

The Sycamores



Statement of Purpose

February 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.

- Sycamores may only provide care and accommodation for up to 3 children.
- Sycamores may provide care and accommodation for children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties (EBD).

The Sycamores has been established to provide a high-quality nurturing environment for children, for whom it is either confirmed or suspected to have been survivors of sexual abuse and who may subsequently have developed sexualised behaviour to varying degrees as a result of that abuse. Whilst this issue is the primary concern, these are often multi-troubled children and young people who may present a variety of unpredictable problems. We draw on local services and those of their placing authority and use their expertise to support the young person to deal with any specialist needs they may have. In recent years, we have been able to use FCAMHs to assist us in understanding risk, behaviours and develop our care planning and risk management strategies. This has proven successful and with the strong working relationships in place, is one specialist service which we have direct access to, but others may also be used if/when suitable to the individual children's needs.

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

"PICNIC" is also an approach to aid children in understanding the impact of their behaviour or decision making, with POSITIVE / NEGATIVE immediate consequences of used for our children.

For further information please request our 'Reading List'.

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.
- Education – To work closely with children's individual educational settings to identify areas / gaps in knowledge, and supplement / support education to enhance children's learning. This will be specifically evidenced through AQA Awards & Big Initiative courses.

As highlighted in the Statement on Needs, Mission Statement and Objectives sections above, we will care 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 because of that abuse. With this in mind, where appropriate to do so, we will develop either / or a “Recovery Plan” or “Relapse Prevention Plan”, in line with the child’s needs or behaviours. This will contribute to the overall education and focus upon the outcomes identified for each child.

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, rugby, table tennis, squash, bowls, cricket & footgolf. Participation in such sports can often lead to children joining local sports clubs, which help build relationships and time in the community for our children in a structured setting. Social development and mastery of a skill are aims within this area.
- Social and leisure - Using local resources, going out for meals, going to the theatre, and the 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 the 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.

Within the home, we young people are encouraged to participate in our 'Meals of the World' themed evenings. This was an initiative we devised within the home to help educate our residents and for them to learn about different cultures and faiths in a fun and relaxed way, with it being achieved through cooking a meal from a chosen country and then learning fun facts by completing quizzes and word searches, etc.

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.
- The child states that they do not wish to see family members.

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.

The Sycamores has a small, nurturing, stable staff team, who place a huge importance on building positive, trusting relationships and engaging young people about their care.

The running of the home is regularly reassessed based on feedback (be that positive or negative) from the children we look after. This is gained in a variety of ways, such as informal discussion with the young people, feedback in 1:1 key worker sessions, 'You Said – We Did' forms, personal questionnaires from the manager, as well as monthly young people's meetings where any issues can be opened for discussion and, where appropriate, acted upon. The House Manager also adopts an open-door policy, encouraging young people to speak directly and share their thoughts/worries/concerns with him.

In addition, someone independent of the running of the home inspects the provision monthly, compiling a Regulation 44 report, which is shared with the Registered Manager, Responsible Individual and Ofsted.

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.

The Registered Manager will also look for direct feedback on a regular basis when completing Quality of Care Review Reports, to ensure that accurate information is added to this, and to also understand how the children feel about many areas of their lives here at The Sycamores.

Children's views or opinions can affect all documents within the home, such as Development Plans, Quality of Care Review Reports, Children's Guides, Locality Risk Assessments, Bullying Risk Assessments and feedback relevant for staff PHCA's.

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 for full details of policies in this area.

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 three children or young people of either sex between the age of 8 – 18. However, a young person may stay beyond their 18th birthday if an agreed plan is in place that is risk-assessed and deemed to meet the needs of the child, whilst not increasing risk to others in any way. We feel that this is a sensible approach for children's moves to any further placement or their own home, when this is the correct time, minimising change, but also offering flexibility for the post-18 planning stage.

The children / young people are considered for placement to The Sycamores 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.

- d) An Impact Risk Assessment completed before admission to the home, demonstrating how a new child admitted to the home would impact the children already resident. Should this highlight any unreasonable impact upon a child, placement would not be considered; however, manageable levels of impact would lead to strategies being implemented to manage this.
- e) Where possible, the child visits the home, engaging well on any visit, and they are demonstrating agreement or desire to live at The Sycamores.
- f) Any safeguards that are agreed to maintain safety within the home are regularly reviewed to ensure that these are still appropriate and/or needed.

Under no circumstances do children ever share bedrooms.

The home is designed to be as normal and domestic-like in nature as possible, providing a sympathetic, caring environment within a residential care context. We aim to avoid an institutionalised manner, instead focusing on providing a nurturing environment with high expectations in terms of values and activities, including educational activities and appropriate help and support when difficulties arise.

The Sycamores has been established to provide a high-quality nurturing environment for children for whom it's either confirmed or suspected to have been survivors of sexual abuse and who may subsequently have developed sexualised behaviour difficulties to varying degrees as a result of that abuse.

The Sycamores is a large, traditional townhouse set over 3 floors. We have a total of 4 bedrooms, 3 for young people and 1 for staff use, with all but 1 bedroom having en-suite facilities. There is also a large family bathroom, 2 separate toilets, a living room, dining room, large kitchen, and 2 separate game rooms. Outside, we have a garden area to the front and rear, with an outbuilding and garage also to the rear.

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

The Sycamores is a large well maintained semi-detached house which provides gardens both front and rear and is located in what is considered to be a quiet and leafy residential area of the town.

The area in which the home is situated provides the young people with a sense of security, stability, coupled with a safe environment in which to live, thus giving the feeling that they are part of a community in which they can thrive.

We benefit from being just a 5-minute walk from the town centre, which gives easy access to all the main shops, cinema, theatre, library, restaurants, and a large leisure centre where young people can enjoy swimming, badminton, gym and a variety of exercise classes. There is a park within 100m of the home, with the town's main park, South Park, located less than a mile away, providing excellent opportunities to get out and enjoy outdoor activities.

The hospital, doctors, dentists, opticians and various other health practitioners are all within walking distance, and our central location offers easy access to all mainstream schools, with us also being close to both College facilities and other educational facilities which the town

provides.

Darlington also offers excellent transportation links, with the A1 motorway and main East Coast mainline opening links to all major cities such as Newcastle, Edinburgh, York and London, to name but a few. The countryside can be accessed in a matter of minutes, providing excellent walking, biking and a variety of outdoor activities, with the North Yorkshire Moors and Lake District all under an hour away too.

Further details can be found in the home's Locality Risk Assessment, where the location of the home is assessed to be LOW RISK for the children resident in our home. This is reviewed on a regular basis.

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 result 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.

Safeguarding and/or Bullying concerns are raised or discussed in every staff meeting and in every individual supervision completed within the home. More details can also be found in the homes' Bullying Risk Assessment, which is reviewed on a regular basis.

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 through Regulation 40 notifications.

If a child protection issue is identified, this is always brought to the attention of the House Manager - Steven Sturman, Designated Safeguarding Lead – Gary Ramsbottom, Responsible Individual - David Bartlett, and the Social Worker of any child involved. If the issue includes the House Manager or Head of Service, the staff are instructed to notify the Next Senior Manager. In every event, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Local Authority's 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 Steven Sturman, Registered Manager 01325 350660 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 who 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 presents 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. This understanding of risk and suitable homes is carried out in the referral/consultation process with the child and their social worker/family. This is not a matching process but is completed to understand the correct home that will best meet the needs of that child, at that time. The Impact Risk Assessment completed will also measure the predicted impact upon the children already resident within the chosen setting to ensure that their placements are not adversely affected by any new admissions to the home.

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.

All children residing within The Sycamores are given a Children's Guide upon admission to the home, and updated copies are provided as these are developed. These guides also include details for children to serve as reminders on how to make complaints, as well as information on outside agencies/support networks that may assist a child struggling to communicate a particular issue or complaint.

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 organisation's policy to record these complaints and take action when required.

Staff are to encourage young people to have a voice, share feelings through positive relationships being in place or make complaints, when there is good reason, and help them to record their feelings, concerns or anxieties- Achieved through completing a 'What I have to say' form. 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, but also in the correct time scales.

In the first instance, the Registered Manager, Steven Sturman 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

All children resident within The Sycamores are given a Children's Guide upon admission to the home, and updated copies as these are developed. There are also details in these guides for children to have reminders of how to make complaints, but also outside agencies/support networks that may aid a child who is struggling to communicate a particular issue or complaint. These have also been highlighted with QR codes for children who have access to technology that will direct them easily to the information/website that they may desire.

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 Projects 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.

The Sycamores can care for children who display sexualised behaviour or present a risk to other children, either in person or online. To help minimise risk, a specific risk assessment for the use of individual bedroom door alarms is carried out, which is regularly reviewed to ensure it is appropriate in line with the individual risk assessment.

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, they cannot be accused of entering another child's room without a member of staff being made aware of this fact.
- 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 as per the specific risk assessment for this.
- Should there be a need for a sensor to be used at The Sycamores, these are installed on the doors of the young people and only activated during sleeping hours. Should they be activated and go off, this would only sound in the staff sleepover room and would not impact any young person.
- Alarms/Monitoring equipment can be added or removed when higher/lower levels of risk are assessed, or from specific incidents within the home.

Members of staff should also be reminded that young people are not permitted to enter other children's rooms for any reason. Should children choose or attempt to do so, this will be deemed a safeguarding concern, and the appropriate steps taken from this.

A consent form signed by the Local Authority Social Worker is to be in place for each young person. Should any changes occur in monitoring due to safeguarding concerns, the wider care team network will be informed of these changes and the reasoning why.

We are also observing a trend of children displaying sexualised beliefs/behaviours online, leading to risks in person being increased from a distorted view of relationships, sex, and socially acceptable behaviour. We understand the need for Digital Safety to be paramount as children can be exposed to age-inappropriate material from an early age, and as such need re-educating from this exposure, whilst also understanding the negative impact that this can have upon themselves. This is a complex area and one which the home does not underestimate as to its relevance today.

As a result, all staff carry out training around this online risk, as we understand the need for Digital Safety and resilience to be paramount, as children can be exposed to age-appropriate material from an early age, and as such need re-educating from this exposure, whilst also understanding the negative impact that this can have upon themselves. This is a complex

area and one which the home does not underestimate as to its relevance in today's society.

We look to develop the skills of the staff team within the home, to look to understand trends in risk, use networking to receive updates from professionals in relation to Digital Safety and also aid the children's knowledge in the hope that better decision-making can be achieved from this work.

Carefully managed risk is also in place for all decisions in relation to internet access or device use. Decisions are made in relation to the expansion of use in line with age, cognitive ability, trust, resilience, and an overview of risk assessments in place. Often, the home will look to install some Parental Monitoring software on the young people's devices, to aid the understanding of the use of the internet or a device in general, to provide scaffolding support for the child, which can be reduced over time. Safeguarding checks will also be carried out in line with the young person's risk, and checks are recorded in the home log if appropriate.

It is the aim of the home to "normalise" internet/mobile phone use before adulthood, in turn, aid children to leave our homes, displaying socially acceptable behaviour online, and not posing a risk to others/themselves.

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 Steven Sturman, Registered Manager 01325 350660 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 Steven Sturman 40 Stanhope Road, Darlington. DL3 7SQ

Education

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

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

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

N/A. - Please see 18.

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

On admission, in liaison with other agencies an assessments of a young person's educational needs takes place, this also includes and is 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 researched in liaison with the local education authorities and Virtual School. Should they be allocated a local school, the home will develop good links and support the young person closely with any transitions.

If a young person's risk assessment considers them unable to attend a mainstream education provision, then admission into Pear Tree School is the preferred option from that point, as we can offer a fuller, holistic approach to the child. The Sycamores will work hard to develop links or working relationships with schools that the children attend, to aid with the education and behaviour of each child, developing strategies as/when needed with schools.

Young people above school age, who can't attend independent work or training, are provided with ongoing 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 them.

In addition, within the home, there is a quiet room set aside for reading, homework etc. and computer facilities are also available. There is a library of books in the living room, tailored to many different reading abilities or ages. There are also many other educational resources available to the children on the landing area of the home, that cover more "delicate" matters such as sexual health, contraception etc., that the children may want to research by themselves. The Children's Guide for The Sycamores also provides many options and signposting for the children to access independent support or advice, should they wish to use these. QR codes have also been developed for children to have ease of access to support. As a home, The Sycamorese looks to support and celebrate education placements,

to develop each child's understanding of behaviours or risks, etc. We use a targeted approach to "gaps" in knowledge for each child, using AQA Awards or Big Initiative courses, for example, to demonstrate work and enhance a child's knowledge, which in turn can aid in reducing risks.

Health

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

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

b) information about –

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

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

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

- All of the children within the first month of admission are registered with the local G.P, which is Blacketts Medical Centre, Bondgate, Darlington, 01325 380640.
- Their eyes are tested by the opticians Specsavers, High Row, Darlington, 01325 461155
- They are registered with the dentist Lance Robson Dentist, Woodland's Road, Darlington, 01325 462268
- In every case, children have a care plan agreed with other agencies and work is undertaken to comply with this.
- Regular check ups are always maintained.

The effectiveness of this approach is monitored in each young person's Care Plan and Looked After Review form, with care plans completed on a day-to-day basis and a Looked After Review report completed in line with reviews on a 6-monthly basis. The 6-monthly reports contain a "Marginal Gains Assessment" report, and this is an effective tool to monitor progress for each child, as is valuable to achieve an understanding of an overall perspective of each child. This also offers the ability to track progress or trends for the child, which are valuable to reflect upon.

Health issues for each are also contained in the homes Development Plan for Holly Tree House, with plans identified in this document as to how each point will be addressed in the future. These are reviewed on a regular basis by the Registered Manager, Key Workers, and discussed in staff meetings.

Quality of Care Review Reports are also completed on a 6-monthly basis by the Registered Manager. Again, this gives an opportunity to have an overview, reflect and collate information to give feedback as to how the home addressed health matters for the children resident. These reports are then shared with the Responsible Individual and Ofsted.

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 complete a comprehensive induction process upon commencement of their employment with Pear Tree and must also complete a probationary period that is monitored by the Registered Manager and HR.

Pear Tree is committed to ensuring that all staff members have the necessary skills and training to meet the needs of the children resident within the home, and when needed, they will identify courses to match these needs and upskill team members. Staff training needs are agreed in supervision, team meetings etc., and it is a fluid process, in line with our organisational values and principles.

Please refer to our training matrix, individual staff members files and/or Pear Tree Connect which shows a full list of all training for each member of staff.

All staff have either completed or are working towards the following mandatory qualifications: (List in not exhaustive)

- 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)

With staff also completing the following specific Pear Tree Training: (List in not exhaustive)

- Managing Sexually Harmful Behaviour
- Safeguarding
- Who Care's Training
- Recovery & Intervention
- Join Up
- Pear Tree School Curriculum
- Care Plans and Risk Assessments

David Bartlett Position: Managing Director / Responsible Individual The introduction gives an outline of Pear Tree's history; the Managing Director is David.

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.

The following members of staff are fixed staff members for The Sycamores:

It's important to note that we understand the skills of the individuals within our staff team, look to utilise these wherever possible, and ensure that the overall team has a variety of skills and/or experience to offer the children within our care. Staff members with lesser experience are aided in developing their individual skills and knowledge within the home, with more experienced staff members sharing knowledge to ensure care is consistent and in line with children's individual plans.

Steven Sturman

Position: Registered Manager

Date of employment: 22.09.06

Management Qualifications - Awarded August 2016

Level 5 – Diploma for Leadership for Health & Social Care and Children and Young Peoples Services -

After leaving School in 1989, I trained and qualified as a hairdresser, progressing to Senior Stylist within a busy salon in Darlington. I then took a complete change in career direction, starting work within Orange, the telecommunications company, where I progressed to being a Senior Fraud Analyst.

Upon turning 30, I took the opportunity to pursue my dream of travelling the world, spending time living in New Zealand before then travelling to Australia and Fiji. Travelling alone helped greatly in developing skills such as confidence, resilience, organisational skills, communication skills and self-reliance, and without a doubt was the best year of my life and something that I would recommend anyone to do should the opportunity present itself. Once home, I settled back into an office job, becoming quickly frustrated, knowing ultimately this role wasn't for me. It was at this point that my now mother-in-law asked if I'd ever thought of working with young people, to which I replied "no". She had always known me to be a sports-mad, outdoors person and believed I could offer much more to young people, rather than be stuck in an office forevermore. After giving this some thought, I enrolled on a course as a Youth Worker, spending the next year voluntarily working on an evening at the Branksome and Firth Moor youth clubs within Darlington.

This experience helped me to gain employment within Pear Tree in 2006, and since then, I've progressed from RSCW to Duty Manager, Deputy Manager and now House Manager, an achievement that I'm exceptionally proud of.

Although now mainly a pen pusher, sport is still what I'm best known for within Pear Tree as I simply can't get enough of it. I've twice completed an Ironman, done triathlons and marathons, been involved in football, biking, climbing, etc, and generally have an unquenchable passion for sport. My sporty background is especially handy in a home full of teenage boys, and I'm keen to give them the chance of trying sports that they might never have tried before, as this can provide great opportunities in promoting self-confidence and a healthy lifestyle.

The most important things that I bring to the organisation were instilled in me from a very young age by my parents: manners, respect, discipline, standards, hard work ethics, and if something is worth doing, it's worth doing right. In a job where nurturing and guidance are paramount, it's these strong morals that I, too, can hopefully pass on to help develop the young people within our care, the way they helped develop me.

Certificates:

- Child Protection Level 1
- Lifting and Moving Things
- Managing Anger and Challenging Behaviour
- Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation
- Nov 17 2014 - Attended a seminar delivered by Dr Bruce Perry - The impact of trauma and neglect on the developing child
- Understanding Child Attachment

- Safer Recruitment
- Introduction to Epilepsy & Administering Buccal Midazolam
- Multi - agency Awareness Raising - Child Sexual Exploitation
- Workshop raising awareness of prevent
- QCF Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People's Services (Children and Young People's Residential Management)
- Keeping Children Safe Online
- Understanding Pathways to Extremism and the Prevent Programme
- Awareness raising session - Attachment difficulties
- Reflective Practice Training
- Radicalisation, Grooming and Exploitation session
- Safeguarding in a Digital World Masterclass
- Lateral Flow Testing Training
- Prevent Covid-19
- Child criminal exploitation and county lines
- Equality and Diversity

Stephanie Bowers

Position: Senior RSCW/Duty Manager

Date of Employment: 16.9.2024

From leaving school I have always worked with children and young people; I was fortunate enough that my career took me overseas for 14 years where I spent my time travelling around beautiful locations all around the world caring for children from birth right up to the age of 16.

I came back to live in the UK in 2014 and settled into UK life, I started a job supporting adult men in a mental health hospital, however my real passion was working with children, and that is where my career with Pear Tree began, in 2018 until summer 2024 where I made the hard decision to leave Pear Tree to further my development in a management role, however after 3 weeks in my new role, I realised that my heart was still with Pear Tree and I asked to return, fortunately for me I was welcomed back and here I am back in my happy place, working with the most amazing young people and helping them to achieve their goals.

Position: Senior RSCW/Duty Manager Date of Employment: June 2018-August 2024 – Returning September 2024

Since leaving school, I have always worked with children and young people. I was fortunate enough for my career to take me overseas for 14 years, during which I travelled to beautiful locations around the world, caring for children from birth up to the age of 16. I returned to the UK in 2014 and settled into life here. My first job upon returning involved supporting adult men in a mental health hospital. However, my true passion has always been working with children, which is how my career at Pear Tree began in 2018.

In the summer of 2024, I made the difficult decision to leave Pear Tree to pursue a management role for my professional development. After just three weeks in this new position, I realised that my heart was still with Pear Tree, and I requested to return.

Fortunately, I was welcomed back.

While I cherish spending time with the young people at Pear Tree, I am currently focusing on my personal development. I have progressed from RSCW to Senior RSCW and now Duty Manager, with my aspiration to become a registered house manager for Pear Tree.

VICKY CUMMINGS

Position: Senior RSCW

Date of employment: 4.7.11

After leaving school in 1994, I had a strong desire to work, trying various types of jobs, but never found the right one for me. Having had my family at a young age and enjoying the special moments which you can't replace, I then decided to go back to work part-time time which took me in a new direction, and I became a carer looking after vulnerable adults. I went on to become an activities facilitator and did this for six years, looking after people with learning difficulties. This was very challenging in managing their daily life, and my roles included assisting, motivating and encouraging them into the community, something I found exceptionally rewarding as I got to take them to events and places that they had never been before, which broadened their horizons and outlook on life, and in turn helped develop their confidence grow and for them to develop as individuals.

I've become a stronger person, gaining confidence and an extroverted approach to life and can see the funny side of things, drawing satisfaction from working as part of a team. I feel that my previous experiences, both professionally and as a mother, have all been vital in helping me realise my full potential, and I'm keen to continue to be able to share my skills with the young people in my care in order that they can reach their full potential too. Having worked at Pear Tree for over 10 years now, I continue to find the role very rewarding, and I look forward to many more years and experiences here.

Certificates:

- Safeguarding Adults
- Moving and Handling
- Managing Challenging Behaviour
- Non Violent Crisis Intervention
- NCFE 2 Cert in Nutrition and Health
- NVQ 2 Health and Social Care Adults
- NVQ 3 Health and Social Care Adults
- Safeguarding Children from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation
- Awareness session - Anxiety, worries and fears
- Awareness session - Eating Difficulties
- Lateral Flow Testing Training
- Prevent Covid-19
- Child criminal exploitation and county lines

JAMIE BROOKS-JOHNSTON

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 9.9.19

My first involvement in working with young people started off by doing voluntary work at the age of fifteen years of age, regularly coaching and running a young people's football team and to this day I still do this.

I started off working as a caretaker in a school in Middlesbrough and then transferred to working in the youth and community centre which was based on the same site.

It was then whilst working in the youth and community centre, I was asked if I wanted to volunteer to work with the children and young people and then shortly afterwards started my youth and community work training with the local authority.

After gaining relevant experience in the field, after a couple of years I gained my first full time role with Connexions LA in Redcar & Cleveland working as a Personal Adviser delivering diversionary activities for the Positive Activities for Young People programme.

After working for the local authority for four years I gained employment with Safe In Tees Valley in the voluntary sector for the thirteen years delivering preventative services for the Youth Offending Service, Police and local Neighbourhood Safety teams.

Whilst at SITV it enabled me to deliver and gain experience in delivering and managing a wide varied range of programmes in the young people and employability sector.

Certificates:

My first involvement in working with young people started by doing voluntary work at the age of fifteen, coaching and running a young people's football team in the area where I live (which I still do to this day). I worked as a caretaker in a school in Middlesbrough before transferring to work at the Youth and Community Centre, which was based on the same site. It was here that I was asked if I wanted to work as a volunteer with the children and young people, which I was more than happy to do, and shortly afterwards, I started my youth and community work training with the local authority.

After gaining relevant experience in this field, after a couple of years, I started my first full-time role with Connexions Local Authority in Redcar & Cleveland, working as a Personal Adviser delivering diversionary activities through their 'Positive Activities for Young People' programme.

After working here for four years, I moved to further my development and take up employment with Safe In Tees Valley (SITV), where I worked for thirteen years delivering preventative services for the Youth Offending Service, Police and local Neighbourhood Safety teams. Whilst at SITV, it enabled me to deliver and gain experience in delivering and managing a wide and varied range of programmes in the young people and employability sector. After leaving SITV, I then took up employment with Youth Focus North East, again delivering an employability programme supporting young people and adults (16-25) into education, employment or training across the Tees Valley Area. Alongside this, I delivered weekly youth club sessions across the Middlesbrough area.

The experience gained within my previous roles developed a strong desire to work within the residential care sector, and when an opportunity arose to join Pear Tree, I jumped at the chance. On reflection, I've thoroughly enjoyed my time here, wishing I'd had a job in the care sector sooner.

One of my main strengths, I believe, is my natural calmness and the approach I take when working with young people, which allows them to feel more at ease, additionally helping for good, solid relationships to be built. This calmness has allowed me to be adaptable and work within many of the houses within Pear Tree, and after working on the mobile team and then The Crest, I've now been given the opportunity to be based at Stanhope Road full-time. I feel this is really helping further my personal development, and I'm now a keyworker for a child here at Stanhope Road. This is something I really enjoy as I can help develop their independent skills in preparation for their next part of their journey away from Pear Tree, post 18.

I'm probably best known for my sporting interests here at Pear Tree, enjoying most sports such as football, gym, walking and biking, and I really enjoy testing and helping to improve their physicality and fitness, which for me is really important. I'm a qualified football referee and enjoy sharing my knowledge of the game, which has led me to deliver organised football sessions every three weeks, which are attended by young people across the whole of Pear Tree. Basically, anything sporty, then I'm your man!

Certificates:

- Understanding Autism NCFE L2 Equality and Diversity NCFE L2 IAG L2 NCFE
- IT NVQ L2 NCFE
- NVQ level 3 in Team Leader and Management FA Football Coaching L1
- Youth and Community Work - NVQ 3 Understanding Connexions Level 4
- Drug issues for Health Practitioners - TROCN Level 3 Y/P and Mental health - TROCN Level 3
- Sport and Recreation – Coaching and Activity – NVQ 2 FA Football NVQ 2
- Prevent Covid-19
- An Introduction to GDPR

Mobile Staff Team

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

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

ANGELA RAMSBOTTOM

Position: Senior RSCW / Duty Manager

Date of Employment: 22/05/00

After leaving school in 1985, I started my career as a junior wages clerk. This role taught me the importance of being organised and gave me valuable insights into what working life is like. I held this position for a year. Following that, I transitioned into the print finishing industry, where I spent eleven years mastering my craft. Unfortunately, both of these

positions were impacted by redundancies, which led me to take a step back and reassess my career aspirations.

I was fortunate to find a new path as a Prison Custody Officer, a position that provided me with significant responsibility and experience. In this role, I was tasked with supervising prisoners in various legal settings, including Magistrates' Courts, Crown Courts, and Periodic Courts. Additionally, I had the unique opportunity to oversee young people at Youth Courts, which deepened my understanding of the challenges faced by at-risk youth within the justice system.

My next position was at a Secure Training Centre for young people, where I played a pivotal role in the lives of those in our care. My responsibilities included not only ensuring their safety and well-being but also supporting them through their educational journeys. I worked diligently to meet their individual needs and provided guidance during family visits, fostering a supportive environment that encouraged personal growth and rehabilitation.

In 2000, I transitioned into a role as a Residential Social Care Worker at Pear Tree, a position that further allowed me to impact young lives positively. My dedication and commitment have been recognised over the years, leading to a promotion to Senior Residential Social Care Worker. Currently, I hold the position of Duty Manager, where I continue to advocate for and support the young people in our care, ensuring they receive the guidance and resources necessary for a successful future.

Certificates:

- Equality and Diversity – Level 2
- Basic Counselling
- Child Protection Level 1
- Safeguarding Children Level 2
- NVQ Level 4 Health and Social Care (Children and Young People)
- Child Psychology Diploma
- Communication skills and report writing
- Basic Counselling skills
- RSA Certificate in Teaching Circuits (Stage 1)
- RSA Certificate in Teaching Gym (Stage 1)
- Computer Literacy and Information technology stage 1
- Basic signing
- Lifting and Moving Things
- Substance Misuse Awareness Level 3
- Diploma in Criminology Level 3
- Managing Allegations Against Staff
- Managing Anger and Challenging Behaviour Level 2
- Tackling Bullying
- RASA - Rock Antics Supervisor Award
- OCR Level 2 ITQ Certificate in IT User Skills
- In House Training - Complaints and Whistle Blowing Procedures
- In House Training - Key Worker Training
- LAO Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Business and Administration (QCF)

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

Ashleigh Walton

Position: SRSCW

Date of employment: 9.1.18

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

After not joining the army I had a few part time jobs for a couple of years including working as a waitress/cleaner at The Carlbury Arms, volunteering work at a local racing stable yard, also working in Morrison's for four years on the kiosk department. Once I left Morrison's I started working at a local primary school as a lunchtime supervisor, while in this employment I also covered caretaker roles and supervision of a child with autism on a one to one basis in breakfast club and cleaning duties. While working at Montalbo primary school I started working a second job at Staindrop academy as a cleaner, working afternoons after school finished and also worked some mornings before school to cover

shifts. Over the Christmas periods of 2013 and 2014 I worked a seasonal employment on The Polar Express at Weardale Railway as a dancing chef. I really enjoyed working on the train with the children, reading stories, dancing, serving hot chocolate and cookies and singing before they met Santa.

Working with the children I helped them with their daily learning including using cutlery correctly and supporting children on the playground with bullying issues or injuries. I made sure that all children's needs and safety were met with high standards. I really enjoyed working with the children, which led me to look for full time employment with children. My sister works at Pear Tree as a Groom and told me about the company. I applied for Pear Tree and was successful with my application. I am excited about progressing my experience throughout my career.

Certificates:

- Prevent Covid-19

Juan Carlos Gutierrez Bonilla

Position: RSCW

Date of employment: 11.3.24

As a child, I always wanted to study. I just was not sure what I wanted to study. So, I decided that I would just finish school and move away from home, which I did. When I left sunny Spain, I embarked on an adventure to find myself and discover what I really wanted to do in life. Leaving Spain on my own, as a teenager, was a hard, but necessary step if I wanted to progress in life. During the initial hard times, I kept looking back at my life in Madrid and always reminisced of all the lovely memories that I had. After a period of adjustment, I managed to improve my English and developed good friendships which really helped me during the first few years. Since then, I discovered myself, and discovered that I am actually really passionate about psychology, criminology, mental health and social issues. While learning the language, I worked in hospitality jobs, and kept progressing with each job, to the point that I managed multiple coffee shops at the same time. However, I decided that the hospitality life was not for me, as I needed a better work/life balance. So, I decided to find an "office job". But I also decided to study a fulltime degree. I enrolled on a Psychology and Criminology Bachelor's degree, while I also worked an office job at The Student Loans Company, full time on the nightshift. It was a very hard, but extremely invaluable experience. I was active from 8am until 2am, and this time helped me improve and become stronger both mentally and emotionally. Whilst at university, I volunteered as a Mental Health advocate within campus and also volunteered as a Community Wellbeing Champion within my local community. My main areas of interest are investigating, and developing a wider understanding of childhood trauma, all areas of domestic abuse, substance misuse and general mental health and overall wellbeing.

I have just recently graduated, and I have just become a dad for the first time! Pear Tree Projects really caught my eye, and when I delved deeper into the company, I was able to understand their mission and I was so fascinated with the therapeutic work they do that I had to apply to join them! Pear Tree really aligns perfectly with my passions and with my outlook in life, so I was determined to join the team. I have a desire to have a positive contribution to the young people's lives and to make a positive impact in their development as they transition into adulthood. Outside of work, I just love a good book or movie, a nice walk-in nature with my family, playing and watching football and American football, a good comedy show, seeing my baby grow every day and spending quality time with both her and my partner. Also, I really enjoy meditation and studying to further develop my knowledge.

Josh Price

Position: RSCW

Date of employment: 11.6.24

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

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

Certificates:

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

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

The Organisational structure of the children's home

David Bartlett, Head of Service.

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

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

Appendix 1 – Corporate History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Easter of the year 2001, Pear Tree opened its first registered home, looking after four children, bringing an end to the culmination of some 18 months planning and development work, and adding an alternative to the current portfolio homes on offer. However, the philosophy of ordinary homes in ordinary streets and the desire to give children with complex and difficult needs the opportunity to live in as normal a home environment as possible is still very much the heart and soul of what Pear Tree is trying to achieve. On 14th October 1991, with the implementation of the Children Act 1989, Pear Tree was the first organisation to apply for Registration of a small 'un-registerable' home in the full knowledge that it would not be allowed to do so. The subsequent development of some of the most homely yet highest quality homes in the country, with a sophisticated programme of events around the care of the children who would live there, has continued to be the strategy. Indeed, whilst Pear Tree was the first to come forward with this idea, this way of working has been adopted by many local authorities, charitable and private organisations since. There would be a 10-year gap and a great deal of hard work and dedication by all those concerned, until June of the year 2001, when the Registration and Inspection Units of Darlington and Durham County Council formally registered five Pear Tree homes, the period of consolidation allowing for the smaller homes, that often looked after one or two children, to be withdrawn.

During the Registration process, it became clear that Pear Tree had grown as an organisation and required an independent base that could be used for administration purposes, away from any of the existing homes. The search then began to try to find appropriate accommodation for our office staff, at the same time acknowledging the need to have somewhere, where meetings could take place, and even better, informal gatherings. With every office viewed, it became apparent that quite a sizable place was required to

cater for everyone's needs, and then in the true spirit of Pear Tree history, we took advantage of opportunities that presented and in August 2001, Pear Tree head quarters moved to Toy Top Farm. The farm house provides a base for our administration staff, a meeting place and a focal point for the whole organisation, the rest of the farm providing numerous opportunities for activities, work experience and further training.

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

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

David Bartlett Managing Director

Updates

Date / Section / Amendment

3.2.22 - new staff added and staff removed

7.3.22 - new staff added

24.3.22 – Training info within Staff matters section

8.4.22 – Staff changes, and personal statements added 11.5.2022 – New staff added, and personal statements added 27.5.2022 – new staff added

6.7.2022 – changes to staff teams 20.9.2022 – Changes to staff teams

1.11.22 – New staff added

21.11.22 – Personal statements added

6.12.22 – new MOS added

19.12.22 – New MOS added

9.1.23 – New MOS and Lee Hume personal statement added

8.2.23 – staffing changes

6.3.23 – New MOS added

6.4.23 – new staff added

6.6.23 – Staff changes

19.9.23 – New staff added

13.11.23 – New staff added

19.1.24 – new staff added

2.2.24 - New staff added

6.2.24 – Review of Caring for Children – Section No 10

5.3.24 – staff removed and personal statement added

11.3.24 – new staff added

12.6.24 – staff changes

15.7.24 – new staff added

19.9.24 – staff changes

12.11.24 – New staff added

21.11.24 - new staff added

28.1.25 - new staff added and staff changes

21.5.25 – staff changes

26.6.25 – new staff added

5.8.25 – staff changes

Revision dates

September 2016

October 2016

December 2017

January 2019

31st January 2020

29th January 2021

3rd February 2022

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

5.8.22 – Review of entire document following Ofsted inspection 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
03.02.2026 – Review of entire document