



# DETAILS OF THE MOBILE STAFF TEAM

The following members of staff are employed by Pear Tree Projects and predominantly cover holidays and sickness throughout all our residential children's homes.

By having this team in place, Pear Tree can provide consistent care for our children, as we aim to utilise staff members from the mobile team on a more regular basis to specific homes where possible, however, other members of this team can / will be used when needed.

All information which is added to the individual homes Statement of Purpose, specifically points 20 & 21, is also relevant to the Pear Tree Mobile Team, this includes training, supervision and records of these.

Contact details for members of the mobile staff team can be found within the Pear Tree Staff Structure document accessible for all Pear Tree staff members, with generic "Pear Tree" email addresses for all.

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **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 manger 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 horses' 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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **Katherine Snaith**

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: RSCW

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.

## **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.

## **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 were 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.

## **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.

## **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: 2.6.25

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.

## **Anne-Julie Heslop**

Position: RSCW

Date of employment: 4.8.2025

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.

## **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.

## **Ben Baker –**

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 11.11.25

I began my schooling at Barnard Castle School but as I am dyslexic, I was offered a place at a language unit based at Greencroft School in Anfield Plain where I obtained 5 GCSEs. Following Greencroft I attended New College Durham achieving a BTEC Level 2 in Public Service (P P) BTEC Level 3 in ICT (M M). I also hold a Level 2 Fitness/Gym Instructor qualification and a Level 2 in Understanding Autism.

I began volunteering at the University of Durham, whilst studying at New College Durham. I was a sports coach in the Community Team. I coached children (School Sports Partnership), disability groups and groups of both children and adults from the wider community in a variety of sports. In 2013 the volunteering led to my employment as an Inclusive Sports Activator at the University. I coached groups of children and young people, in addition to mental health groups, individuals who had drug and alcohol issues and forensic groups, all from the local area. I also worked at the University children's summer camps.

In 2018 one of these groups asked if I would like to join them permanently as an Activity Coordinator. In 2018 I then began working for Resolve Care, a forensic care home for adult males with learning difficulties and autism. In 2020 when we were in lock down, I was able to adapt and work as a support worker, working a 12-hour shift pattern, including night shifts, sleep ins and weekends. As part of my role at Resolve Care I wrote reports and case notes daily. I shared information with colleagues at shift hand over. A large part of my day was observing Service Users, listening to them and building a strong rapport. I promoted wellbeing and independence whilst following each Service User's care plan. The Service Users I cared for had complex needs and exhibited challenging behaviours. I can be compassionate; have endless patience and I am able to remain calm when under pressure. As part of my role, I drove Service Users to appointments and activities. I work with other support staff and professionals and being part of a multi-disciplinary team is important in helping to make a positive difference and is essential to good practice. During this time my sister, who I was very close to, died and following this my marriage broke up. These experiences and previous traumas in my own life made me more able to understand and empathise with both Service Users and colleagues. I was able to inspire colleagues through sharing my experiences and as a result raised over £2,000 for charity. After five years at Resolve Care, I felt that I had the necessary skills and experience to work with young people who had suffered their own traumas, abuse and negative experiences. I hoped I could act as a role model to help them to make positive changes in their lives and improve their life chances. I applied for a job at Pear Tree and was successful and moved there in 2023.

I enjoyed working at Pear Tree and had the opportunity to complete a level 3 Diploma in Residential Child Care and develop my skills and knowledge. As part of being on the mobile team I was able to get to know and work with all the young people in all the houses. I had the opportunity to work with many different staff members, and I gained many skills from observing

the differing styles of my colleagues. In March of this year, I was approached to apply for a job as a SEMH support worker for an outdoor adventure company. With a background in sport and the outdoors this seemed like my dream job. However, the alternative education offered involved driving for long distances to pick up individual children and then travelling to a venue to do an activity led by an instructor and then driving back again. I was spending very little time with the young people and realised that it wasn't the 'dream' job I anticipated. I resigned in September and began working for Northumberland Estates at Linhope, assisting with their shooting season while I took time to consider my options. It was clear that the job I had enjoyed most was at Pear Tree and I regretted leaving. This led to my second application to Pear Tree.

Outside of work I have many hobbies. I play first team hockey for Durham City Hockey Club and play badminton at Newton Aycliffe. I have several bikes, and I am a keen mountain biker. I have a kayak and a camper van which I try and use as often as possible. I also enjoy hill walking and spending time in the mountains. I enjoy travel and have visited many countries such as Canada, USA, New Zealand, Austria, and other European countries. In 2024 I was part of a group that climbed Mt. Ararat in Turkey, and I was also lucky enough to travel to Nepal and hike several amazing treks around Annapurna. These experiences have shaped my life and given me the opportunities to grow and develop personally. The traumas I have overcome have allowed me to be more understanding and empathetic. I have a strong loving family supporting me and I want to help and understand young people who for whatever reason don't have the family and opportunities that I have had.

## **Ella McNeill -**

Residential Support Worker

Start Date: 03/12/2025

Growing up, I was known as the "sporty" kid. Whether it was horse riding, football, dancing or trampolining, I was always taking part in a team or extracurricular activity. One sport that piqued my interest the most was swimming. I competed as high as nationals and trained as much as I could around school and other sports. Becoming the club captain at 14, I began to help coach our younger, developing squads, giving them my firsthand knowledge and experience.

I loved volunteering at my club and working with the younger swimmers before my own dedicated training sessions. This then inspired me to become a qualified lifeguard and Level 1 swimming teacher assistant at age 16, just as I finished my GCSE's. I completed these roles alongside my A levels, in which I studied Maths, Art and PE. Covid had put a stop to this for a short while, but as soon as I had the chance to be back around the pool, I was there. In April 2022 I completed my Level 2 Swimming Teacher qualification, where I was then fully qualified to take and run my own lessons. I performed lifeguarding and swim teaching as a full-time job after sixth form as I wasn't sure on what career path I wanted to choose.

Then in August 2022, I received a job offer to move to Dubai to be a full-time swimming teacher. At only 19, my family were apprehensive, but I was ready to take this in my stride. I loved learning new skills and adaptations from being in a different culture and loved bringing my own skills to the team in Dubai. I was teaching 6 days a week for 6 months and I loved seeing the children's progress in swimming across this time.

I then moved back home to carry on my swimming teaching career for 1 year, but as I had got the travel bug and knew I wanted to move away again. In March 2024, I made the big move to Australia. I first started as a swimming teacher, again learning new skills that I could use, and teaching others from my experience. I loved working with the children and teaching them this vital life skill, however, this was not enough hours of work to pay my bills. So, I later applied for a job working with racehorses, as I had grown up with horses back home so felt this could be second nature to me. This allowed me to work full time and the opportunity to work with animals. I had this job for 1 year until deciding to do some travelling over summer 2025 and make the move back home.

In September 2025 I began my university course of Primary Education at Teesside university as I felt teaching was always a second nature to me. This is when I decided to apply for a job at Pear Tree. I originally applied for the stable hand job, but following my interview, Pear Tree and I believed that becoming a Residential Support Worker would benefit my career aspects alongside university. I began my employment at Pear Tree in December 2025 and look forward to seeing where my career can progress within the company.

- Amendment – 25/11/25 by SB – LB & AB removed & BB added.
- Amendment – 9/12/25 by SB – EMc added.
- Amendment – 5/1/26 by SB – CB removed.
- Amendment – 20/1/26 by SB – BS & CH removed.
- Amendment – 18/3/26 by SB – JGB removed.