

Heather House



Statement of Purpose

March 2026

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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

- 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 2miles 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 as highlighted above. 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' 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 Blacketts 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. 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 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

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

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)

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

Mobile Staff Team

The following members of staff cover holidays and sickness absence throughout all Pear Tree homes. However, we do look to offer consistency in our care, and as such we look to utilize the following staff members from the mobile team on a more regular basis. Other members of this team can and will be used when needed.

All details for members of the mobile staff team can be found in the document entitled 'Details of the mobile staff team', with all points from this statement of purpose applicable to this team also.

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

Marie Levitt

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 2.6.25

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

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.

Certificates:

- 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 David Bartlett, Head of Service.

Sean Cooper, Senior Registered Manager

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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

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

23.03.2026