

Oakwood House



Statement of Purpose

July 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 children's home is to provide care.

- Oakwood is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to 8 children.
- Oakwood may provide care and accommodation for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD)
- Also, Oakwood may provide care and accommodation for children with learning disabilities (LD).
- Oakwood must reduce the number of people aged 18 and over for which it also provides care and accommodation.

Oakwood 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, including impaired learning, measurable learning disabilities and emotional and behavioural difficulties.

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.

If a young person comes to us who has a Learning disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010) We take a multi-agency approach to supporting the young person, 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.

However, the same approach that we take to support young people make positive progress in overcoming sexual abuse/sexualised behaviours and associated emotional and behavioural difficulties, does, also support and help young people make positive progress with, learning disabilities. Details of which can be read in our Recovery and Intervention Plan and therapeutic approach documents.

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 function 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 eight 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 a large Edwardian/Victorian property in the west end of Darlington. It is designed to be as normal and domestic like in nature as possible. Providing a sympathetic and caring environment within a residential care context but avoiding an institutionalised manner. 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.

Oakwood House was originally two separate houses that have been altered into one building. The property still has the benefits and the facilities of two separate properties in terms of having two kitchens, four reception rooms, two hallways.

This means that those residing in the home on whichever side are never without the facilities they may need appropriate to their specific side of their house.

The property is separated on each floor by an electronic door that can be opened or secured depending on the circumstances and needs of the children at the time.

The doors are normally in an open position for as long as possible but can be locked for specific purposes such as to ensure young people of a certain level of risk are kept from accessing the bedrooms or private areas of other children at bed time as an example. The advantage of this facility is that it is able to both promote privacy and support a risk management approach to ensure safety when required.

The smaller side looks after up to three young people who are usually older than the others and as such are able to be given more responsibility which aides their preparation for independence.

The division of eight into two groups of 3/2 and 5/6 promotes a less intense environment with less interactions and as such is more in keeping with normal domestic living. Children and young people have free access through the home to all appropriate places.

Positive aspects of the ability to devise house in two:

- Provide an increased level of security at vulnerable times.
- To be able to have a different level of expectations due to age and responsibility.
- To promote privacy within smaller groups.

There are CCTV cameras installed for security which monitor the main entrances and car park area. The images are stored as part of Pear Tree policies on CCTV.

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

The Crest is located in a highly desirable suburban area of Darlington. It is approximately one mile from the town centre enjoying excellent park facilities nearby. Transport links are available through Darlington train station and extensive bus networks, all available in and around the town centre. The Crest benefits from having all town services and amenities to hand, most within walking distance.

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 Diana Hewick-Crawford, Registered Manager 01325 365984 or Pear Tree Head Office 01388 776799.

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

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

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

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

Emergency admissions.

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

12. The arrangements for dealing with complaints.

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

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

In the first instance the Registered Manager, Diana Hewick-Crawford 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 Diana Hewick- Crawford, Registered Manager 01325 365984 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 Diana Hewick-Crawford, The Crest, Oakdene Avenue, Darlington. DL3 7HR.

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

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

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

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

Health

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

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

b) information about –

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

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

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

- All of the children within the first month of admission are registered with the local G.P, which is Blacketts Medical Centre, Bondgate, Darlington, 01325 380640.
- Their eyes are tested by Specsavers, Sainsburys, Victoria Rd, Darlington, Co Durham, 01325 521096.
- They are registered with the dentist Lance Robson, Woodland's Road, Darlington, 01325 462268 or Dev's Dental Practice, 27 Stockton Rd, Darlington, DL1 2RX, 01325 358916

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 sculpture. Although only 20 years of age, this occupation brought him to the attention of a number of establishments and David began teaching as a lecturer within Darlington Arts centre, Bishop Auckland Technical College, and then later, for Further Education in Cleveland, which also included St Luke's Psychiatric Hospital in Middlesbrough, and the regional secure Unit. Although unqualified, David became a full time lecturer in Art 3-D Design at Bishop Auckland Technical College in 1988, and later as a result of successful

workshops operated by Northern Arts, was recruited by Aycliffe Young People's Centre, where he was to spend 2 ½ years within the secure unit. In 1989 – 1990 he completed his first year Certificate of Education.

Although teaching began to provide a regular income, David also continued to run a successful business and in 1989 he purchased a number of properties that were later to be used by the organisation to become known as Pear Tree. During his time at Aycliffe Young People's Centre, it became abundantly clear that there were many young people for whom it was felt institutional settings were not the most positive and productive. The staff room was full of ideas from teachers who had been involved for years, wishing that they could start their own organisation. It was of a direct result of these experiences and working with a number of children in particular, at Aycliffe Young People's Centre, that the idea of developing a school on a farm where therapeutic activities coupled with sensitive caring environment could be most productive. This idea was floated by David and taken up by a number of people with contacts within the Local Social Services Department. Subsequently, the first Summer schemes were started in the summer of 1990 as described within the introduction, and in the spring of 1991, at the age of 24, David Bartlett left Aycliffe Young People's centre to work full time on developing the organisation, that would become known as Pear Tree and has been 'on duty' ever since.

Fixed Staff Team

Diana Hewick-Crawford

Position: Registered Manager

Date of employment: 04.12.06

I first came into child care in 1998 aged 24 I was employed as a holiday coordinator to organise adventurous breaks for young people, this took me to the four coast lines of the British Isles. This then led me to another role in child care, the transporting (escorting) of young people to and from court, secure units and family contacts which I thoroughly enjoyed. I knew then that working in child care with disadvantaged young people was the career I wanted to pursue.

Throughout my career so far, I have worked with a lot of young people with challenging behaviours and some of those that test your patients to the limit as I'm not one to be beaten, I decided I needed to train in a technique that would protect myself, my colleagues and the young people in my care. In 2000 I trained to be a Team Teach instructor, enabling me to train the staff I worked with, giving them the skills and confidence to protect themselves and the young people.

After having my own child in 2006 I knew I had to broaden my horizons and set myself a new challenge and this is when I started my employment with Pear Tree Projects.

I continue to thrive in achieving my goals and ensuring the young people in my care are given 100% from me to help and encourage them to achieve their goals.

Leanne Keerie

Position: Deputy Manager, Acting Duty Manager, Senior RSCW

Date of Employment: 12.06.00

I left school in 1995 always knowing that I wanted to work with children. In September 1995 I went to college and completed my NVQ 2 & 3 in Childcare and Education. Once I completed my NVQ course I did some voluntary work in a nursery school at Ferryhill working with 3-year-olds, I carried on doing this until I found myself a job in a nursery in Durham city working with 0–8-year-olds.

At the age of 22 I made an application to Pear Tree Projects and first joined the team in June 2000 as a Support Worker, working my way up to be a Residential Social Care Worker as I gained experience and further qualifications. I have completed my NVQ 3 & 4 in health and social care, along with various other training experiences.

Throughout my time at Pear Tree, I have gained vast experience and feel that I have grown within the organisation. I am consistent with the young people that I care for and very firm when it comes to boundaries. I have supported many young people within Pear Tree using positive life skills and good parenting skills.

I always give 100% in my working role.

Rachel Nixon

Position: SRSCW/Acting Deputy Manager

Date of Employment: 01.03.2021

I left school in 2005, and I knew that a career in care was the path I wanted to follow; I spent the next 5 years gaining different qualifications from A Levels in Health and Social Care and Psychology to attending University to complete a degree in Community Health. Whilst studying full-time at Sunderland University I was offered a job for Sunderland council supporting adults with Autism and Learning Disabilities. I developed a real passion for supporting people and to help them thrive and achieve their goals. The day I graduated from University I was offered a senior support worker role, and I decided to remain in Sunderland to work. Throughout my years there I worked in many different homes and travelled to many different countries with the people I supported. After meeting my husband, I decided to move back to Darlington, and I was offered a job as a Deputy Manager in a residential home for adults with Autism. We started a family in 2018, and we now have two little boys aged 2 and 1 years old. It was during my maternity leave with my youngest that I decided that although I loved my job, I would like to have a better work life balance and would like to work with children. Thankfully I came across Pear tree and after reading about the ethos of the company it sounded like the perfect job for me.

Michael Dale

Position: RSCW / Senior / Duty Manager

Date of Employment: 26.11.18

My career in Pear Tree began in 2012, I enjoy my role as it provides a variety of challenges. I strive to progress and feel I am ready to work in the management team and have gained valuable experience to make the progression within Pear Tree. I am currently working as Acting Duty Manager and really enjoy covering the Duty Manager position when on leave. Hopefully one day there will be a space for me to progress full-time as Duty Manager. I left Pear Tree in October 2018 to work for another company. I came to realise very quickly that this was the wrong decision and contacted David. He was fully supportive and welcomed me back, I cannot thank him enough for the opportunity. I make sure I am prepared for my shifts and support others in my team, when possible, especially with the newer members of staff. I have started my QCF, Leadership and Management level 5 and aim to get this completed soon as I can. In my spare time, I like to go to the gym, play golf and go mountain biking. Biking is something that I incorporate into Pear Tee as this is a high-value activity for young people.

Elizabeth Longstaff

Position: Senior RSCW

Date Employment commenced: 11.12.06

I first started my career working in the care sector in Ventress Hall Nursing home. I was

employed there for seven years, of which I loved every minute. The position entailed pure care and attentiveness with not only with the old but also with terminally ill.

Although I enjoyed my seven years in nursing, I felt I was ready for a new challenge. This came by chance through a friend working with young people.

I began working at Arronbeth in 2003 working alongside challenging children/teenagers.

This gave me a great insight into effective ways of dealing with violent, abusive, volatile and disruptive behaviours. After three years at Arronbeth I decided I wanted to make a positive contribution where I could utilise my skills to see effective results.

I began at Pear Tree in 2006. I work alongside the young people teaching basic life skills – cleaning, ironing, keeping up personal hygiene and taking pride in their appearance. I also teach them baking and cooking. We have made three course meals and some wonderful calorific desserts. I enjoy taking the young people on excursions, biking, walking and other activities that we organise. I teach the boys how to behave appropriately in the community and respect. I feel my role plays a large part of Pear Tree and I can rest assured safe in the knowledge that I have and always will give 100% commitment to the role.

Amy Bulmer

Position: RSCW

Date of employment: 3.1.18

I left Tudhoe Grange School in 2008 to study A-levels at Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College where I studied History, English Literature, Philosophy and Psychology. At this point in my life, I had absolutely no idea of where I intended to go career-wise. After Sixth Form I attended Northumbria University where I attained a BA Degree in History. As part of my degree, I was required complete an eleven-week work placement module, I gained a volunteer position at the Old Newcastle Project, which was an organisation which was recruiting volunteers to work within Newcastle Castle Keep whilst the Black Gate was being renovated as part of a project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. My role was to work within the Learning Team which involved taking a lead role in organising school visits, working closely with individual schools to develop and deliver sessions that were relevant to the national history curriculum. I was also involved with delivering tours of the castle to the general public, storytelling, historical research, general administration tasks, as well as organising public events to promote the project. After the work placement had finished, I chose to continue to volunteer as it was a great opportunity to gain experience working with children and liaising with schools, as I was beginning to look towards a career in teaching. In the final year of my degree, I also began to volunteer as a teaching assistant at St Charles Roman Catholic Primary School in Spennymoor to gain experience in a school environment which would allow me to apply for a PGCE course when I finished my degree. I found that although I loved working with children, I still wasn't sure that teaching was 100% for me and decided to take a year out of education once I had completed my degree to decide which career path to take. I then began to volunteer at the Education Village in Darlington and worked with Beaumont Hill's Primary department. I enjoyed this experience immensely and gained invaluable experience working one-to-one with children with special needs and supporting them with their learning. I gained a great deal of experience of engaging sometimes difficult and challenging young people and found that I cared very much about the welfare and best interests of children and young people. During my time at the Education Village, I had the opportunity to support outdoor extra-curricular activities

such as kayaking and outdoor education which I am sure will be useful in my new role at Pear Tree.

I had initially discovered Pear Tree Projects through relatives who had worked for the company previously and who spoke highly of a job they loved, it was this which gave me inspiration to apply. I was thrilled to be offered the position of RSCW in November 2017 and could not wait to start in the New Year. I am thoroughly enjoying my new role and am looking forward to gaining more experience as well as progressing and developing my skills throughout my career.

Arron Proud

Position: SRSCW/ Duty Manager

Date of employment: 14.1.19

I left school at the age of 17 after deciding that studying in a classroom setting was no longer for me. This led to me enrolling on a Public Services course at New College Durham. After studying this for two years I was accepted onto a Sports Business Management degree at Sheffield Hallam University. From a young age I was taught that if I wanted something in life, that I would have to go and earn it and as a result at 13 years old, I got my first job as a paperboy which was followed up by various different part time jobs until I finished University.

Many of my hobbies and interests revolve around sport having competed at county level in Cricket, but also competing at a high level in Rugby, Football, Tennis and Athletics in the past. I also have been involved in coaching cricket since the age of 15 and have gone on to coach many junior level sides. This has allowed me to develop communication skills with young people.

My introduction to the care sector was with a company called Danshell who specialised in caring for adults with severe Autism and Learning Difficulties along with many other disabilities. Working in this setting was incredibly challenging and allowed me to develop teamwork skills in a care environment.

Having coached young people for the best part of 10 years, I knew that I wanted to work with young people as a career and after hearing that Pear Tree Projects were looking to hire, then it was a no brainer that I had to apply.

Clare Tweddall

Position: SRSCW

Date of Employment: 3.9.19

I left school at eighteen after completing my A levels, my plan was to go to university and eventually become a teacher or Police Officer. All that changed when I decided to take a year out. During this time, I met my husband, bought a house and found out I was expecting our first child, so University went off the radar along with my career aspirations, as my little family became the priority.

Whilst juggling childcare I worked part time in the catering and hospitality industry,

indulging my love of people and cooking, including running a café alongside my mother. In 1997 our world was turned upside down when my husband's father was killed in a motorbike accident. Malcolm, my husband worked alongside his father in the family haulage business, so when his dad died, we had to step up to the plate and take over its running, with the admin side becoming my responsibility.

Over the next few years our family grew, completed by three wonderful children, with the children came the animals. Horses have always been a love of mine, so it was natural for the children to have ponies and soon we joined Pony Club. I was quickly recruited onto the Branch committee helping to organise the day-to-day running of the club, Pony Club Camp and the Branch Treasurer position all fell into my remit. During this time in Pony Club, I worked closely with young people and soon figured out this is what I enjoyed doing and where my main strengths lay.

After spending most of my adult life bringing up my own children, I began to feel a little lost when they grew up and needed me less, so I decided it was time to look for a new challenge. I started looking into fostering, mentioning it to a close friend she suggested I would be perfectly suited to Pear Tree. Not knowing exactly what Pear Tree was, I began making further investigations, I was excited when I read the ethos of the company and its history. It all seemed common sense to me, I felt totally inspired by its holistic approach, everything it stands for and what the company tries to achieve for its young people, so I went ahead and applied for a RSCW position and was fortunate enough to be offered the job. I am currently working as part of The Crest team and love it, every day is different, you must think on your feet and be prepared for whatever comes your way, it can be challenging but ultimately so rewarding.

Sarah Utley

Position: Senior RSCW

Date of Employment: 9.3.2020

After leaving school I decided to pursue a career in dental nursing. This role was varied and each day different from routine dental appointments to general anesthetic sessions to talking in schools about dental hygiene. I worked my way up from junior dental assistant to practice manager of the dental surgery.

After marrying my husband and having my first child I gave up my career in dental nursing to follow him in his career as an Army Dog trainer. This saw me and my family travel around the UK and abroad for the next 18 years during this time I had two further children. It was while posted abroad in Germany that I started my career in Early years and for the past 13 years I have worked the Early years sector in nurseries and pre-schools around the country looking after children from birth to 11 years old.

It was while working in a pre-school in a deprived area of Dorset that I truly felt I had made a difference to the young children and their families. Through my time at the nursery, I was able to raise money and secure funding for the nursery to give the children new experiences such as forest and beach school sessions, also for two practitioners to be trained as Relax Kids Coaches. This training is based around boosting a child's self-esteem and resilience this training allowed myself to go to other settings to carry out Relax Kids sessions, so I was able to help more children than just the ones that attend my setting.

In 2017 the family moved up to North Yorkshire to settle and to put down roots. I secured a job as a co-manager at a large day nursery and completed my BA honours Degree in Young Children and Early Childhood with the hope of going on to do my teacher training. It was while looking for schools for teaching placements that I realised that I did not like the one size that fits all national curriculum style and the lack of time spent outdoors. I had to finally admit that maybe teaching in a mainstream school was not for me. I did however want to make a difference to children's lives. It was then I came across Pear Tree. From driving down the manor drive and seeing the young people engaged and working with the animals and on the farm, I knew that Pear Tree was for me.

My spare time is spent with my family. We enjoy going to Rugby matches and I also spend many a windy and wet Sunday watching my children play for local rugby teams. I also enjoy horse riding and have three horses at home and enjoy going out hacking with my daughter across Yorkshire Dales and when I am feeling brave up to the gallops! Alongside the horses I have 4 dogs and a pet sheep called Shaun. I do believe he thinks he is a horse and will often take himself round a small course of jumps!

Steven Alderson

Position: SRSCW

Date of Employment: 01.12.2021

I left school in 2005 and found it difficult to know what I wanted to do in my life. After a lot of deliberating, I decided to go to Six Form to study History and some other subjects which I was a little unsure about. After one full year of studying, I decided that it wasn't for me so I decided I would like a job in support. I left Durham Sixth form to do a BTEC Diploma in Sport at Bishop Auckland college. I completed this course, but with a reluctance to go to university, again I had to look for a different pursuit. Luckily, I started a Business Administration apprenticeship whilst at a work placement for an Off-Road Running brand. I completed multiple levels in a BTEC Diploma. This then allowed me to stay full-time for this company. I stayed there working for 13 and a half years, learning many different roles in a small business, ranging from Key Customer accounts all the way through to Personal Assistant for the director of the company. The job, however, had run its course with no more room for my personal development. I decided to take a risk and completely get out of my comfort zone and apply for Pear Tree. A decision which I can say was a great one based on the experience I have had here so far!

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.

Laura Crosby

Position: SRSCW

Date of employment: 6.3.23

After I left college, I was unsure what I wanted to do, I moved from Leeds to Darlington to be closer to my Horses, I had no clue what career I wanted to pursue when I was younger. I ended up working in a Palliative care Hospital for a year which I really enjoyed. I then left there and worked as a groom and a waitress at the same time. The yard I worked at then closed, so I needed to find a new job where I was a receptionist at Student Loans Company. I left there and joined EE as the shift pattern suited me better, I then worked there in different departments for the past 9 years until I joined Pear Tree.

I enjoy being outside busy doing things, I have a horse and a dog which keeps me very busy in my spare time, the dog loves running around the farm while I am looking after my horse, and I also take him out for rides with me. When I am not at the farm with the horse and dog,

I like spending time with my friends and family, going out for meals, trips to the cinema or just chilled nights in.

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 electricity. 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 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.

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 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 camp.

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 locked 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.

Keith Cresser

Residential Social Care Worker

Start Date - 27/04/2026

I have held a wide range of roles since the age of fifteen, beginning with volunteering at my local swimming club, where I taught children as young as five to swim. Most recently, I worked as a Duty Manager at the Tees Barrage White Water Centre, delivering sessions to people of all ages and abilities. I've always enjoyed being outdoors and have led activities including kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddleboarding, white water rafting etc.

In my role as Duty Manager, I saw myself as a mentor, coach, and role model to the staff I line managed. I made sure they felt supported and able to come to me whenever they needed guidance. Alongside my practical experience, I studied at Teesside University, gaining degrees in Sports Coaching and Exercise, and Applied Sport Science.

I also spent four years working for PGL, delivering residential trips for schools, families, and young people, eventually progressing to a senior staff position. For two summers, I worked on the Ardèche River in France, leading a team of instructors running river descents for visiting groups. I also spent a winter season in the Alps as a chalet host, responsible for cooking and maintaining the chalet for guests.

Throughout all these experiences, I've found working with children to be the most rewarding part of my career, especially seeing them achieve things they never thought possible. I take real pride in creating a safe and supportive environment where children feel comfortable trying new activities, building trust, and expressing themselves. I enjoy helping children step outside of their comfort zones at their own pace to experience a new outdoor activity, helping them to develop social skills, confidence and self-esteem.

Coaching and teaching come naturally to me, and I make a conscious effort to communicate in a way that is positive, patient, and engaging for each child as an individual. I understand that every child is different, so I adapt my approach to suit their needs, helping them feel valued and understood and I hope to have a meaningful, positive impact on the lives of the children cared for by Pear Tree.

Mobile Staff Team

The following members of staff cover holidays and sickness absences 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.

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 for 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 have attended sixth form and achieved two A-levels in psychology and sociology, which I loved studying and found 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 centered 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.

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 personal training and fitness qualifications, 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: 4.8.25

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

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

Earlier this year, I took a short break from the care sector and worked in a factory as a laundry assistant. However, I quickly realised that I missed the personal, human aspect of

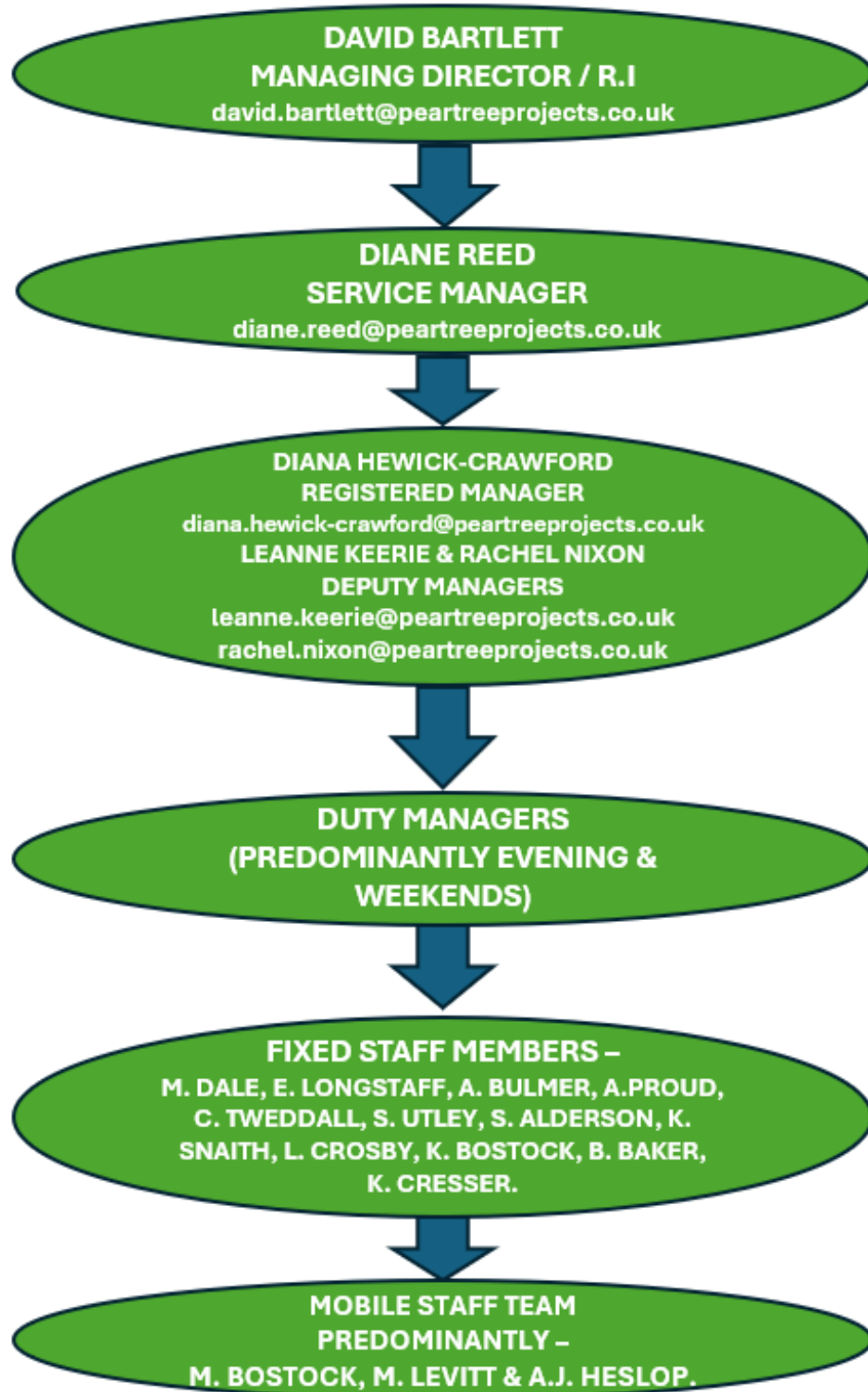
my previous roles. I thrive in environments where I can connect with people, offer support, and feel like I'm making a real difference.

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

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

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

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.



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 Diana Hewick-Crawford, House Manager. Diana 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 endeavor 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

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

13.3.24 – Training section updated

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. No 8: A description of the accommodation offered by the children's home – Reviewed and updated following Ofsted Inspection.

21.5.25 – staff changes

26.6.25 – new staff added

5.8.25 – staff changes

19.8.25 – staff changes

01.10.25 – new staff added and staff changes

Revision dates

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

5.8.22 – Reviewed entire document

26.7.2023 – Review of entire document including some staff changes

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

19.9.24 – Review of entire document

01.10.25

19.03.2026

July 2026

