guidance I have experienced I could then provide for little cousins and a sister who are all grown up now. I feel the experiences of guiding and helping them will benefit me at Pear Tree and I would like to share my skills and provide that sort of support for the children now within my care.

Certificates

Bsc with Third Class Honours in Psychology and Counselling.
ASA Level 2 Certificate in Teaching Aquatics (QCF).
Level 2 Award in Pool Lifeguarding, Intervention, Supervision and Rescue QCF.
IAO Level 2 Diploma In Active Leisure for Exercise Professionals (QCF)
Functional Skills Qualification in Mathematics at Level 2.
Equality and Diversity

LOUISE BEAUMONT

Position: Senior RSCW, Duty Manager

Date of Employment: 12.02.07

Working with children and young people was something that when growing up I always wanted to do and I have been fortunate to have been able to work with children and young people for most of my adult life.

After school I worked supporting teachers in a primary school with children who have special needs and behaviour difficulties. Then in nurseries with children aged from six weeks upwards both jobs which I enjoyed but when an organisation asked me to manage their indoor play area I accepted.

When however an opportunity arose to move in to work in residential settings working with children in a capacity in which I could be more hands on, I readily moved. For a short while I worked for a company called Arronbeth these were very challenging young people and at the time I felt that there must be a better way of providing residential care for challenging young people. I heard about Pear Tree and that they did things differently and that the outcomes for the young people were better.

I've now worked at Pear Tree since Feb 2007; I enjoy all aspects of the job but feel that accompanying the young people to Toy Top farm and helping them to experience and enjoy that environment is something which I am very good at. I also enjoy gardening, encouraging the young people to help me grow flowers and vegetables for us all to enjoy. I like to cook with the young people, teaching them how to prepare nutritious meals using fresh ingredients which will help them when they reach independence.

I feel that I have grown a lot with the organisation, and that I have found my niche. I now feel that I have established myself in Pear Tree and that I would like to develop a career with the organisation.

Certificates:

Child Protection Level 1

NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education

NVQ Level 3 Health and Social Care

Certificate in Risk Assessment

Lifting and Moving Things

Managing Allegations Against Staff

Level 2 Safeguarding Children

Tackling Bullying

In House Training - Complaints and Whistle Blowing Procedures

In House Training - Key Worker Training

Managing Anger and Challenging Behaviour

Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation

Introduction to Epilepsy & Administering Buccal Midazolam

Multi - agency Awareness Raising - Child Sexual Exploitation

Awareness Raising Session - Attachment Difficulties
Workshop raising awareness of prevent
Child Sexual Exploitation - Awareness training
Keeping Children Safe Online
Awareness raising session - Attachment difficulties
Equality and Diversity

JOHN CAMBRIDGE

Position: Senior RSCW

Date of Employment: 01.09.10

After leaving college in 1986 I worked in a number of roles in different factories and security work. I realised I wasn't satisfied with what I was doing and decided to go to University to improve any future work prospects.

At the time I didn't realise I needed good A-level grades to even have a shot at getting into University and so I was disappointed after talking to one of the senior lecturers to find out that I'd needed to do my A levels to go any further. Not one to be put off, I immediately started phoning colleges to find appropriate courses. I found a Foundation Course to Higher Education, at Stockton and Billingham Technical College. After a year I had the qualifications to gain entry to University. I spent three years at Teesside University on a BEng Hons Instrumentation and Control Engineering Degree. After University I worked for a company called ICAAD as a system engineer. Programming and building the control systems for a wide variety machines for companies, some of which were well known international companies.

Unfortunately ICAAD had financial difficulties and went bankrupt. So while I was between work, I decided to get some qualifications in electrical installation. Having gained those qualifications I was able to find work with a number of electrical engineering firms. I worked all over the UK and spent a number of years in this trade. The hours were long and I would get a week end -off every three weeks or so and started to question if this was the life I wanted for myself. My youngest sister suggested I try for a job in mental health where she was working, which I did and have worked in medium secure mental health units, forensic secure and high dependency units. The work was quite demanding and sometimes dangerous but was also rewarding, knowing that I was able to help people, deal with a difficult illness. I worked in mental health for seven years before, I decided I needed a career change, which has brought me to Pear Tree. I have been working here for a while now and thoroughly enjoy the challenge of working with young people.

Certificates:

Adult Literacy

Health and Safety

Protection of Vulnerable Adults

HSE First Aid at Work

Care of medicines (foundation module)

Drug awareness studies and their applications

Health and Social Care (Adults)

Risk Assessment

Level 3 certificate for the inspection and testing of electrical equipment

Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation

Mental Health and Wellbeing

LFD Training

Equality and Diversity Training
Anaphylaxis Awareness

JASMINE WEIGHILL

Position: Senior RSCW, Date of Employment: 2.1.17

Before I started at Pear Tree I spent some time in the Army after leaving school which involved an intense training course involving high levels of physical training, high standards of cleaning with daily inspections, combat based first aid, high levels of discipline, respect for others, team work, motivation and attention to detail. My job role in the Army was going to be a combat medical technician but unfortunately due to injury, I had to leave.

I then went on to do some voluntary work in a primary school where I assisted the teachers throughout the different age groups and learning levels, helping and assessing the children with their education, organised activities and supervising them at all times. This required high levels of tolerance and enthusiasm along with a willingness to help others.

With this experience I then moved on to become a Residential Care Worker. In this role I supported young people's needs, rights and views. I made certain that each young person's individuality, difference and diversity were always appreciated and that the young people were provided with equal opportunities and are not discriminated against.

Through a consistent approach to care, the young people acquired self-esteem and resilience, as well as self-awareness and improved general well-being. I also worked with each young person's parents and families, when appropriate, recognising that they are the young person's first and most enduring carers and that my role was as a partner in each young person's care.

Through the experience and skills I have built up throughout my previous roles I wanted to progress in my career and join Pear Tree Projects. I believe in the therapeutic approach to care and the company's five values. I want to learn and develop my skills further by working with Pear Tree staff and progress through the company, becoming a positive influential member of the Pear Tree family. I look forward to sharing experiences with the children and young people for many years to come.

Certificates:

Counter Bullying training

Behaviour Management

Level 2 BTEC First Diploma in Public Services

Level 2 Certificate in Adult Numeracy

Level 2 certificate for IT users

Self harm and suicidal thoughts in children and young people

Anaphylaxis training

Introduction to GDPR

SHIRLEY STRAUGHAN

Position SRSCW, Date of employment 2.11.2020

I joined Pear Tree, after working in Residential Care elsewhere, for almost a year.

I left school in 1990 and worked for my parents for four/five years managing a non-residential hotel.

Throughout this time I had my two older children and decided to change my career, more suited to my family's needs.

I did voluntary work, at a local school, where my children attended. I was later offered an opportunity to work for Durham County Council in an employed capacity, which I accepted and worked for seven years. During this time I completed my Specialist Teaching Assistant Certificate. I often worked alongside the class teacher, and taught small groups of children, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Due to family circumstances I became a self employed farmer, where I built up my own flock of sheep, farmed the land and built stables to create an opportunity for people to manage the care of their own horses using the facilities on my land. I have been farming for twelve years and it is still ongoing. During this time I went on to have my third child and complete my family.

I started a new challenge over a year ago when I started my career in Young Children's Residential Care. I later heard about a company called Pear Tree and the incredible work it did, with therapeutic activities and a holistic approach. I loved the ethos of Pear Tree and what it stood for. I felt this would be a fantastic opportunity for myself, to become part of something very special.

I have now been working within Pear Tree for almost three months, where I am building positive, professional relationships with them. Young people in my care and the staff I work alongside in a stable, caring environment. It can be very challenging and yet extremely rewarding as well. I hope to continue my journey at Pear Tree for a long time to come.

Certificates

Specialist Teacher Assistant Certificate

An Introduction to GDPR Training

Equality and Diversity

REBEKAH HARRISON

Position Senior RSCW, Date of Employment 7.3.2022

I left school after my A levels and went on to do a degree in Law. While working for my degree I started to work for Ladbrokes, and I eventually became a deputy manager. I had my son and due to his needs, I stopped working when he made the transition to senior school as we were not sure how he would handle the change from a very small school to a large one.

While caring for him I also signed up for a master's degree in psychology and started to volunteer at Durham Prison. Both these experiences have considerably widened my skill base.

I have helped to run numerous support groups for parents with children who have complex needs and these helped me to decide that when the time was right, I wanted to work with children and to be able to help.

I am an enthusiastic (rather than good) golfer and I love to bake, especially sweet things. I am an avid reader and there are always at least 3 books tucked away in my car somewhere.

Samantha McKie

Position Senior RSCW, Date of Employment: 24.5.2022

I left school in 2011 where I went on to do an apprenticeship in horse care and management, whilst completing my apprenticeship I worked on a busy hunting yard caring for numerous horses. My role was to get horses fit for hunting, bathing/ plaiting to a high standard, and all other general yard duties. In 2014 I fell pregnant with my first child and because of this, I had to leave my current job. After maternity leave, I went on to work on other numerous yards either hunting, eventing, or show jumping yards.

In 2018 I started working as Head Groom on a busy hunting and eventing yard where I stayed for 5 years, traveling all over the UK and Ireland grooming for my previous employer.

Although horses have always held a special place in my heart, I felt it was the right time to change my career and working with children was always something I was interested in.

In 2019 I went on to have my second child, and I enjoyed having some time off on maternity leave. I believe that my experience with horses has given me lots of transferable skills that I can use within Pear Tree. I am kind, caring, compassionate, and understanding but also not afraid to stick up for myself.

My hobbies include horse riding, going for country walks, and bike rides, socialising with friends, and watching good movies.

Andrea Shotton

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 6.11.23

I re-joined Pear Tree in November 2023 after working for training providers and local colleges delivering apprenticeships for Health and Social care and Children and Young People along with functional skills level 2 & 3 and B-tech qualifications for the last 15 year. I was made redundant in August 2023 and decided to re-apply for Pear Tree.

Since leaving school I have worked in various industries and settings which have included, fruit shops, factory work, warehouses, elderly care, Mental health care, Learning disabilities and childcare.

I have two children; we are a close family who are always there to help and support on another when needed.

I have gained valuable experience within the jobs I have worked especially childcare and education environment, these are skills I can transfer into my new role at Pear Tree and these will provide solid foundations which I can build upon and progress my career here at Pear Tree, as well as helping the young people to strive and achieve their own dreams, having them believe in themselves and also grow as individuals, working as a team with basic family values of encouragement positive reinforcement and having support, having boundaries and also structures in place whilst promoting their own physical and mental well-being, health and educational needs, through a consistent approach to the care of the young people will acquire self-esteem, resilience, self-awareness and also basic life skills.

I was delighted to be offered a role back at Pear Tree and being welcomed back into the Pear Tree family. In my spare time I enjoy Archery to which I am a club member of Durham City Archers, swimming, museums, fishing, being outdoors, baking and cooking, I also have my own allotment where I grow veg and fruit, I enjoy reading, spending time with my own family and enjoying holidays together, I enjoy learning and enhancing my own personal skills by continuing my own professional development.

Certificates

Prevent Training

NCFE CACHE Level 2 Understanding Mental Health First Aid and Mental Health Advocacy in the Workplace

NCFE CACHE Level 2 Principles of the Prevention and Control of Infection in Health Care Settings

NCFE CACHE Level 2 Understanding Safeguarding and Prevent

NCFE CACHE Level 2 Awareness of Mental Health Problems

NCFE CACHE Level 1 Award in Mental Health Awareness

BTEC Level 4 in Education and Training
Supporting the Use of Medication in Social Care
NVQ Level 3 Advice and Guidance
NVQ Level 4 Health and Social Care (Children and Young People)
NVQ Level 3 Health and Social Care (Children and Young People)

Mobile Staff Team

The following members of staff cover holidays and sickness absence throughout all Pear Tree homes.

ANGELA RAMSBOTTOM

Position: Senior RSCW / Duty Manager

Date of Employment: 22/05/00

On leaving school in 1985 I was initially employed as a junior wages clerk, and then as a print finisher. Both these posts ended in redundancy which caused me to reflect on my career path.

I was very fortunate to be able to be employed as a "Prison Custody Officer". My duties included supervising prisoners at Magistrates courts, Crown Courts, Periodic Courts as well as Youth Courts. From this post I was then employed at a Secure Training Centre for young people.

In 2000 I was employed as a Residential Social Care Worker. Since then I have gained the following qualifications:

Certificates:

Equality and Diversity – Level 2

Basic Counselling

Child Protection Level 1

Safeguarding Children Level 2

NVQ Level 4 Health and Social Care (Children and Young People),

Child Psychology Diploma

Communication skills and report writing,

Basic Counselling skills

RSA Certificate in Teaching Circuits (Stage 1)

RSA Certificate in Teaching Gym (Stage 1)

Computer Literacy and Information technology stage 1,

Basic signing

Lifting and Moving Things

Substance Misuse Awareness Level 3

Diploma in Criminology Level 3

Managing Allegations Against Staff

Managing Anger and Challenging Behaviour Level 2

Tackling Bullying

RASA - Rock Antics Supervisor Award

OCR Level 2 ITQ Certificate in IT User Skills

In House Training - Complaints and Whistle Blowing Procedures

In House Training - Key Worker Training

LAO Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Business and Administration (QCF)

Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation

Level 2 Certificate in Customer Service Principles
Female Genital Mutilation: Recognising and Preventing FGM
Awareness session - Social and Communication Difficulties
Awareness session - Attentional Difficulties
NSPCC - Keeping Children Safe Online
Awareness Session - Attachment Difficulties
Health and Nutrition
Awareness session - Low mood and depression
Get moving / get healthy
Depression and Suicide
Understanding Young Minds
Infection, Prevention and Control
Neuroscience for personal development
Lateral Flow Testing Training
Mental Health and Wellbeing
Attachment in the early Years
NCFE CACHE Level 2 Understanding Behavior that Challenges
An Introduction to GDPR
Eating Disorders

JANICE TOMLIN

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 16.06.08

My journey with Pear Tree Projects commenced 15 years ago. Having worked with children previously for a number of years running play groups for various ages my understanding was I had gained lots of experience during this time. These children were from mostly secure and stable backgrounds. It soon became apparent that Pear Tree would be very different and that I had lots to learn. I was eager to learn in order to be able to support and help our young children moving forward in their lives. The aim was to teach them the skills required to progress over a period of time and eventually to go to be functioning, competent individuals in their lives ahead. My enthusiasm and interest for the job increased as I learnt new skills and became more confident in my role.

Having learnt by others more experienced and spending time with the children, watching behavioural patterns and dealing with challenging issues that may arise. This gave me the knowledge and understanding to help support our children. Whilst enjoying different experiences outside of the homes with our young people for many years my thoughts of how important it was for our young people to have the experience of having a warm nurturing home which many had never experienced. To have their own bedroom (a space to feel safe) and have caring staff available for support this could be a time to heal. I take great pride within this role ensuring that our homes are well maintained to a high standard and a warm and welcoming to our children, staff and visitors. I'm always willing to give other staff support and positive advice when required.

Pear Tree is a very special place and one like no other. I would like to think I have made a positive contribution to the lives of these children who have not had the best start in life. My hope is that we have given them a warm secure place with lots of exciting new experiences and the tools to repair, rebuild and to move forward in order to become positive individuals' productive meaningful lives.

Certificates:

Food Safety in Catering

Child Protection Level 1

CACHE Level 3 NVQ in Children's Care

Learning and Development
Initial Training for Classroom Assistants' certificate (Stage 1 & 2)
CACHE Level 1 Award in Getting Started in a Pre-School Setting
Lifting and Moving Things
Safeguarding Adults
Tackling Bullying
Safeguarding Children level 2
In house - Complaints and Whistle Blowing Procedures
Equality and Diversity
Report Writing and Record Keeping
Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation
Awareness raising session - Attachment difficulties
Allergywise - Anaphylaxis Training
An Introduction to GDPR

CAROL BRADFORD

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 04.08.10

Before I came to work at Pear Tree I had fifteen years experience working within the care environment. This included eight years working with the elderly as an activities coordinator and several years working in mental health. Many of the clients displayed challenging behaviour and learning difficulties alongside mental disorders. I have always been particularly interested in working with the younger client group as many of the behaviours the clients displayed had stemmed from their childhood. I felt that I had gained much experience and had many transferable skills to bring to the post of RSCW.

Having two young children of my own, I understand the importance of structure, good time management skills, budgeting and learning life skills whilst encouraging and supporting them to make the right choices throughout their lives.

I have very strong family values and believe that all children and young people should be encouraged with positive reinforcement and support whilst promoting their physical welfare, emotional, health and educational needs.

Since coming to work at Pear Tree I feel that I fit in well and work effectively with all teams showing support and compassion, not only to the young people within our care but also to my colleagues. I have a cheerful disposition, I am helpful with a good sense of humour and always willing to muck in (or muck out) no matter what. Someone once told me that you shouldn't work with children and animals, however, we do both effectively and I'd like to say that I'm enjoying every minute!

Certificates:

DICES:Risk Assessment and Management System
Diploma in Aromatherapy
Diploma in Indian Head Massage
Safety Practices
Equality and Diversity
Report Writing and Record Keeping
Key Worker Training
Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation
Prevent Covid-19
An Introduction to GDPR

HANNAH WILLIAMSON

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 21.5.19

I left secondary school in 2009 and started my journey through college studying childcare and early years education knowing I was passionate about caring for young children. Despite enjoying the course at the time, and those around me were planning to apply for university I knew I wasn't as set on spending another 3 years in a classroom environment studying, I was more hands on and loved the outdoors and being active.

My heart was set on joining the army as military police something that had always been in the back of my mind. Once I completed and passed my child care course at college, I started my application for the army, followed by me returning home from a 2-day selection process in Glencorse full of elation. I had to wait a year for a date to start due to my job choice as military police. Unfortunately, a year later I was unable to go ahead with my start date, due to me needing an operation. Everything changed for me from that point.

In January 2013 not long after my operation I found out I was expecting my first child. I knew this hadn't been in my plans, but with a very supportive partner and family I welcomed my son into the world later that year. I enjoyed family life and nurturing my child came natural to me, I felt very lucky to be able to be at home full time with my son and in 2015 my daughter was born completing my family.

In 2016 I started a job as a nursery practitioner in a local nurse. I stayed there a year before moving on and landing a job as a support worker for young women with mental health. This job taught me so much, not just work related but about myself too. I believe and have also been told that my personality is what is needed to be a great support worker. Friendly, fun, bubbly, emphatic, caring and compassionate.

I found during my time working as a support worker that just by someone else being there, it can make a big difference to a person's life and their well-being, just by being around to talk to and support with a friendly face.

I was told about Pear Tree projects and immediately found myself interested in the organisation and in May 2019, I started my role as RSCW. I feel this has been the best decision for me, I feel I can bring a range of transferable skills and my up for anything attitude to the young individuals that are a part of Pear Tree.

My own personal hobbies include running, horse riding, military boot camp, which I have introduced to a few young people at Pear Tree. I also often take part in assault course events for my own personal achievements. Alongside working and being a mum of two, I also go out with a Paramedic crew every three months, where I'm able to do an observation shift and get to experience their line of work and what's involved which I thoroughly enjoy.

ASHLEIGH WALTON

Position: SRSCW, Date of employment: 9.1.18

I left school in 2008 after completing my GCSE's. I was working in a part time job as a waitress at a local pub and also attending college completing a uniformed services course. I did not complete the whole course as I applied for the army and began the selection process and training. I completed the process and training and was selected to start. I was very glad I had completed the process but found that the timing to leave for the army was not right and I left.

After not joining the army I had a few part time jobs for a couple of years including working as a waitress/cleaner at The Carlbury Arms, volunteering work at a local racing stable yard, also working in Morrison's for four years on the kiosk department. Once I left Morrison's I started working at a local primary school as a lunchtime supervisor, while in this employment I also covered caretaker roles and

supervision of a child with autism on a one to one basis in breakfast club and cleaning duties. While working at Montalbo primary school I started working a second job at Staindrop academy as a cleaner, working afternoons after school finished and also worked some mornings before school to cover shifts. Over the Christmas periods of 2013 and 2014 I worked a seasonal employment on The Polar Express at Weardale Railway as a dancing chef. I really enjoyed working on the train with the children, reading stories, dancing, serving hot chocolate and cookies and singing before they met Santa. Working with the children I helped them with their daily learning including using cutlery correctly and supporting children on the playground with bullying issues or injuries. I made sure that all children's needs and safety were met with high standards. I really enjoyed working with the children, which led me to look for full time employment with children. My sister works at Pear Tree as a Groom and told me about the company. I applied for Pear Tree and was successful with my application. I am excited about progressing my experience throughout my career.

Certificates

Prevent Covid-19

Lorna Boyes

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 5.12.22

I have grown up and been involved with all aspects of farming livestock and horses from a young age. I spent a lot of my childhood on my godfather's farm being involved in all aspects of livestock farming but mainly working with and caring for the ponies and horses. I was also able to ride the ponies and racehorses in training on my family's racing yard. I learnt to ride from the age of 3 and this is still my main hobby and a great passion I take great pride in. I have a strong passion for the welfare and care of animals. I enjoyed all aspects of my job in racing including mucking out, riding and taking horses to the races, plaiting up and leading them up. It brought me great satisfaction to watch a horse I've loved, cared for, and ridden go out onto the track and perform.

Over the years I have had a lot of hands-on experience with children and horses, taking my young brothers to many pony club and riding club events, hunting and one-day events and also enjoying the odd days hunting myself. I currently have a 12.2hh pony for my children and a beautiful 15.1hh Cleveland bay mare for myself.

After studying a BTEC NC in sports development, coaching and fitness at college I went on to be a physio for the Darlington Technology College football teams. This involved me treating and assessing injuries sustained by players during a match.

From there I went on to work at Headlam Hall as a housekeeper. This is where I got the foundation and knowledge, I applied to my own cleaning business. I specialised in holiday property housekeeping which involved me cleaning a number of commercial and domestic properties to the highest standard. I have also worked for CDDFT as a healthcare assistant. During my time cleaning the 2 schools at Pear Tree I became really aware of Pear Tree and the work involved, this definitely made me think about my current role and how I could make an impact on the young people at Pear Tree.

My hobbies alongside having horses and riding would be a genuine love for the outdoors, walking my dogs with my children and gardening. I am a mother to 3 beautiful daughters ages 12, 10 and 3 and guardian to my 3 brothers.

My knowledge of the outdoors and in particular my knowledge of caring for animals will

hopefully help educate the young people at Pear Tree. Animals are in my opinion the best therapy and coping mechanism. After losing my mum in 2017 animals were my therapy and helped me cope and come to terms with my situation so I understand first-hand how much of a positive impact they bring to your young people. I feel all of my life experiences enabled me to take up this position and I hope to have a positive effect on the young people I care for.

Sharon Edwards

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 6.2.23

From leaving school in 1984, I have always mainly been employed in the equine industry including working at Pear Tree previously where I often had daily interactions with the children. In between having my own children, I have worked as a self-employed cleaner, I was able to work my hours around the children.

From 2016 to 2020 I was an assistant yard manager and due to covid I was made redundant. I was then employed as a yard manager at a yard close to home. I was responsible for ensuring the day-to-day management of the yard horses. This involved prioritising each horse's individual needs, organizing other equine professionals to attend when needed and providing general care to make sure they were fit and healthy.

My hobbies include walking, within the countryside, visiting the beach and cooking. I also really enjoy the equine point to point days out. My favourite job ever is being a mum, spending time at home and walking my 5 dogs.

Kate Bostock

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 17.4.23

After leaving school in 2003 I went on to Springboard Trust to complete a level 2 in early years care and education, when my apprenticeship was coming to an end, I was employed in a care home in the Durham area supporting elderly adults in care.

Taking care of all personal care needs and the day to day running of the home environment working with adults with dementia or in respite care supporting them to live the best possible life whilst in a care environment working alongside other staff to maintain the best quality care standards for the residents and welcome their families into the home.

Whilst working I also completed a Level 2 diploma in beauty on an evening for something to do in my spare time with friends, at a young age beauty knowledge was an interest.

I later left the care home and started working for an energy supplier Npower in a customer service role taking phone calls dealing with customer queries whilst promoting sales of gas and electric.

Whilst at Npower I felt pregnant with my first daughter and decided that call centre work wasn't for me and that my passion was with working with children, so I decided to leave my job and go to East Durham college to study a level 3 diploma in childcare and education. In 2010 I started working in early years within a private day care nursery working with children from 6 weeks old up to 3-4yrs.

In my time there I worked across all rooms with the different age ranges, ran creches and worked my way up to room lead spending 14 years with the company.

I am very passionate about providing care and education for children and love how every day is different seeing children develop and build strong relationships, watching children thrive brings me great joy there is nothing more than seeing a child happy and thriving.

Every age range is different seeing a child taking their first steps or saying a word for the first time to learning that they are confident to write their first letter of their name and be so proud of what they have achieved are all special moments that stay with you forever.

After my time here I decided that it was time for me to pursue my career in working with children and Pear Tree looked like just the place I would like to work, what attracted me to Pear Tree was the therapeutic opportunities that they provide and the outdoor learning environment. I have interests in similar activities such as having my own allotment and caring for my two dogs which I enjoy taking on walks with my children.

Certificates

Level 3 Award in Paediatric First Aid
Awareness of Forced Marriages
Level 1 Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines
Recognising and Preventing FGM
CACHE Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education
Level 1 Award in BSL
Level 2 Key Skills in working with others
Level 2 Key Skills in communication
Level 2 Award in Early Years and Education
Children's perspectives on play
Parents and Partners
NCFE Level 1 in Creative Craft
Working with Parents
Every Family Matters

Giammarco Di-Gregorio

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 1.8.23

I grew up in Rome and then moved to the UK in my early 20s. I've always wanted to help young people do their best, which is why I decided to study psychology. While I was a student, I volunteered for widening participation and EDI activities to help more students from different backgrounds get into university, especially in science subjects.

I love science, and throughout my undergraduate journey, I worked as a research assistant on different projects. I worked with human infants and bonobos to answer questions like, "Do 10-month-olds understand other people's needs?" and "Does maternal responsiveness affect an infant's recovery from distress?" I also worked on a project to improve rehabilitation training for people who have had strokes. After graduating, I joined Nudge Education and started working with children and young people who were disengaged from school. My role involved designing and delivering educational interventions to engage them and help them return to school. The length of the interventions depended on the funding provided by the commissioners, often the young people's schools. This often meant being involved in short-term interventions.

As I started looking for roles focused on longer-term interventions, I learned about Pear Tree. What I liked about Pear Tree was its focus on outdoor education, as well as the emphasis placed on nurturing and looking after the animals. After visiting the homes, I immediately felt I wanted to be part of it.

Certificates

BSc Honours Psychology
Award for Undergraduate Psychology
Children at the heart of Human Rights
NSPCC Child Protection Introduction

Claire Hewitt

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 5.2.24

During my time at school, I didn't fully engage, resulting in minimal qualifications. This is something I later came to regret. Despite initially pursuing Business Administration at college, I found a job working as a carer to support my young family. This led me to the realisation that my passion lay in caring for others. I found fulfilment working in a residential home for the elderly, where I made a positive impact on their lives. Juggling work and motherhood, I shifted to part-time at Morrisons Supermarkets. While raising my children, I took an opportunity at my daughter's school, initially as a dinner supervisor, then transitioning to a classroom role.

I was determined to progress, and I successfully completed my teaching and learning level 3 course, enjoying a rewarding 14-year career as a teaching assistant. During that time, I worked across all of the year groups from reception to year six, later becoming more experienced and specialising in assisting the teaching staff in upper key stage two. I gained lots of experience working with children who were autistic, suffered with ADHD and those who often displayed challenging behaviour. This required me to adapt to situations and develop strategies to assist with their learning as well as their emotional and behavioural needs.

Seeking a new challenge due to changes in the education landscape, coupled with my children now being grown up, I applied to Pear Tree Projects as a Residential Social Care Worker, driven by the desire to make a difference in children's lives.

Outside of work, I enjoy outdoor activities like walking in the countryside or by the beach, exploring new places. I am rediscovering my passion for running and aim to spend quality time with my grown-up children, although their interests have shifted as they've matured.

Certificates

Understanding Young Minds Awareness
of Forced Marriages Social and
Communication Difficulties Anxiety
Fears and Phobias Attentional
Difficulties
Emotional Well Being and Communication
Paediatric First Aid
Policy, Practice and Research Affecting the Education Sector Understanding
Mental Health
FGM
CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools

Juan Carlos Gutierrez Bonilla

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 11.3.24

As a child, I always wanted to study. I just was not sure what I wanted to study. So, I decided that I would just finish school and move away from home, which I did. When I left sunny Spain, I embarked on an adventure to find myself and discover what I really wanted to do in life. Leaving Spain on my own, as a teenager, was a hard, but necessary step if I wanted to progress in life. During the initial hard times, I kept looking back at my life in Madrid, and always reminisced of all the lovely memories that I had. After a period of adjustment, I managed to improve my English and developed good friendships which really

helped me during the first few years.

Since then, I discovered myself, and discovered that I am actually really passionate about psychology, criminology, mental health and social issues. While learning the language, I worked in hospitality jobs, and kept progressing with each job, to the point that I managed multiple coffee shops at the same time.

However, I decided that the hospitality life was not for me, as I needed a better work/life balance. So, I decided to find an "office job". But I also decided to study a full-time degree. I enrolled on a Psychology and Criminology Bachelors degree, while I also worked an office job at The Student Loans Company, full time on the nightshift. It was a very hard, but extremely invaluable experience. I was active from 8am until 2am, and this time helped me improve and become stronger both mentally and emotionally. Whilst at university, I volunteered as a Mental Health advocate within campus, and also volunteered as a Community Wellbeing Champion within my local community. My main areas of interest are investigating, and developing a wider understanding of childhood trauma, all areas of domestic abuse, substance misuse and general mental health and overall wellbeing.

I have just recently graduated, and I have just become a dad for the first time! Pear Tree Projects really caught my eye, and when I delved deeper into the company, I was able to understand their mission and I was so fascinated with the therapeutic work they do that I had to apply to join them! Pear Tree really aligns perfectly with my passions and with my outlook in life, so I was determined to join the team. I have a desire to have a positive contribution to the young people's lives and to make a positive impact in their development as they transition into adulthood.

Outside of work, I just love a good book or movie, a nice walk-in nature with my family, playing and watching football and American football, a good comedy show, seeing my baby grow every day and spending quality time with both her and my partner. Also, I really enjoy meditation and studying to further develop my knowledge.

Certificates

BSc Hons Psychology with Criminology
Healing Complex PTSD - The Brain Science of Recovery
Understanding and Treating Trauma and PTSD

Josh Price

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 11.6.24

During my childhood, I spent a lot of time at Pear Tree within various environments, my mother has had spent a large part of her working life at Pear Tree therefore I have gained an awful lot of knowledge from her. I also completed work experience at Toy Top Farm, and I loved working with the horses, which led to me wanting my own. These early experiences have deeply influenced who I am and my career aspirations. I earned a degree in psychology and a master's in forensic psychology, focusing on childhood experiences and abuse prevention. Currently, I am pursuing a PhD at Teesside University, researching the impact of childhood abuse on adult relationships. My goal is to train with the NHS to become a clinical psychologist, helping disadvantaged children make progress with their lives and reach their own full potential. I am passionate about helping children overcome adverse experiences to build meaningful and positive relationships in adulthood.

I hope my passion for psychology will enable me to make a significant difference for the young people at Pear Tree. I love animals and enjoy spending time with them, and I hope to involve young people in these activities. Additionally, I enjoy drawing and reading and want to share these interests with children and young people. I am a social and bubbly person, eager to try new things, and I hope to develop more interests that align with those of the young people to help create positive experiences for them.

Certificates:

Sports Leaders UK Level 1 Award in Sports Leadership (QCF)
National Citizen Service 2014
Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Horse Management
Diploma of Higher Education in Psychology

Katherine Snaitth

Position: RSCW, Date of Employment: 1.7.2024

Upon leaving school in 1996, I studied Equine and Business Management at Bishop Burton Agricultural College. After college, I pursued my passion for horses and worked at various event yards around the country, including as an international groom, traveling to competitions around the UK and Europe.

Since 2002, I have managed our family-owned livery yard, worked part-time in equestrian retail, and served as a riding instructor. I have taught at Pony Club rallies and residential summer camps every summer for the past twenty-one years involving children and young people. I thoroughly enjoy supporting young people in reaching their full potential and believe this is a skill I can bring to my new role at Pear Tree.

I have two children, both boys, who are passionate about farming. I have spent the last eighteen years raising them and teaching them to navigate life. I enjoy exploring new places with them and watching them grow. My youngest is now about to start secondary school, giving me much more spare time—something I have not had for several years. As I considered how to fill this newfound time, I wanted to find a rewarding career that allowed me to use my existing skills and develop new ones, presenting a greater challenge than my previous career in retail.

Working at Pear Tree enables me to be part of a team, something I have missed after working on the family farm. I also appreciate the opportunity to create a family unit for the children, showing them all the wonderful things life has to offer, especially when many of them have not had the greatest start in life. I feel privileged to be part of their younger years and support them in becoming young adults who will give back to society.

I bring an outgoing personality to the role, which I believe will help me build a good rapport with the children and enable me to support them effectively. I look forward to seeing the improvements in the children and how they grow into young adults, overcoming challenges and learning new skills to cope with difficult situations.

My main and most time-consuming hobby is horse riding, but I also love spending time outdoors walking with my dogs and am a member of a running club. Being outdoors helps me reset, and I would like to bring my love for the outdoors and nature to my role, teaching the children about all the wonderful things the outdoors has to offer. I am a big believer in the importance of outdoor exercise for mental health, which is why I have recently taken up running.

With my children getting older, I felt it was time for a fresh challenge in my life. Having worked within Pear Tree as a freelance groom for the last two years, I have gained an insight into the company, its ethos, and values, and felt it was a role I wanted to pursue. I am very much looking forward to becoming part of the Pear Tree team.

Mae Bostock

Position: RSW, Date of Employment: 10.7.2024

From the age of 8 years old I competed in judo and from the ages of 15 to 17 I competed at the highest level for Great Britain all over the world including places such as Japan, taking part in major events such as the Youth Olympics in Baku and the European championships. I was also national champion three years in a row.

Judo has shaped me as a person and made me who I am as well as providing me with brilliant life skills that I have now transferred over into the workplace and everyday life such as determination, resilience, discipline, planning, sportsmanship etc. which are qualities I hope to teach the children at Pear Tree.

Since leaving school I attended sixth form and also achieved two A-levels in psychology and sociology which I loved studying and found it very interesting.

I feel as though these qualifications have given me the skills to be able to analyse and understand the reasoning for someone's behaviour and actions. I feel as though this will support me in my role as a residential support worker as I am able to recognise and understand behavioural patterns.

After my A-levels I joined NEAS (Northeast Ambulance Service) where I worked as patient transport. This job came with a lot of responsibility and pressure but also provided me with a wide range of skills and knowledge that I will be able to transfer and use while working with Pear Tree such as empathy, person centred care, attention to detail, patience, the ability to follow strict guidelines and procedures whilst working in stressful situations.

While working with NEAS, as much as it was a great opportunity I knew my passion was to work with children and young people as the few jobs we had where children were involved and needed my help and support I felt more engaged and passionate which encouraged me to make a move to work for Pear Tree where I knew my passion would not be wasted.

Ambulance Support Worker Level 3
Care Certificate
Ambulance Patient Care Level 3
Level 3 Award in First Aid at Work

LAUREN PATTERSON

Position: RSCW

Date of employment: 27.8.2024

Since leaving Secondary school I have always been excited and determined to have a job where I could meet new people, be independent and help people where I can. I have worked in several customer assistant roles, since I was 16 years old, such as working on the perfume counter at Boots, waitressing at my local pub and working as a customer assistant at Lidl.

Alongside working, I have also completed a professional policing degree at Teesside University with the intention of going on to join the police, which I successfully did back in 2022. I wanted to join the police as I wanted to help people and be a support network for someone who needs it. During my time as a police officer I had to deal with many challenges, often involving children and other types of incidents that have happened so it was important that I have good time management skills and the ability to quickly build trust with people in the community.

Whilst in the police, I fell pregnant with my daughter who is now 15 months old and quickly realised that the shift patterns and demand of the job was not suitable for me and my family, so I decided to leave. Some of the activities I love doing in my spare time include going for walks with my daughter and partner to discover new places and spending weekends up at our family caravan by the sea to relax and unwind.

I've always wanted to care for others and make a difference in people's lives and I knew that providing help to children who have experienced disadvantaged starts to their childhoods, was the sort of job I wanted to do after the police, and this is when Pear Tree was recommended to me. When looking into the values and work that Pear Tree does with the children in their care, I knew that I wanted to be a part of it, so I applied to be a residential

social care worker. Thankfully I got the job, and I am extremely excited to start my journey here at Pear Tree.

Certificates:

BSc Professional Policing

Laura Hendsbee

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 23.09.2024

I grew up as a child of the British Army, moving all over the country to whatever base my dad's job positioned us in- I attended 4 primary schools and 2 secondary schools! At college, I did Psychology, Criminology and English Literature. My choice of A-levels and subsequent University degree was inspired by my grandma. She was an incredible woman who lived with ill mental health and the stigma it brought, yet she remained caring, selfless and determined in spite of it. I began University, doing BSc Psychology with Criminology, at the height of Covid in 2020; my freshers was spent cooped up in student halls playing Scrabble and reading books which I did not mind one bit. I also experimented with some new hobbies at this time and some I have kept up with include ice skating, playing the guitar, weightlifting and baking. I really enjoyed my time at university and particularly enjoyed the modules pertaining to individual differences and development, I ended up graduating with honours after doing my dissertation on the topic of victim blaming attitudes toward women where participants were grouped by individual differences.

Interested in development, I decided to enter a role as a teaching assistant at a SEN school in Morpeth for my first job as a post-grad. I enjoyed working with the children at this school very much and I gathered some valuable experience working with children across year groups with a variety of learning differences and behaviours. My favourite thing about that job and working with the kids was the moments of connection when an area of shared interest was discovered, and then I'd go on to spend whole lunchtimes discussing the most interesting shipwrecks or extinct animals. I left that position recently after a year due to a change of address, yet I knew I wanted to remain working with children due to the confidence and knowledge I built up over that time. I was drawn to Pear Tree because of its trauma-informed approach; this is an approach I feel passionately about as a result of my studies and past experience.

During my time here, I hope to bring a blend of sportiness and craftiness to the homes I look after. I think that group activities are an excellent way to build connection, and I hope that I can introduce the children to some activities that are new and interesting to them to build as varied an experience as possible. Ultimately, I aim for the kids to see me as a trusted, reliable and consistent caregiver.

I live with my two cats, Pixie and Duke, alongside my partner. My favourite colour is orange, and my favourite animal is a pigeon! Someday, I'd like to travel to Nova Scotia to meet the other half of my family.

Certificates:

BSc (Hons) Psychology with Criminology

Benjamin Sackree

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 28.10.2024

I grew up in the South Island of New Zealand having relocated there with my mother and brothers at a young age. As such I developed a love for all things outdoors and took part in activities such as rock climbing, kayaking, mountain biking and camping. I have always played sports in my childhood mostly taken up by Judo and later on developed a love for rugby. This later developed into a love of all things fitness related and has led to me competing nationally as a strongman athlete (pulling trucks, pressing heavy logs and lifting atlas stones to name a few events!)

After relocating back to the UK to live with my Dad I finished my education and worked a variety of jobs in construction and property development whilst also joining and serving in the Army Reserve as a part time infantry soldier. This time confirmed my love of all things outdoors (whilst also confirming that day to day military life was not for me!). At this point I decided to take on a new challenge and joined HMP Prison Service. This was a challenging yet enjoyable time for me, no two days were the same and I gained valuable experience of working with people from all walks of life. I especially enjoyed my time working at HMYOI Deerbolt with young lads whom I felt I could help relate to and hopefully help through their sentences as they prepared for life outside of custody.

After the COVID pandemic I decided it was time for me to leave the Prison Service and pursue a new venture. I decided to return to property development and successfully managed 5 renovations over a 2-3 year period. This helped me develop skills in project management, team leading and learnt many new valuable practical skills. After finishing my last project I decided that whilst I had enjoyed a return to construction it was not my passion and instead of taking on a new project opted to take a job at Nissan manufacturing engines whilst I figured out what career path I wished to pursue. I thought long and hard about this and realised that I felt the most rewarded when working with young people during my time at Deerbolt, mentoring and ultimately helping them. This led me to Pear Tree where I hope that my practical skills, love of teaching young people and passion for the outdoors and sports can all be utilised and I can pass useful skills onto the children in our care.

Certificates:

SFJ Awards Level 3 Diploma in The Management and Care of Individuals in the Custodial Environment

Jennifer Lavelle

Position: RSCW

Date of employment: 19.11.2024

After leaving school, I pursued my passion for working with horses by starting an equine course at college, before moving on to an apprenticeship at a racehorse stud. This experience taught me a great deal, including the privilege of bringing new lives into the world and watching them grow into exceptional athletes. I assisted with the day-to-day care of the horses and supported veterinary work.

Once I completed my apprenticeship, I moved to Middleham, where I had the opportunity to care for some of the horses I had helped raise, traveling the country to racecourses and experiencing the success of the sport. I became an assistant manager, but after six years, I realised that the early mornings and long days were not what I wanted for my future.

Realising my passion was in the care sector, where I could make a real difference to others, I began working as a reablement support worker. I assisted individuals recovering from injury or hospital stays, helping them regain independence. However, the long travel required for this role became unfeasible due to car and fuel costs. As a result, I returned to racing, this time on a smaller yard, where I worked with some fantastic horses.

During this time, I bought my first house and recognised that I needed a long-term career. This led me to residential care, where I found my true calling. I absolutely love this field, but my first role did not fully align with my values. When I heard about Pear Tree through a friend, I immediately knew it was the perfect place for me. The opportunity to combine my passion for care with my love for the outdoors and working with animals drew me in. I see it as a unique and amazing chance to make a positive impact on the lives of children and young people in care, something I feel deeply committed to.

In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my animals (two cats, a dog, and a horse), exploring the countryside, baking, and preparing good food.

Certificates:

Equality and Diversity

De-Escalation and Positive Behavioural Support

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Reporting and recording

Epilepsy and Seizure Management

Care Planning and Key Working

Anti- Bullying

Safeguarding Children with Learning Disabilities

STEPHANIE KENIRY

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 27.1.25

I was fortunate enough to be brought up locally and around horses and ponies. I was also a member of the Zetland Hunt Pony Club which taught me many useful life skills and values. My parents, however, were adamant that I was not to go down this path as a career choice and shipped me off to university to obtain a degree in Crime and Investigation. It was during my time at university that I started taking racehorses for their holidays. The land I was renting had too much grass one summer, so I offered this to local professionals to give respite to horses that were currently out of training.

The demand for this service quickly escalated and top northern trainers were soon wanting me to not only take those needing a break, but to take yearlings from the sales and break them in ready to go into full training. I did this for a few years before being approached to become an assistant trainer and set up a satellite yard to reduce the travel distances between racecourses around the country. The yard I was running had a lot of success, and I decided to take out my own licence in 2018 and saddled numerous winners under both codes.

It was during Covid that I decided a career change was on the cards, but I was unsure what to do. I was approached by a digital marketing company to help build and launch an equestrian platform which I did in 2023. By creating this platform I was lucky enough to be awarded a finalist position at 'The Prolific Northern Business Awards' 'The British Business Awards' and won an 'Elite Business Award' for the Most Innovative Equine Ownership Platform 2024. I then went on to become an Area Sales Manager for a leading British Equestrian brand selling high end products and managing contracts of sponsored riders and covering the area Hull to John O'Groats.

I was beginning to become a little sour to the 'corporate world' which included a lot of hours behind a computer, driving and time spent away from my home and family. I had really enjoyed working with the young adults that were coming into the horseracing world during my time training and teaching them the necessary skills needed to succeed in life; so, I wanted to pursue a new career doing something similar.

It was by chance I found the position available at Pear Tree and I am so pleased to have been given the opportunity to join the team. I am very much looking forward to working with the children to help them overcome any challenge that they may face in life and use my previous experience in a broad range of topics activities to help them all achieve their dreams.

Marie Levitt

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 2.6.2025

After leaving school in 1999, I studied Health and Social Care at college. While studying, I worked part-time in a supermarket, and after completing my course, I continued working there. I was later offered additional training and took on a role as a pharmacy dispenser in the newly opened pharmacy department. I enjoyed the healthcare aspect of this role, which led me to explore full-time employment in the care sector.

In 2015, I secured a full-time position in the pharmacy department of a hospital. This role involved checking medications on the wards, which gave me the opportunity to observe clinical staff delivering direct, face-to-face care to patients. It was during this time that I realised I wanted to work in a more hands-on care role.

In 2018, I took the next step and became a Mental Health Care Assistant, completing a Level 3 NVQ in Mental Health Care while working on the wards. My passion for supporting others continued to grow, and in 2021 I was offered the opportunity to complete further training and became a Nursing Associate. In this role, I worked within a Community Mental Health Team, delivering one-to-one mental health interventions to adults experiencing complex mental health difficulties. This position helped me develop a deeper understanding of how to build therapeutic relationships, offer consistent support, and promote strategies to aid recovery and provide high quality care at the same time.

Outside of work, I have a wide range of hobbies and interests including CrossFit, bouldering, metal detecting, cross-stitch, and gardening. I've also completed a personal training and fitness qualification, which I pursued for my own knowledge and wellbeing.

Recently, I began looking for a new challenge and an opportunity to make a meaningful difference in a different setting. I believe the skills I've developed throughout my career are highly transferable. My experience in mental health care, building relationships with individuals in distress, and delivering consistent, compassionate support has prepared me well to contribute positively to the lives of young people at Pear Tree.

I am drawn to Pear Tree's commitment to helping children and young people in care feel safe, supported, and empowered to make progress in their lives and I am looking forward to bringing my experience, empathy, and enthusiasm to the team and supporting the children during their time at Pear Tree.

Certificates:

Senior Healthcare Support Worker Mental Health Support Level 3
Level 2 Certificate in Fitness Instruction
Level 3 Certificate in Personal Training
Level 3 Diploma Mental Health Care
Foundation Degree Nursing Associate

Andrew Bush

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 16.6.25

I began my career in the print industry immediately after leaving school at sixteen and dedicated over twenty years to it. During this time, I developed a strong work ethic, learned the importance of reliability, and understood how effective teamwork contributes to achieving shared goals. These foundational skills have remained with me and continue to influence how I approach any professional setting.

During those years, I also became a father to my daughter, who is now pursuing her studies at university. Being a dad has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my life, and I'm hugely proud of the independent and grounded young woman she's become.

My wife works in education and previously managed a youth centre. Through her work, I had the opportunity to volunteer and spend time with young people in a positive, energetic environment. It was there, that I saw first-hand the difference a nurturing and consistent adult presence can make in a young person's life. That experience inspired me to re-evaluate my career path.

So, I decided to pursue a qualification in childcare and was fortunate enough to secure a role as a residential support worker with A Wilderness Way. This opportunity allowed me to gain valuable experience while completing my diploma in residential childcare for children. I genuinely enjoyed every aspect of the role — from building trusting relationships with young people to supporting them through challenges and celebrating their successes. Creating a safe, stable, and supportive environment where children can grow and feel valued is something I take great pride in being a part of.

Outside of work, I'm a keen supporter of Newcastle United and enjoy attending festivals and live events. I also play five-a-side football when I get the chance and enjoy the occasional round of golf with friends. Exploring the English countryside, particularly the Lake District and Northumberland walking with my dog is a favourite way to relax and unwind.

Now that I have joined Pear Tree Projects, I am excited to be part of a team that shares my commitment to providing a safe, nurturing, and consistent environment where children and young people can feel secure and supported. I look forward to continuing to learn, grow, and make a positive difference in the lives of the young people we care for.

Certificates:

Reporting and Recording
Radicalisation and Extremism
COSHH
Self-Harming Behaviours
GDPR for Children's Home
Mental Health
Food Hygiene and Safety
Internet Safety
Infection Control

Anne-Julie Heslop

Position: RSCW, Date of Employment: 4.8.25

I first developed a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility while helping my dad in his butcher's shop as a child during school holidays. After completing my exams in 1986, I left school to work full-time in the family business, where I gained valuable experience interacting with customers and working as part of a team.

Over the years, I've worked in a variety of roles, including being chalet maid at Butlins and a customer service agent for a loan company. But it was when I began supporting people with complex physical and learning disabilities that I truly found my passion. I took great pride in making a positive difference in their day to day lives. Whether it was accompanying individuals on holiday, supporting them during hospital stays, or simply being a consistent and caring presence, I found the work deeply rewarding and meaningful.

Earlier this year, I took a short break from the care sector and worked in a factory as a laundry assistant. However, I quickly realised that I missed the personal, human aspect of my previous roles. I thrive in environments where I can connect with people, offer support, and feel like I'm making a real difference.

When a friend told me about Pear Tree Projects and the high standard of care offered to children, I was immediately interested. I know several staff members who speak very positively about their work here, and I felt it could be the perfect setting for me to return to doing what I love. I believe I have many transferable skills that can benefit the young people, and I'm excited to bring my experience, empathy, and enthusiasm to this role.

Outside of work, I enjoy a wide range of hobbies including gardening, baking, cooking, knitting, crocheting, and walking my little dog. I also keep my own horses, and I find animals can have a very calming and therapeutic effect, something I hope to share with the young people here at Pear Tree. In the past I often took homemade cakes or soups into work as I really enjoy cooking and baking, and I look forward to using my skills to involve the children in activities that promote creativity, life skills, and general wellbeing.

I'm really excited about this opportunity and committed to being a positive, consistent and nurturing presence for the children in our care. My goal is to support each young person to achieve their true potential in life.

Certificates:

Level 2 Certificate in Understanding Nutrition and Health

Linzi Larner Atkinson

Position: RSCW, Date of employment: 18.8.25

As a mother to four children aged 17, 14, 5, and 2, I have experienced firsthand the incredible journey of childhood across all stages of development. This personal experience has not only brought me immense joy but has also deepened my understanding of the importance of every milestone — from the first steps to teenage transitions. Each stage has its own challenges and triumphs, and I've come to appreciate how unique and valuable every child's learning journey truly is.

It is this deep personal connection that has inspired me to pursue a professional path in working with children and young people. I am passionate about supporting children as they grow, helping them discover their strengths, overcome obstacles, and reach their full potential. My goal is to create a positive, encouraging environment where children feel seen, heard, and valued — no matter their background or abilities.

In 2016 I had the opportunity to study Childhood and Youth Studies at Teesside University. This gave me a strong academic foundation, learning more about child development, safeguarding, inclusive practice, and

the social factors that affect young people's lives. I was especially interested in exploring how I can support children not just academically, but emotionally and socially, helping them thrive in all areas of life.

In the future, at Pear Tree I hope to work in a setting where I can make a genuine difference — I believe that every child deserves the chance to be understood and empowered, and I am committed to being someone who helps make that happen. I am excited about the prospect of studying at Teesside University, and I am ready to embrace the challenges and opportunities that come with this next chapter. With both personal insight and growing professional ambition, I am confident this course will equip me with the tools to turn my passion into a meaningful and lasting career.

Diploma in Childhood and Youth Studies

Positive Behaviour Support, Behaviours of Concern, Breakaway and Physical Intervention

Food Safety and Hygiene

COSHH

Reporting and Recording

Self-Harming Behaviours

Health and Nutrition

Health and Safety

Emergency First Aid

Fire Safety

Hidden Harm

Anti – Bullying

Female Genital Mutilation

Child Sexual Exploitation

21. 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 and health care.

The Organisational structure of the children's home:

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Pear Tree achieved its Investors in People Award in February 2002, and as such, has had to demonstrate not only to the Care Standards Commission, but also to other professionals the systems that were in place to support staff. At our review in April 2007, the assessor could find no areas to advise on, renewing our status. Subsequently in March 2010 we achieved the coveted Investors in People Gold Award.

Each member of staff has a Staff Development Programme linked to Appraisal and regular Supervision. Supervision takes place both formally and informally. Appraisals are conducted on an annual basis. The list demonstrates the supervision team under Sean Cooper, House Manager. Sean is under the direct supervision of David Bartlett, Managing Director. Details of the Staff Development Programme and support structure are evident in Guidance and Good Practice and can be provided separately.

22. 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.

Whenever possible Pear Tree will endeavour to ensure that the home has both male and female role models. However, there may be times when the home's staff will be mainly one sex, due to the structure of the organisation we will ensure that the young people have regular contact with members of staff of both sexes, through structured activities, our duty manager system and education.

Appendix 1 – Corporate History

Pear Tree began in the summer of 1990 at the request of the Local Social Services Department to try and provide a service for children in care in the local area. Whilst its origins stem from humble beginnings, the organisation was built on a complete desire of those involved to try and create a new kind of organisation that would take a fresh look at the way services were provided and endeavour to create opportunities in the best possible way for a small group of children.

Over the years Pear Tree has developed to be an organisation of some size and standing due to the strength of its workforce. Pear Tree has always benefited from consistent like-minded individuals who have firm beliefs in the type of care that was to be provided, having made a commitment, not only to the organisation but to the children in their care and, as a result, forming an ethos that would be appealing to future recruits. Building on the strength of early successes, the team of like-minded individuals has been able to grow and consistently maintain these key elements. Pear Tree, therefore, benefits from having the abilities of the same individuals from its early days and, year after year, has been able to add to and maintain key individuals who continue to add strength to the organisation.

Pear Tree's development has been satisfying to watch for all those involved. From its beginnings, with a summer scheme in the summer of 1990 (which was repeated for three consecutive years) to its first home for young people, to be prepared for independent living, which was opened that same year. In 1991, again as a result of this fresh approach in thinking, our Community Support Services were established and have remained consistent to date, looking after around 7 people in the community on a daily basis.

The organisation became a Limited Company on 31st October 1992 and, as the demand for Community Support Services for local children began to fall, increased demand for residential places resulted in Pear Tree opening its second home in September 1994, followed by its third in April 1995. In this year also, Pear Tree, due to the increased complexity of the needs of the children who were being referred, and the demand for specialised placements, formalised its links with the Child and Adolescent Community Forensic Service (formerly known as Kolvin Unit), obtaining a contract for psychological and psychiatric support to Pear Tree, based on the previously mutually enjoyed links that it had held for a number of years. Due to the retirement of key individuals within the Child and Adolescent Community Forensic Service and restructuring, formal arrangements have lapsed. However a close working relationship still exists.

In September of 1995, South Tyneside Educational Authority was the first LEA to recognise the work that was being undertaken by Pear Tree staff, acknowledging not only the work of the Home Tutors who had been employed by Pear Tree, in an attempt to try and provide some education until other resources could be identified, but also the remainder of the entire staff team. As a result of this formal acknowledgement, and being named as an appropriate education facility, Pear Tree developed its Learning Programme to run alongside its Recovery Programme developed with the help of the Child and Adolescent Community Forensic Service, earlier in the same year. In July 2004 we applied for Registration as a small independent school.

In the spring of 1997, Pear Tree opened its fourth home; its fifth followed in January 1998 and, in August 1999, its sixth home opened as the demand for placements continued to increase. Historically, all of the homes have always worked on the basis of never looking after more than three children or young people, subsequently falling short of the requirements of the Registration and Inspection Unit. At no point in time was this ever the intention. The desire was simply to work with small groups of children trying to create a much more normal and homely living environment. Pear Tree has encouraged those in a position of authority to find ways of registering such facilities, continually feeling uncomfortable with the term 'unregistered home'.

The dawn of the new millennium brought a likelihood of these ambitions being fulfilled with the announcement that such homes would require registration and, early absence of clear information as to how this would be implemented, caused us to pause for thought and review the services we were providing. Some of the homes which we had opened, looked after only two young people. Increased demands for specialised placements in the most unpredictable of circumstances would, later in that year, cause us to open up our seventh home, adding to the need for reflection. The Directors of Pear Tree subsequently took the view that a period of consolidation was necessary whilst, at the same time, reviewing the services that we provide.

In Easter of the year 2001, Pear Tree opened its first registered home, looking after four children, bringing an end to the culmination of some 18 months planning and development work, and adding an alternative to the current portfolio homes on offer. However, the philosophy of ordinary homes in ordinary streets and the desire to give children with complex and difficult needs the opportunity to live in as normal a home environment as possible is still very much the heart and soul of what Pear Tree is trying to achieve.

On 14th October 1991, with the implementation of the Children Act 1989, Pear Tree was the first organisation to apply for Registration of a small 'un-registerable' home in the full knowledge that it would not be allowed to do so. The subsequent development of some of the most homely yet highest quality homes in the country, with a sophisticated programme of events around the care of the children who would live there, has continued to be the strategy. Indeed, whilst Pear Tree was the first to come forward with this idea, this way of working has been adopted by many local authorities, charitable and private organisations since. There would be a 10-year gap and a great deal of hard work and dedication by all those concerned, until June of the year 2001, when the Registration and Inspection Units of Darlington and Durham County Council formally registered five Pear Tree homes, the period of consolidation allowing for the smaller homes, that often looked after one or two children, to be withdrawn.

During the Registration process, it became clear that Pear Tree had grown as an organisation and required an independent base that could be used for administration purposes, away from any of the existing homes. The search then began to try to find appropriate accommodation for our office staff, at the same time acknowledging the need to have somewhere, where meetings could take place, and even better, informal gatherings. With every office viewed, it became apparent that quite a sizable place was required to cater for everyone's needs, and then in the true spirit of Pear Tree history, we took advantage of opportunities that presented and in August 2001, Pear Tree head quarters moved to Toy Top Farm. The farm house provides a base for our administration staff, a meeting place and a focal point for the whole organisation, the rest of the farm providing numerous opportunities for activities, work experience and further training.

Pear Tree continues to pride itself on not only the quality and material standards of the homes it provides but also of the quality of the people it has been able to recruit. These individuals encompass a wide age range and equally wide spectrum of previous occupations, skills and abilities that all come together to form quite a unique multi-disciplinary team, all of whom have at the forefront of their minds, not only commitment to the organisation, but more importantly to the individual children they are involved in looking after ensuring, on a daily basis, that their complex needs and the repeatedly testing scenarios that children often present, are never too much. Pear Tree continues to promote high quality of care and understanding in a most positive environment, which is full of activities and learning experiences on a daily basis that will continue to benefit the children now and well into the future.

To date, Pear Tree provides six homes in Darlington and Bishop Auckland, and a small school on a farm. On behalf of the Pear Tree organisation, our most sincere hope is that your involvement with us, in whatever capacity, is as positive an experience for yourselves as it has been for all of us.

David Bartlett
Managing Director

Updates

Date / Section / Amendment

3.2.22 - New staff added and some removed
7.3.22 - new staff added
24.3.22 – Training information in staffing section
8.4.22 – staff changes, and personal statements added
11.5.22 – new staff added, and personal statements added
27.5.22 – new staff added
6.7.22 – Changes to Staff teams
20.9.22 – Changes to staff teams
1.11.22 – New staff added
21.11.22 – Personal statements added
5.12.22 – new MOS added
19.12.22 – New MOS added
9.1.23 – New MOS added and Lee Hume personal statement
8.2.23 – Staffing changes
6.3.23 – New MOS added and change to deputy manager
6.4.23 – New staff added
6.6.23 – Staff changes
19.9.23 – New staff added
13.11.23 - new staff added
19.1.24 - new staff added
2.2.24 - new staff added
6.2.24 – Review of Caring for Children – Section No 10
5.3.24 – Staff removed and personal statement added
18.3.24 – new staff added
12.6.24 – staff changes
15.7.24 – new staff added
19.9.24 – staff changes
12.11.24 – New staff added
21.11.24 – new staff added
28.1.25 – new staff added and staff changes
21.5.25 – staff changes
23.6.25 – new staff added
5.8.25 – staff changes
19.8.25 – staff changes
01.10.25 – new staff added and staff changes

Revision dates

September 2016

October 2016

December 2017

January 2018

January 2019

31st January 2020

29th January 2021

3rd February 2022

22nd February 2022 - Review of entire document - changes to the following sections: caring for children, children's behaviour, and education.

5.8.22 – Review of entire document.

26.7.2023 – Review of entire document including some staff changes.

6.6.24 – Staffing changes and review of No 1 and No 14

19.9.24 – Review of entire document
01.10.25