



A therapeutic  
approach to helping  
children and young people  
recover from trauma and  
abuse.

Third Edition  
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David Bartlett MBE

## Foreword

This is a brave document. It accompanies the reader from its tiniest focus on detail relating to the extreme depth of a child's trauma to the broadest of worldwide perspectives, reminding us of our fundamental location in humanity and our intimate connection with the natural world. Mr Bartlett's writing reminds us that our protected and regarded, yet often vulnerable systems should never overrule our logic and common sense: we are adults, charged with, and required to, make informed decisions on behalf of the children in our care. In so doing it relates rationally to positions of political correctness, acknowledging the simplicity of our souls and our need to have fun.

Its truth and honesty are genuine, leaving the reader feeling connected and reminiscent of values so often overlooked. It's consistent, persistent search for excellence reminds us of our abilities, and challenges us to bring more of ourselves to support that quest. Its respect for each individual's capacity to rise and respond, given the necessary understanding, patience and support, provides hope and inspiration.

It is indeed brave, and perhaps above all, this document is wise: a quality so often elusive, and a treasure to find.

**Christine Sketchley BA Hons, PGCE, MSc**

Educational Psychologist

## Foreword – November 2016

To promote a child along a sound and secure developmental pathway as is possible and towards integrative independence is a privilege we all in the childcare profession understand and aspire to. David Bartlett leads pragmatically and conceptually in this field at a time when one might argue our political leaders and policy makers seem to have suffered a catastrophic pause in their conceptualisation of childhood developmental needs and priorities.

The Pear Tree 'rainbow' (my italics) approach to meaningful child centred and developmentally sensitive care articulates for any parent / carer / professional or policy maker a most valuable template from which to consider their practice, service development and a tool to incorporate in their daily, every interaction matters, care philosophy.

The Pear Tree philosophy promotes a valued and purposeful life journey experience, evolution and effective adaptation to life circumstances – An intimate journey of relational trust and maturational growth with ourselves, our environment and those we encounter en-route – the good, the bad and the ugly!

The Pear Tree 'rainbow' articulates a broad spectrum care methodology of nurture and values based windows of developmental opportunity that is presented in a highly accessible, credible, principled and well intentioned manner.

This is an entirely refreshing, inspiring and provoking text, which should be on all progressive childcare professionals critical reading list.

**Dr P J Kennedy BSc (Hons), MSc, D Clin Psych, PgCert, C Psychol, AFBPsS**

Consultant in Clinical & Forensic Psychology

Psychological Services Professional Lead – NTW Adolescent Forensic Services

Visiting Researcher, Newcastle University

It is with great pleasure that I endorse David Bartlett's transformational work. I had the pleasure of auditing his school for the Quality Mark as a Values-based School. The school was found to be outstanding in every sense including its leadership. I came away inspired and wanting to tell others about what I had seen - which I have done.

I think the deep insights that David has, about how to nurture and educate young people who have had extreme trauma in their lives, should become a model of good practices for others to emulate.

Dr. Neil Hawkes  
Founder Values-based Education (VbE)

Since this document was first released in 2016, it has found utility in a number of areas, some of which were unexpected. These include being a valuable working tool for Pear Tree Staff and similarly for Residential Social Workers in other settings. It has also found to be useful to educational psychologists, mainstream schools, the prison service, the police and even the British Army. Indeed as an army officer said to me "we are all in the people business."

It has been clear that whilst 'some' may find all its contents useful there are also many that can take elements from this, as others have said, pearls of wisdom and apply them to their own work place. In this second edition, I have tried to take on board feedback from these different sources and elaborate on points that have come from these discussions.

One most critical but worthwhile piece of feedback was that the document did not know whether it wanted to be a book or a works manual, which I feel is a very valid comment. This perhaps indicates that it has in fact achieved its objective. To provide information to anyone in 'the people business' which whilst based on experience can be backed up with research wherever possible. This is not intended to compete with other academic thoughts but more likely be a medium through which they can be translated into real life with practical applications. Whilst in some cases the reader may be from an academic background, its target audience is the workers at the coal face who may be less likely to read research but who's practise may be helped significantly by a less formal approach to writing backed up with examples from first hand experience that are sometimes amusing, often frustrating but I hope always interesting.

It's utility in various institutions has been surprising but also understandable. It has been my goal through my career to keep things simple and above all human. These are elements that often get lost when large numbers of people come together and form an institution and become often unknowingly institutional. I hope you find this interesting but above all, helpful.

David Bartlett, September 2017.

A/Page.

After a life in care and education David Bartlett could have chosen to write about the stories of the young people that influenced him.

Like the time his family were under police observation as a result of a contract on his life and the thought to be a credible threat to abduct his own children by known gangster families whose children were taken into care.

Or the time he transported a child in a military style operation and hid her at a secret location on the moors due to a credible threat of an honour killing. This was to avoid her being taken into protective police custody by people she would not know; a move that was thought could be devastating due to her fear of people.

The time he privately financed a trip for seven children and five staff to go to the Bahamas to swim with dolphins which helped his studies into the impact of working with animals as a therapeutic support.

Or the fact that for nearly thirty years he has made himself available to support his staff team 24/7 and every night when goes upstairs, he has two sets of clothes by his bed, one smart set in case he has to attend an emergency in town and one set of work clothes in case he has to see to his farm animals used by the service.

To do so each time in anything other than anonymous basic details threatens to compromise their security and confidentiality. Therefore, he has never courted fame or recognition. In this document he has done better than that, he has used what he has learnt from the over one hundred children he has looked after for many years and the thousands he has assessed and not only researched them and their situation but the theory behind what he has provided that has done so much to transform their lives.

Like the boy that went into racing and ended up looking after the horse he had reared as a foal when he was a child and then led it into the winners enclosure. The one that landed the best job in the world driving the biggest tractors on the road. Or just as importantly the ones that have gone on to have their own children and become parents themselves free of the need to be supervised by the authorities.

In this document David Bartlett tries to clarify some of the things that anyone working with people wished they could ask but dare not due to the nature of the subject. This is how those working with the most vulnerable children in society can make a difference not just now but the kind of life changing meaningful change that lasts for generations.

B/Paragraph.

Can you help those that don't know they need help? Can you change what appears to be ingrained into a person's personality? Can you help those that have nothing in the world, not even the concept of appropriate relationships, to change their stars? This document is about the way a service developed that has consistently for nearly thirty years done just that and the thinking that is now backed up by science that enabled the future to be changed for numerous young people.

C/Sentence.

The theory behind a remarkable service established in the North East of England over thirty years, looking after the most vulnerable children in society.

## Introduction

It's 2pm and the school day has been going well. I find myself faced with an angry adolescent with his adrenalin pumping and looking for confrontation. He is being confronted with things he doesn't understand and angry at having to deal with them. How I handle this situation will have a bearing on not only on the reaction of the pupils watching but also more significantly on the rest of his life.

I use my body gestures to demonstrate that 'there is no fear here mate, what ever you want to throw at me I can deal with, you're better off going about your business and do what I've asked you to do'. I maintain that position for some time watching us go around in circles seeing whose patience will break first. Over a brief amount of time that felt like forever I slowly saw him come to terms with his immediate environment where he could see the boundaries were not negotiable, they were solid and he began to slowly move towards me anxiously, could he renegotiate this situation? I find without thinking, just doing, my body gestures react and I soften my tone of voice, I reduce the harder non-negotiable posture I've been adopting and enter into negotiation with him. It's my way or no way, I'm the leader here, you follow me, that's how it works, if not go some place else, you'll come back when you're ready.

This adolescent continues to tests me out a couple of times but prefers the feeling of being accepted and wants to follow me, now with the knowledge I understand him. The stand off is over and I have a working arrangement that suits everyone and he will benefit from this for the rest of his life.

The group of students that have been watching this situation give a round of applause as I stroke his mane and put a head collar on this young horse. Yes didn't I say he's a horse and I'm in the round pen at Toy Top Farm (our outstanding school) and I've just completed a join-up session with a young horse that has hardly been handled and is at the start of his learning career.

This is not a book about horses, it's about children but the above is a good example of how we can learn from the environment around us and looking at other animals like horses we can begin to understand what they have in common.

Children are exactly that, they are children. They are small (if not in stature) vulnerable, inexperienced, they are unsure (sometimes frightened of the world around them) and reactive to their immediate environment. As is the horse above. Those with traumatised backgrounds have learnt all kinds of avoidance and survival strategies and with this in mind have adrenaline pumping through their veins at a level that negatively affects them even when they are in a relaxed state. With their limited understanding they are looking for grown ups, care givers, parents, teachers to guide them, nurture them, mould them and prepare them for the world around them and the life they are to lead.

This may seem idealistic, particularly if you work with children in the care of the local authority where your daily challenges have eroded that understanding. Where the management of your work has become so far removed from the task in hand that you've been lead to believe your job is to tolerate whatever comes your way and complete the correct procedures until it's time to go home. It's not, you are looking after children that need all of the above and every piece of legislation that has been drafted is designed to do that as best as possible, the question is how has it been interpreted and how has that interpretation affected your practice.

My name is David Bartlett, I began working with children in care before there was even a looked after system in the late 1980s. In 1990 at the age of twenty-four I started Pear Tree Projects, which has to date, opened six residential homes looking after some of the regions most difficult to place young people and in that time looked after over 115 Children on a long term basis. We run three farms one of which is our main school base. It became a registered school in 2005 and at the time of writing has only ever been rated outstanding by Ofsted.

We were recognised by the Investors in People programme to a gold standard of which at the time only 3 % of organisations were functioning at that level, becoming an investors in people champion.

(This was only to lapse when the need to make financial cuts came and I was faced with the choice of this or the children and staff Christmas party, Investors in People had to go and we had a ball instead.) We've been recognised by the 'International Values in Education Trust' and our homes operate at Ofsted's assessment between good to outstanding.

In January 2016 I received an MBE in the New Years Honours for founding the Company. It was the highlight of my career to be presented with the award by HRH Prince William at Buckingham Palace, to walk out of the Palace to a cheer for myself (and my family who have always played a big part) being met by some 15 of my students and my team of professionals who have had such a significant role in the organisation over many years. They were all to have their photographs taken with myself in front of the palace gates and following a good day out in London, all were to join us for a meal that night before the journey home.

I am extremely proud not only of the organisation, the people who have joined me on this endeavour and the young people who we have helped to build successful lives for themselves. Also the opportunity to be tasked with the challenge of looking after some of the most vulnerable children in society, for which we can do so much for, in many cases rebuild their lives. As long as we remember they are children and we are the grown ups and its our job, nigh responsibility to do so.

In the following pages I hope to be able to share with anyone who wants to know, some of the knowledge we have gained on the way. Much of this is described within a Pear Tree setting, however, there is a lot of information that is transferable to any setting and I hope you will use my thoughts, the kind of information I wish I had been given years ago to help you in any way they can. One of the difficulties is everyone thinks they should know everything from the beginning. That of course is not possible, so I will endeavour to provide what to some will seem obvious but to others who didn't dare ask, may be important to know.

I hope to explore the following

1. Children and young people.
  2. Receptiveness to intervention.
  3. Trauma and its consequences.
  4. Spectrum Of Harmful Sexual Behaviour.
  5. The care system and its effects good and bad.
  6. The Impact of our Environment.
  7. The Importance of Values.
  8. The value of activities.
  9. Helping children learn values through activities
  10. Equine assisted therapy.
  11. Positive Ignoring.
  12. Pulling the Plan Together
  13. A marginal gains approach to assessment.
- Conclusion.

## 1. Children and Young People

To start with let's think about what a child is and what a young person is? In terms of age, a child is 12 years and under, a young person is 13-18 years of age (in the eyes of the law a child is anyone under the age of 18). This is an important starting point as it is so vital we get it right. Young people don't always like being called children, even when they are acting like one and let's not make our children grow up too quickly by referring to them as young people, undermining their valuable status and changing our perception of their vulnerability. So often I come across people referring to them all as "YPs". This I fear has negative implications both in terms of how you then perceive them and then consequently your expectations of them. You would never refer to some one as a number and YP is just the same. Let's keep it simple and accurate, they are children or young people. Personally when speaking I still use a term frowned on by political correctness which has no objection to the term YP despite its difficulties as mentioned. The term I use maintains the informality often needed and leaves no doubt about what is being communicated and their potential vulnerability, they're all kids to me!

As children they are entitled to a childhood and one of my main aims throughout my career has been to give the children and young people that come our way the chance to have a childhood and experience the kind of nurturing and learning opportunities that we hope our own children experience. Indeed it should be the aim of all carers and professionals looking after children and young people that whatever their individual starting points, they have the opportunity to work towards and whenever possible achieve a normal developmental pathway.

One of the many highlights of my career was when one of my young people (who was nearly 18 years old!) had been out all night. Knowing he was due a talking to from myself, he telephoned me to make an appointment. As he was working, had passed his driving test and bought his own car, all whilst living in one of our children's homes, he subsequently then drove himself to meet me in my office. After he had his talking to he then drove home. What better example of normality, along with living up to responsibilities and demonstrating good values. His only crime was to not keep us informed, what nearly 18 year old doesn't want to be out all night if he has the chance? This young man was to come to us as an angry young man having been diagnosed as having ADHD and left us to join the Army. Guard duty outside Buckingham Palace for hours on end indicates to me we are too quick to put labels on kids to excuse poor care in poor environments at home or in care.

Whilst we aim to give these kids all the opportunities I mentioned above, the one thing we can't always give them depending on circumstance is love. The recent 'Guide to the National minimum standards 2015' say that they should be 'loved'. If you work in residential care or foster children on anything other than a long-term basis, you will know how difficult this can be. In my view this statement greatly undermines what love is and only goes to add confusion to an already difficult area.

The emotional bond between natural parents and their offspring is unique to them and for the child has a foundation entrenched in a lifetime of experience. For the parent, a shared experience through all stages of development. For those working in a professional context, dealing with kids who have had difficult and often traumatic experiences which have only gone to teach them that grown-ups cannot be trusted. Their behaviour is often challenging and can be distressful as you are dragged in to their life of negativity and dis-functionalism as well as having to remember policies procedures and protocols. At the same time maintain expected professional boundaries. It's therefore not helpful to have a document that tells you they must be 'loved'. In fact this is either treated with lip service or an ignorant interpretation of the meaning of the word at a superficial level or it is dismissed as an unachievable target.

What I believe the Guide to the National minimum standard for children's homes is trying to ensure is that all children and young people have the right and opportunity to be nurtured and experience quality relationships.

It is this nurturing that is so important to the child's development and crucial to any recovery that may be needed. It is this process of nurturing that is vital and can often be interpreted as loving or affectionate acts. These are the qualities of attentiveness, appropriate touch, hand on shoulder, occasional hug at appropriate times. This should never be as a matter of general practice when not heart felt. 'Plastic cuddles' as one of my manager used to call them only go to devalue the process, as despite what you may think at the time children can see through this and this then adds confusion to learning about genuine relationships.

Nurturing is about ensuring the correct clothing is worn for the weather, that the child doesn't look dishevelled (like no one cares for them). General good quality care includes, providing good wholesome food, homemade whenever possible and along with impromptu special meals that you know to be a favourite. This nurture can be expressed in simple acts, showing genuine interest in what they are doing. The surprise of a hot drink, with out asking, as the child wakes or at key times. These are the indicators of nurturing and give the relationship the building blocks of future development. The better the relationship the higher the quality of nurturing, the more a child will feel cared for and less 'unloved'.

*"It is high levels of nurturing that make them (the children) better"*

*– Dr Bruce Perry Hardwick Hall 2014*

There are many reasons children come into the care system, however the stark reality for many is (except for those who are in care as a result bereavement or through exceptional circumstances, no fault of the parents) they have yet to experience love. Particularly if they have been sexually abused (a chapter we will discuss in more detail later) the last person they thought loved them may have been the person who abused them and therefore there is an understandable expectation that the next person to say they love or even be kind to them might abuse them as well. This is why we say that relationships need to grow organically over time. If you rush in all gushing and promote yourself as the solution to their problem, you will only create understandable anxiety.

Creating a quality relationship is usually something we learn from our parents. When this for whatever reason has gone wrong, we need to learn it from someone else. The way we interact with the world around us and the people we share our lives with is the most important skill in life to learn and affects our life in every way. Having quality relationships with genuine honest interaction is vital. As this skill is learnt we increase the chances of these children finding the quality missing from their lives, love. Most likely in the relationships they create with the skills they have learnt from people like you, built on over time through positive shared experiences.

Attachment difficulties, which have been present in most of the children we have looked after, are caused when the primary care giver (usually the mother) is unable to bond with the child. This results in the child being unable to develop an attachment to the caregiver. Some children subsequently have difficulties forming relationships; others are desperate to find someone to attach to. ([www.simplypsychology.org/attachment.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/attachment.html).)

There will of course be many young people who professionals and foster carers are asked to care for, for whom you may think this is not possible. Their behaviour is so challenging that your prognosis for the future in terms of quality of life is bleak. The fear is that this behaviour is so entrenched that making any meaningful change is thought to be unlikely. It is at this point in our discussion that you need to know about an important fact that took myself over twenty years to discover and it took an out of work comedian to make known to the world. Ruby Wax in her first book following her graduating from Oxford University having studied MA in Mindfulness based cognitive therapy was to my knowledge the first academic to communicate in a simple way such an important discovery, Neuroplasticity. ([www.mindfulnessinschools.org](http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)) ([www.bemindful.org](http://www.bemindful.org))

This is the process the brain goes through as a child grows and experiences their world around them as it is. We are as many have always thought a product of our environment and experience, as each event good or bad goes to shape not only the physical make up of the brain but the way it works and processes information also. Whilst the significance and importance of early years development cannot be understated, it is important to know that this doesn't stop happening. So the child or young person who is in your care is an evolving being, they are not the fixed finished product and you are now part of the developmental process with all the responsibilities that goes with that. The more difficult and challenging the behaviour the more profound and clear the learning experience must be to help correct previously held negative beliefs.

Ruby describes the brain as a muscle, a muscle that needs exercise in certain ways to develop. Educationalists are familiar helping children stimulate their brain and encourage higher-level thinking. Likewise we need to exercise the brain in other ways as well. Before Ruby released her brilliant book 'A Sane New World' intuitively many of us valued the belief that all children should enjoy their childhood and have positive experiences to look back on. Now this is backed up with Neuroscience. Children adapt to and are responsive to the world around them soaking up information all of the time.

As Ruby explains even as adults whenever we see something new for the first time this grows neurones. If we experience negative experiences this grows negative muscle, whenever we experience positive experiences this grows positive muscle. In times of difficulty if someone has positive experiences to remember they can recall these memories to continue to grow positive thinking muscle. So positive stimulating environments with good experiences really do have a long lasting effect. I used to use the term 'compensatory experiences'; this implies something given as compensation for the wrong doings of others. With this new information we must think of positive experiences being required to remodel damage others have done as part of a rehabilitation process. For many years a commonly used expression was 'the child is at an impressionable age' the fact is this is scientifically proven to be so and we continue to be mouldable (to lesser degrees) the older we get.

'You can't teach an old dog new tricks,' but you can help them get the most out of the ones they know.

So why is the above so important? It is because we may have discussion around the degree of impact we may have with children and young people. The debate about nature via nurture is still important to consider, but the issue of Neuroplasticity gives scientific credence to our optimism regarding potential capacity for worthwhile meaningful change. This is why every social worker and teacher in the country goes to work.

## 2. Receptiveness to intervention

The nature via nurture argument is as I said is an important one to consider. Matt Ridley In his excellent book aptly called Nature Via Nurture was able to identify where this is relevant to those of us at the coalface looking after difficult and or traumatised kids. His studies showed that there is a gene that affects different outcomes. Child 'A' from dis-functional background placed in a negative environment with negative role models will behave in a negative way. Placed in a positive environment with positive role models will still behave in a negative way. Child 'B' from a dis-functional background placed in a negative environment with negative role models will behave in a negative way. Placed in a positive environment with positive role models will respond to that environment in a positive way. This is not a statement to justify a genetic argument but to reinforce the point that so many of the children that often get written off and placed within poor quality environments could do so much better if given the chance to be in a positive environment.

It is very much these children that we try to (and generally succeed) in identifying at the point of referral and assessment. They are the ones that benefit from our positive structured environment and in some cases (probably more than you think possible) make a full recovery to the point of accessing that all important normal developmental pathway. Many may not be academically able but they can sustain relationships and hold down employment which in turn leads to quality of life. These are also the children whom there is little hope for if they remain in a negative environment which is usually the result of dis-functional parents and then the care system which doesn't account for such an important assessment and in fact usually directs its resources to the ones that cause the most difficulties regardless of the prospect of change at the time or any time in the future.

Politicians would be advised to stop chasing those that don't respond and in fact love to be chased only learning on the way that their strategy to gain attention and notoriety has succeeded and therefore why change what to them has been a successful strategy? In my experience as outlined at the very beginning of this document, the best way to engage someone that doesn't want to engage is to walk away, withdraw and usually they will come after you trying to engage your self, this time on your terms with a much better chance of achieving change. How, what is the thinking behind this? Before we look at how we can attempt to tackle some of these issues we need to look at what can go wrong and what kind of effects trauma can have? To conclude within this chapter 'Receptivity' is absolutely the key to creating a positive environment and worthwhile change for the children in that environment. Therefore accurate assessment of individuals and robust management of group dynamics is imperative.

### 3. Trauma and its consequences

When we talk about trauma, we mean significant harmful events usually over a sustained period of time (although it could be a major one-off event) encompassing one or more of the elements that are referred to as abuse;

Emotional Abuse

Physical Abuse

Sexual abuse - (Sexual Offences Act 2003)

Emotional Abuse - the persistent behaviour that through use of words, actions or intimidation goes to cause distress and negative impact on the victim. This includes all forms of bullying and consequently the undermining and running down of the victim. The victim may not realise the impact on them which may be evident in their personality and the way they see themselves and the world around them. Survivors of this kind of abuse with out help may find themselves always promoting the negative and this has impact on everyday situations. As Ruby Wax explains being alert to the negative is something left over from caveman days as it was the negative that represented a danger that could kill you. Therefore we are naturally hard-wired to receive negative information much more quickly and profoundly than positive information, growing negative brain muscle on the way. This has to be kept in perspective and not allowed to rule your life. The work Ruby and others have done on promoting mindfulness exercises which is now being used in schools as a way of helping young people (and adults) to be aware of their own thoughts and subsequently take control of their lives is a significant recent development and its importance cannot be understated.

Physical Abuse - includes any form of corporal punishment, striking, beating, kicking or any action that goes to cause deliberate physical harm. These children will often have either an overtly high pain threshold or overtly low pain threshold. Sometimes both depending on the circumstances at the time. Physically abusive imprinting is relevant in many as their response to most situations is based on violence.

Sexual abuse - sexual acts against the victim in the case of children without consent which cannot be given.

Over the years as I became tuned into the issues the children and young people who come to us present, it is my belief that they present an aura in their behaviour and response that indicates the kind of trauma they have experienced. Emotional abuse is extremely damaging on its own and presents damaged children, however when this is coupled with physical abuse the effects are more profound. To my knowledge it is not possible for a child to experience physical abuse without there being significant elements of emotional abuse also.

Likewise when emotional abuse is coupled with sexual abuse the effects are significant and profound. Again there is no sexual abuse that doesn't involve emotional abuse. As with emotional abuse sometimes the children are unaware that they are being abused as this behaviour has often been present throughout their lives and they have grown up with a culture which has promoted inappropriate sexual beliefs. Changing these beliefs is one of the most important challenges we face, which we will discuss later.

When sexual abuse is coupled with physical abuse the effects are catastrophic! The impact on a child's development is taken to another level of devastation. Whilst we may consider the kind of experiences these poor souls have experienced in case studies, the impact on the brain is such that Neuroplasticity cannot take place due to the toxic stress experienced, resulting in the child's development being stuck at the age the trauma was experienced. Therefore resulting in long lasting physical harm.

The consequences can result in learning difficulties and or mental health difficulties, the inability to form relationships, anxiety, poor self esteem, challenging behaviour and violence and aggression. All because someone wanted sexual gratification and they were prepared to fight a child to get it.

### **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. (Injury)**

This is something often associated with veteran soldiers but is highly relevant to child abuse also. Recently I had the honour to meet a man called Monty Roberts. He is the internationally renowned horseman who has had significant influence over my ideas for over twenty years. Initially it was his work with horses that brought him notoriety however he is also a highly successful foster parent and his work with helping veteran soldiers recover from Post Traumatic Stress is ground-breaking. In one meeting he helped crystallise a view on this subject which is so in keeping with what I had already written above. He asks the question 'Is it a disorder?' This implies something that you can't recover from. The term that should be used is Post Traumatic Stress 'Injury'. Indeed you can recover from an injury and this more accurately describes what has happened and allows optimism for what can happen next.

### **Sexual imprinting.**

Our earliest sexual experiences are profound and leave an indelible imprint on our brain. The old fashioned idea that parents want their children, girls in particular to reach the coming of age (at 21 when she is physically and physiologically equipped to deal with sex and marriage and economically self reliant) as virgins and marry their 'Prince Charming' in the most romantic of circumstances with fireworks going off as in a Disney film, has like most old wives tales an element of sense. As what the parent is hoping for is that the young person is to have the most positive experience at a stage of development they are emotionally equipped to deal with.

In times gone by when this was the expectation the absence of this ideal could if not would result in pregnancy (due to the absence of modern birth control) and if too early could result in death for the new-born infant and young mother. At very least they could have experienced significant hardship.

These old fashioned values were designed to guide society for reasons so far removed from our lives today we can't really understand or appreciate them as they were intended.

It is these early experiences that determine the kind of person you will most likely want to have as a partner, the kind of relationship you may have and how you conduct that relationship. The qualities you find sexually arousing? If you're unsure about how profound this is, look at your partner or someone you find attractive. Look at their qualities, gender the colour of their hair and style, the characteristics that make them who they are. Now look at someone the opposite in all of the above. Do you find them sexually attractive, if not how much 'therapy' would it take for you to do so?

What then if your earliest experiences are of a man or woman (at one point 7 out of 10 of the children we knew to have been sexually abused were thought to have been abused by females) the same sex or opposite sex, three to five times your body weight and you're only a child. The person you are having sex with is not the love of your life that you have dreamt about for a long time but someone unknown, friends of your parents or even worse your parents or siblings, the very people you should be able to trust. The consequences are many and profound but to start with a common factor among many of the children who come to our service is that they are confused about their sexuality and in some cases an overwhelming desire to recreate the circumstances of their abuse as if in an attempt to reconstruct memories that it wasn't in fact all that bad. This then results in the cycle of abuse being continued as these recreated circumstances often involve other children. It is in my view negligence to think that sexual abuse is not going to have an impact on their own sexual development and relationships.

Another common factor is difficulties around toilets, from enuresis, encopresis and in extreme cases smearing. Also often toilet training and refusing to clean themselves we believe in an attempt to make themselves undesirable to any potential abuser. We once looked after a brother and sister who for good reason were placed in different homes within our organisation. They both independently and unknown to the other volunteered to clean the toilet. This was reacted to initially by the staff at the time as evidence of how hard they were trying to please but this had gone to another level and was symptomatic of their difficulty dealing with their own victimisation. Staff were instructed not to allow this and as an opportunity to demonstrate how they were going to be protected from the worst job in the house and subsequently anything else that may arise.

The challenges these difficulties pose are many and complex but also straight forward if you don't allow preconceived ideas about political correctness to compound the issue. First of all we encourage them as children and young people under the age of consent that they can be whoever they want to be and not of fixed sexuality due to the abuse perpetrated against them and as a result of being in our care having taken sex off the agenda they have plenty of time to decide. We teach them to respect all boundaries and rules including sexual boundaries and boundaries around all kinds of relationships and importantly what's right and wrong. Also we promote the feeling that although we are sorry the child has experienced the abuse they have, now they are in a safe place with good relationships there is no excuse for not maintaining the highest standards of personal hygiene. The past cannot be an excuse for the rest of your life.

Whilst these examples are not universal to everyone who has been abused as many may suffer in silence and develop coping strategies to be able to get on with their lives, the above is an example of my experience of looking after many who have had difficulties.

Whilst I don't want to discuss ways of helping in this section as it will be discussed in more depth later on but to put the above into context now, one of the exercises I do with our kids is to get them to draw a grid with 70 squares. Then I ask them to colour in the number that represents their age. With this complete I say to them the hard truth of life, 'some time in the future your going to die. We all are going to die, if you're lucky you might live to seventy. If you're really lucky you might improve on this. As the first ever kid I helped to look after in Pear Tree was killed in a car crash in his early thirties let's agree you will be lucky to get to 70. Therefore looking at the grid with squares each representing a year in your life, do you want to ruin your chances of having a good life now when you've got all these boxes to go because of something someone (or many) has done in one of these coloured boxes.' Hard tough love is so very often needed and this is just one example that helps children put their lives in perspective.


Example of a 13 year old's grid.

## **Child sexual exploitation. (CSE)**

This is an area that has been promoted to huge significance recently as technology and social media allow contact (and sexual contact in the form of sexting) between people so easy and to huge numbers. In my view, and that of some of my colleagues, it is important to differentiate between sexually active adolescents who have knowingly embarked on a lifestyle, wrong as it may be and children who suffer sexual abuse. The level of impact on a child's development as a result of toxic stress or years of inappropriate sexual behaviour and beliefs is very different to that of promiscuity with some form of trade off in the form of street credibility, alcohol, drugs and fast cars or whatever it may be.

Recently my office took a call from a social worker wanting to urgently place a 16 year old girl with us, due to the risk of sexual exploitation. When I enquired as to the details, this girl was going off in cars with older young people. The social worker was exasperated by the girl's mother who saw no harm in it and as a result they were wanting to take her into care for us to put her right. On enquiring about other contextual information I was informed that was basically it!

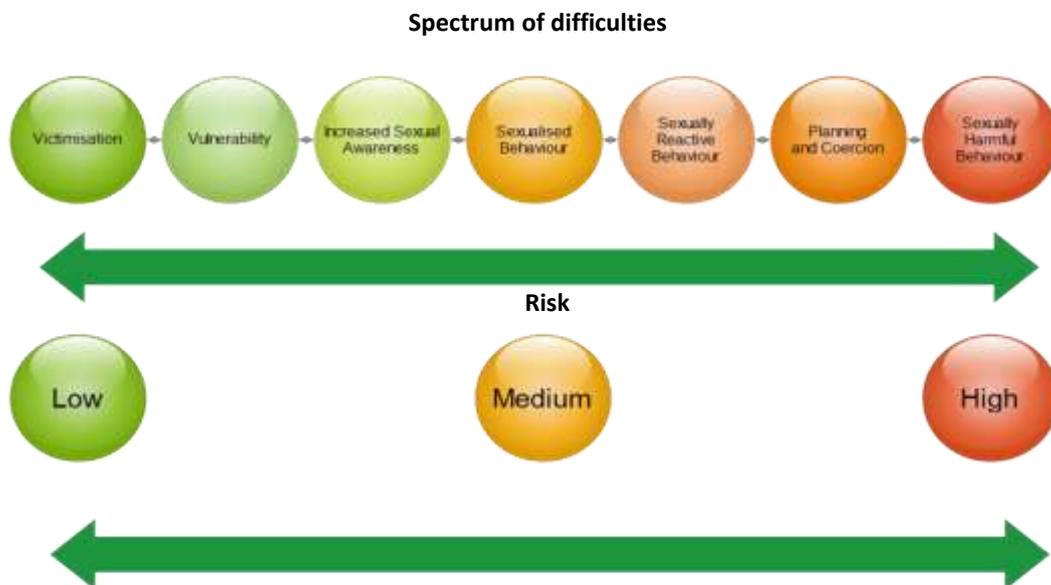
You can only help people if they want to be helped, this girl was above the age of consent and had no learning difficulties or impairments. She had chosen a lifestyle that others didn't like but it was her choice. To remove her from the family home and place her in a local residential home with all that goes with that, could have been extremely damaging in itself, with little chance of reducing the behaviour. The result could be increased absconding and most probably broadening her social networks adding to the risk. It was because of these factors the social work team wanted to send her away from her area to a 'therapeutic' type placement (like Pear Tree) to get the help she needed, that she neither wanted or asked for. Therapy can't be imposed, there are no magic pills or tricks. A therapeutic approach which we provide, as I've made clear earlier the child or young person must be receptive to help and want to change their situation (whether they realise it or not or whether they can vocalise it or not.) In these circumstances by offering an alternative lifestyle those vulnerable and ready for some form of intervention may be rescued and helped to move on. Those that have embarked on a chosen lifestyle of sex drugs and rock and roll and wish to continue, make it extremely difficult to offer an attractive alternative. Somehow good care and activities, whatever they are, just don't compete. Once young people choose to have sex, why stop?

Right now I can feel the numbers of social workers that are saying "They didn't choose to, they didn't know what they were doing, they got sucked into it!" A sentiment I appreciate, however, there ultimately is a choice at some point in the process. When assessing young people for their suitability for a placement at Pear Tree I am trying to ascertain whether they will choose to buy into our solution to their problems or not? Those that genuinely have had no choice usually do, those that 'have chosen' to generally don't. The younger the child the more likely the assessment will be positive towards a placement being offered.

To add to the complexity of the situation we have had children referred to us under the banner of sexual exploitation who were in fact abused children looking to be rescued and helped. The above is not an argument about not helping children who are involved in CSE but getting the right kind of help and support. However, it is a concern of mine that by spreading our resources so thinly in an way that in most cases isn't achievable, we lessen the resources available to those that are in greater need and receptive to help.

#### 4. Spectrum of Harmful Sexual Behaviour.

First of all we need to remember that as human beings we are sexual beings with processes and mechanisms to drive our sexual behaviour. It therefore is important to consider what is normal sexual behaviour (Brook traffic light tool, a guide to identifying sexual behaviours [www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)) The children we have had experience of looking after who have been sexually abused have very much been awoken to sex, sexual behaviour and grooming behaviour prior to abuse. This can be evident in children who make themselves available to be abused through to sexualised behaviour which can include exposure of their body parts, masturbating in public places or places to be seen. This behaviour if left unchallenged can develop into sexualised behaviour that involves other children or young people, possibly in a mutual way. When this involves pre-adolescent children and they behave in a sexualised way without understanding why, we refer to them as 'sexually reactive' if this is also unchallenged and the growing adolescent begins to understand why he behaves the way he or she does and begins to develop strategies to create opportunities to be sexual, ultimately this behaviour can develop into harmful behaviour, sexually harmful behaviour. This escalation of behaviour can be considered against our Spectrum of Harmful Sexual Behaviour.



As this illustration indicates, there is a correlation between behaviour and risk. In addition, there can be (and in my experience there usually is) a correlation between early inappropriate sexualised behaviour and this escalating to sexually harmful behaviour without some form of intervention. In the case of sexually reactive children (pre-adolescent, sexualised behaviour without understanding what they are doing), all that may be required is to take them out of the sexualised environment they are familiar with, take sex off the agenda and give them guidance on the rules around sexual behaviour, age of consent, relationships etc. For younger children this usually sees their sexualised behaviour calm down.

For young people this can be harder particularly if brought up in an incestuous environment of inter familiar sexual abuse that may include extended family and friends also. As adolescents who have been sexually awoken and sexually active, without intervention, why stop? To put it into some kind of perspective, without minimising the seriousness of sexual abuse, imagine you have been brought up to brush your teeth with your right hand and then you are taken into care and someone who you've just met tells you that this is morally wrong and you must only brush your teeth with your left hand. This everyday living activity is, too most, completely normal. For many children, regretfully sexual abuse is considered to be this normal

If you can understand the confusion, now imagine you've got learning difficulties?

Initially the first step on that road to successful intervention is to stop any further incidents of inappropriate sexual behaviour. Whilst these children and young people present risks to themselves and others, in a well supervised and structured environment this can be achieved, again the key issue is the responsiveness to help. The higher the risk the more responsiveness is required to keep within well managed supervised boundaries.

The recent 'Report of the parliamentary inquiry into support and sanctions for children who display harmful sexual behaviour' (2016 ) asks us to consider and agree a common language, and makes the following conclusions regarding the following terms:

Harmful sexual behaviour - this is an overarching term that describes all kinds of sexual behaviour that may be harmful to the subject, including sexual language, the child being coerced online or sexting, through to serious sexual offences for both the perpetrator and the victim, as the behaviour is harmful to the perpetrator also.

Sexually harmful behaviour - by changing the order of the same words the inference changes to behaviour against others that is harmful to them, the behaviour is owned by the subject who as a result creates a victim in the process.

The similarity in the language is bound to lead to confusion and misquoting, however this description is probably quite accurate. Having considered the number of referrals that are emailed to us to consider, social workers already struggle with this subject placing children that are at risk of CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) in the sexually harmful behaviour category, a category very far removed from their actual difficulties.

The report also identifies sexual behaviour as a 'continuum'! Continuum/Spectrum? We have described this as a spectrum (uniquely and ahead of the thinking) since 1995 and the word spectrum is more universally understood, people considering other issues such as autism are familiar with the same concept. Therefore, I see no reason to change our language in this regard.

Worryingly the report also identifies the need to develop a way of categorising and prioritising sexual behaviour in order of harmfulness. I say worryingly as this has been available for years in the form of regularly used risk assessment processes.

Our systems are based on the work done in the 1990's by Professor Finley Graham (and others) with the 'Derwent Initiative'. The type and nature of young people's behaviour has become more complex and has developed in ways unforeseen in the 90s with the development of the digital age, sexting and social media but the nature and intention of the behaviour is the same as human behaviour - human nature is a constant. In my experience these systems are already used by the judicial system when it comes to sentencing.

Therefore early sexualised behaviour among young children such as exposure of genitals or early masturbation must be considered as a low risk type of behaviour.

Pre-adolescent children trying to be sexual with other children without understanding the significance and consequence (sexually reactive) has to be considered a medium risk and demonstrates a need to provide early intervention to stop the escalation of behaviour along the spectrum.

A young person trying to use their sexuality in the full knowledge that it is harmful to those that they engage or coerce must be considered a high risk. The level of concern can then escalate from that point depending on the nature of the behaviour. For example trying to engage younger children into sending images of themselves naked to circulate to others is wrong, quite rightly a criminal offence and should be dealt with by the law.

A young person coercing a younger child to engage in a sexual way with exposure of genitals and touching or masturbation, clearly is more concerning.

A young person coercing a child to have penetrative sex in whatever form is significantly more concerning.

A young person using physical force to have penetrative sex is at the highest level of concern.

Interestingly enough the report identifies the difficulties professionals and others have in terms of understanding when the person using their sexuality to harm others is a female. This echoes our experience as the female is usually only ever seen as a victim even if there is clearly an intention and motivation to harm others. It is the context and intent that must be considered in every circumstance.

This behaviour can range from females engaging in behaviour in exactly the same way as described above. However there is also another aspect to behaviour of young women in the desire to engage and court the attention of male peers, up to the point of wanting a sexual relationship and then at the point of having sex, claiming rape.

The reasons for this can be complex. The girl in this context a victim of earlier sexual abuse may really want a close intimate relationship. The process that happens at the point of intercourse can only be known by those involved, did she change her mind at the last moment, did he force himself on her, or did she not understand what a normal sexual relationship is and use a previously abusive experience as a blueprint believing the next event to have been in a different context to what the young man thought?

Did the previous abusive experience result in a disclosure that, by its nature, results in a flurry of intense professional activity, which is such a powerful experience. The girl believes the only way to recreate such intense attention is to once again claim to have been abused or manufacture a situation for abuse to occur.

In our experience this kind of behaviour is often repeated but the context is never and cannot be considered in a full investigation which can have damaging consequences on both parties development. Again, in my experience justice usually prevails but the process can be damaging to all concerned.

Another scenario is that of underage girls, who may look much older than they are, putting themselves in situations where they engage males in sexual activity. This is done with full knowledge and intent that they plan to report their experiences shortly afterwards. The consequence of this on the males is, in simple terms, a way of using their sexuality to entrap others with negative consequences. This is never seen as sexually harmful behaviour but for some unsuspecting young men most certainly will be.

This reinforces the need for adults, looking after young men, to ensure they are well briefed as to the importance of self-protection skills and the fact that 'no means no' right up to the point of and during intercourse. Even a consent form signed 5 minutes prior to sex allows a 5 minute window for her or him to change their mind. The only safe sex is with long-standing, meaningful and trusting relationships, with the importance placed on the quality of those relationships.

### **Disclosures of abuse.**

This leads nicely on to the subject of dealing with disclosures. When a child with a disrupted childhood decides they trust you enough to talk about their abuse, this is a rewarding and intense moment. It is rewarding because it means you have developed that all important trusting relationship, to the point where it has been successful enough for them to build up the courage to tell you what will be painful to express. At this point it is important not to do 'deals' like promising to keep the disclosure a secret, as what happens following receipt of their information must be followed through with the information passed on to other agencies. It's important to remain calm and relaxed and keep your heart rate steady so the child is not impacted on by your anxiety. 'Stay calm and carry on'!

Over the years most disclosures usually take place when you least expect them and usually when you are involved in another task such as baking a cake or driving in the car.

Dr Bruce Perry talks about the significance of being sat side by side (as opposed to facing each other) and the value of interactions on these occasions. A car journey is a classic example of this as is fishing or similar calm events when the child believes you are concentrating on something other than them.

It is important to remember what was said accurately and be able to report/document it accordingly. Also, be aware that children often test-out the grown-ups around them to see how you will handle the information they give you and often prepare you and themselves for the process. On one occasion a young person disclosed serious sexual abuse by a number of adults in his home area. They were subsequently arrested and questioned. Thanks to the skill of an experienced policeman who picked away at the story, the truth became apparent.

The young man really wanted to disclose the abuse he had suffered at the hands of his father (who was subsequently arrested, convicted and sentenced to 8 years in prison for the abuse.) He was scared of his father and of the repercussions if his father found out he had told and nothing was done about it. Therefore he spoke about his abuse with great accuracy but replaced his father in the accounts with people he knew, but also knew they could not, would not harm him, to see how we all dealt with the information. The consequences for those individuals was, for a while, 'horrific'.

In Matthew Sayed's brilliant book 'Black Box Thinking', he discusses the difficulties in relying on evidence based on memory. He explains that memories are a chemical process in the brain and his example, which is not dissimilar to that above, "You can imagine having tea with David Beckham, you can later recall thoughts of memories of having tea with David Beckham, it doesn't mean it ever happened."

This is not to be dismissive of disclosures but entirely objective, as the policeman in our above example. However it is important to remember that whilst it is all right to seek information and ask for clarification of what the child is saying you must not allow your discussion to cross the line and to 'investigate' as only the police can do this. Any leading questions or pressure to provide more than what the child wants to say, may compromise any forthcoming legal action.

### **Organic difficulties.**

These areas of concern are as a result of something that cannot be altered. For example as we have said earlier children can develop learning difficulties for a variety of reasons but through good care and education can be helped to develop and make huge progress from their starting points. However children with a learning disability may be helped but will not be able to achieve the 'normal developmental pathway' we hope for. Likewise children who may have **Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**, Asperger's and others ([www.austismresearchcentre.com](http://www.austismresearchcentre.com)) depending on the severity of their difficulties may also only make limited progress. With these kind of difficulties the focus is on helping them adapt to their environment and if necessary altering the environment to suit them. Here the use of carefully structured language is so important. Constantly positive and uplifting which is difficult to achieve all of the time, particularly if they are encountering difficulties and you are the subject of their frustration. Again a subject we will discuss later.

One of the complicated factors to take into account here is that children that have had disrupted childhoods may present behaviour that is similar to and indicates organic difficulties. Also children with organic difficulties can present as being problematic in the same way as children from disrupted childhoods. Often these children's true difficulties aren't recognised until they are in a positive environment where it is possible to assess their response.

One child to come our way was extremely disruptive leading a chaotic life with his mentally ill mother. Only when he was in our environment could we see that he wasn't just displaying autistic like symptoms he was genuinely autistic. The wonky walls of the beautiful old farm house he was living in were causing him genuine distress. In addition to this he was also a very naughty boy.

As strategies to manage difficult children are needed to be different to those with organic problems this can be difficult to manage in the same home. These differences in strategy are around experiential learning where you create an environment where children can learn from their mistakes, and either suffer the consequences for poor behaviour or receive praise for good behaviour. Straight forward puppy dog training, as I often call it. It is therefore important that if a child behaves in a hurtful way to another child or grown up, that a genuine honest response is delivered. The child needs to know the hurt he or she has caused. For children with organic difficulties they are much less likely to learn from their mistakes and may encounter the same issue over and over again and respond to it the same way. In the case of learning social cues and responses they may never be able to read them at all. The child from a disruptive background who displays autistic like symptoms but isn't autistic, if placed in an environment where there isn't the importance placed on learning and situations are just managed to avoid problems will never likely learn even if he or she could.

Once again the importance of on going accurate assessment that takes into account environmental factors is so important. Likewise the review of group dynamics and progress of individuals within that group as they grow up and more is known is an important factor. For this particular young boy we had to encourage his local authority to find a facility that specialises in autism. Sometimes knowing you've done your best, all you can and when to move a child on, regardless of the financial consequence to your organization, is all part of being professional.

## 5. The Care System and its effects good and bad.

If society is faced with rescuing children and young people who have experienced the kind of trauma described above, it should be assumed that we are going to try to provide something radically different from what their experience is in everything from the physical environment to the culture present within that environment. The stark reality is for the vast majority (the only exception are the extremely lucky) this is not the case. The usual route for these multi-troubled kids is that they are often reluctantly taken into care after everything possible to keep them at home has been explored often against all reasonable odds of success.

They first find themselves in a foster family who very rarely are physically and emotionally equipped or trained to deal with the traumatised kids placed with them. The motivation is often driven by financial incentives or a desire to contribute emotionally in the hope there is an emotional return from the child or children placed with them who are neither equipped nor able to offer anything in return. Of all the children I have assessed in foster care only a very few have been cared for by people who fully understand the difficulties and are resilient enough to care for these kids 24/7, something most professionals wouldn't even contemplate. These people are absolutely solid gold, of the rarest kind who on every occasion has left me humbled by their efforts. The fact I am there in the first place means it has already for whatever reason gone wrong.

In all but a few circumstances the result is the children are moved on to the next available foster carer for their turn to experience the inevitable emotional trauma that is the expected reaction as these children try to drag you into their dysfunctional world of inappropriate beliefs and behaviour. This cycle can be repeated many times before other options are considered in an effort to demonstrate that the less expensive services like foster care can't cope. Eventually they find themselves in residential care.

Residential care homes are an expensive provision. The largest of the costs are staffing costs. In days gone by the most commonly thought way of reducing the costs per child was to increase the number of children looked after in a home at any one time. We are still going through court procedures for abuse and arguably institutional abuse from the 60s 70s and 80s as the impact of these large institutions allowed a culture of sexual abuse and bullying to prosper. The fact is whenever you have large numbers you impact on the behaviour of the children being looked after as their difficulties are often not managed and this then impacts on others.

This impact is also evident in the behaviour of staff teams that develop coping strategies to deal with the environment created, some of these strategies are inappropriate and institutional which in turn has a knock on effect on the quality of care provided to the young people they are tasked with looking after. In the mayhem created those with a desire to abuse children, before the rigorous safeguarding procedures we have today were developed, found an environment where their behaviour could go undetected for years with a regular supply of young people conditioned to accept abuse and suffer in silence.

The recent (2016) BBC Panorama documentary looking at violence perpetrated by staff in a detention centre is evidence that the coping strategies developed by the staff to deal with the extreme levels of violence these damaged young people present (a level you would have to live with and experience over a period of time to fully appreciate and understand) had morphed into strategies that crossed the line of any form of acceptability.

This reminds us that the effects of institutional behaviour on staff and children are not a matter of historical fact but are relevant today and will most likely be in the future again if the lessons of managing large numbers of staff tasked with managing large numbers of young people again presenting the behaviour of their dysfunctional upbringing are not remembered.

It is common sense that young people learn from other young people and therefore the need to manage disrupted childhood development, in an environment of positive examples, from which they can learn how to overcome their past is somewhat obvious but I feel is rarely managed properly. In the business of running organisations, 'systems' become all important as we rely on them to manage the unexpected or unforeseen. In the process without senior managers leading from the front to monitor the systems and its impact on the children and maintain that level of human contact remembering our starting point that children and young people are just that, children or young people, the focus gets lost in the system as the system becomes the priority.

Examples of this are many but a good one in our own environment and my personal experience was from the area you would expect would know all about this as regulators of systems to monitor practise 'OFSTED' . In one of our small homes looking after only three children, young girls. The inspector who arrived at lunchtime stayed in the sleep-in room / office until late in the evening with the girls trying to go to sleep with a strange man in the room next to them, working through the administration of the home unaware of the anxiety he had created with the girls as he believed the only evidence as to the quality of the home was in the administration and didn't talk to the girls at all during his inspection. As a result of this we had to make it an expectation with my managers that this kind of conduct would be challenged and inspectors would only be able to stay into the evening if they were having supper with the children or watching activities and spending time with the kids. If they wanted to study the records they should come in good time and do this in office hours, with reasonable variations on that theme. This has only happened once but indicates a level of thinking. On a positive note Ofsted has over the years been significant in helping to develop worthwhile systems and practice and we have learnt an enormous amount from each inspection. Honestly we have! Look at every inspection as a massive learning opportunity.

Today we have moved on significantly but now other factors are relevant. The business world has become interested in the sector and many homes are owned by hedge fund/financial organisations whose priority is to its shareholders and the influence of accountants is significant. What do accountants know about looking after children in care? Whilst an accountant will feel they are being diligent monitoring costs this may be at the expense of the very positive experiences we need to provide as discussed at the beginning.

What a good businessman like myself who is focused on the bigger picture (and I take no shame in discussing it) will tell you is that it is never good business not to do your best or to do a bad job. In our business the focus needs to move from keeping to contracts and service specifications to childhood development at which point the cost of a worthwhile experience is a seriously good investment as children get better and other costs reduce accordingly.

From the child's point of view imagine you've had the worst of starts in life and suffered all that we've talked about above. You are moved from numerous foster carers all of whom you hoped might be the solution to your problem and then for whatever reason you are moved into a large institution occupied by older more experienced young people with similar backgrounds and difficulties. The staff work shifts which can inhibit the chance to develop relationships with people other than those that are constant, the other problem young people and the professionals that are responsible for you hope you're going to get better?

In my experience, within the world of residential care a consistent culture has been created in all but a few homes. Whilst the staff are well meaning, they often have very little to offer other than emotional support, accommodation, food and a clothing allowance. What we have to remember and keep sight of is the fact that this culture is an alternative to the rest of the world. It is not 'normal'. It is not normal for children living in any home not to have a regular age-appropriate sleep pattern or not to have any meaningful daytime occupation. To be out all night, smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs and having under age sex.

Normal is not feral, normal is living up to responsibilities to yourself and others, society would cease to exist if it was. Yet the majority of people working in residential care, all too quickly, lose sight of normality and accept this is what you have to deal with if you want to work with 'these kinds of kids'. Often people have no vision of how things could be in a different environment with different expectations. Failings and difficulties are reported as fact and in the use of 'institutionalised' language, professionals often just focus on managing current needs and lose sight of the need to challenge and change the behaviour itself.

During one assessment we set out the expectations (along with the potential rewards) to a child in respect of the fact that she couldn't smoke in our homes or with us at anytime as she was only thirteen. The fact that we wouldn't tolerate her behaviour (ie the smoking) was interpreted by the residential staff that we wouldn't work with her. There was no concept or understanding of setting targets and expectations to bring about change.

Once again the importance of receptiveness is the key issue. The sad thing is there are many children living in homes with low or no expectations who are responsive to change but the home is setup to manage those that are not. Yet receptiveness (as opposed to a fixed mind-set) is something hardly acknowledged and rarely assessed as part of any admission process.

When homes are able to overcome these difficulties, manage group dynamics, put boundaries in place and have expectations and structure in a controlled environment. Then a residential care experience can have a significant role to play as this avoids many of the pit-falls that go with living with another family in foster care.

So having considered all of the problems how can we help these kids and what can we do to make it better?

I started working with kids in care in one of the largest secure units in the country in the late 1980s. At the age of 21 I was seconded as a young professional artist as part of a project sponsored by Northern Arts. Following the success of this pilot scheme I was asked to go back and join the teaching team. As a young man at the start of my career I was amazed by the emotional strength of the team of teachers and their camaraderie against adversity in the most challenging of any school environment. Here violence and chaos was part of everyday life but the resolve of the teachers meant there were glimmers of hope and worthwhile progress every day also. It was in the school staff room that the idea of starting a school on a farm was born as an attempt to create the opposite environment to that which I was part of at the time and seeing how the environment was creating as many problems as it was solving. All be it has to be recognised that some children need a physically secure environment to protect them and others, the size of the groups is important for all the reasons stated above. It was the desire to address these issues that led to the start of Pear Tree.

*A worthwhile document to consider is 'The Authentic Warmth Dimension of Professional Childcare' by RJ Cameron and C Maginn. This is an excellent document, well worth considering as they set out from the beginning "In a nutshell, the challenge for social work is to provide the quality of care and support that is to be found not just in the average family home but the most functional of families". In other words we are to do better than the ordinary if we are to make any headway at all.*

Within a few years we had various projects which revolved around a small residential home for only three children with access to a small farm for activities. The plan which developed and has been consistent throughout was based on the following in this order

Environment  
Values  
Activities  
Assessment

This soon developed into the refined plan we have now which remains:

Within Pear Tree, there are 15 fundamental principles that support and underpin the work we do, they are:

ENVIRONMENT - The place children work, play and sleep.

VALUES - How they interact alongside the people they live with and the community (internal and external) that they are in contact with.

EDUCATION - TRAINING - ACTIVITIES

What we encourage them to do while they are living in our homes. How we hope they learn from the experiences we offer.

These systems are organised by the company at a management level but are required to be maintained by all, for the benefit of all.

PROTECT - Children only make progress when they feel really safe. Safe from their past lives, safe from any threat which can include other children, external community, the broader Pear Tree community, or other residents within the home in which they live.

(This is our first task, caring for our children, it's our first job, if we don't get that right, we don't get anything right. That's how as a society we will be judged) (Barack Obama, 16/12/2012).

ENGAGE - The way in which staff employed interact with the children in our care and offer role-model leadership to groups of children, or individuals on a one to one basis, offering support and guidance within the context of a nurturing parental relationship, or as a teacher/instructor.

OCCUPY - The next stage of a developing process is to provide experiences from which children can learn. Whether this is by playing a game, taking them out for the day or supporting in education. It is this process that transforms the relationship from one of supervisor and young person to that of mutually shared experience.

RELATE - As a result of all of the above, the opportunity to develop a trusting therapeutic relationship.

INFLUENCE - Only when all of the above are in place, in the order set out, will staff of any designation be in a position to influence the child towards making that all important meaningful change.

The above is the responsibility of all staff, at all levels, and must be a priority at all times, whether this is working with the children directly or at a management level to organise.

Within the school/education context, remembering that there is a symbiotic relationship between the residential homes and the school, each one dependant on the other, the following are required to be promoted by all:

INSPIRE - The need to create an environment where children are excited to be involved in their education and look forward to the next lesson or event. Where they can make the connection between the task at hand and their future, both immediate (whilst in school in terms of what they can do next) and the longer term. (Inspiration leads to aspiration HRH Queen Elizabeth II).

MOTIVATE - Only if a child is inspired will he or she be motivated to want to learn more.

EDUCATE - Only when children want to learn do they actually make worthwhile progress, remembering the words of Monty Roberts, "There is no such thing as teaching, only learning, and it is the job of the teacher to create an environment where learning can occur." We provide a balanced and personalised curriculum that allows children to learn at their pace and subjects relevant to them.

TRAIN - With the ability to learn and make progress, focus on establishing a work ethic and the ability to function in the workplace can be developed with an ever-increasing level of responsibility. These being transferable skills to any employment setting.

EMPLOY - As a result of all of the above we hope our children will be able to continue with a meaningful daytime occupation following discharge, with the aspiration of full-time employment whatever accreditation has been achieved. This has on occasions been for the first time in many generations.

*Once again this only works if it is provided in the order outlined above.*

**It is these 15 fundamental principles that allow us to achieve our aims and objectives.**

### **Aims**

'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

### **During their time with us**

- Stay with us for a minimum of 1 year
- Engage in our service and education
- Make achievements in education
- Make progress in their Personal Holistic Competency Assessment
- A reduced assessment of risk to the child
- A reduced assessment of risk from the child
- Engage in education/training/employed independently
- Discharged in a planned way
- Be able to continue education/training/employment after discharge

### **Following discharge**

- 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

### **Our 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
- To improve life chances through education and improved attitude to life and mental health

At this point it may be worth considering our internal training documents on these areas of interest to explain their significance.

- The impact of our environment.
- The importance of values.
- The values of activities.

## 6. The Impact of our Environment

It has long been recognised that one of Pear Tree's unique selling points is our ability to create a wonderful, nurturing environment for the children we look after. It was the topic of the very first conversations in the late 1980's that were the initial spark of an idea that led to the formation of this organisation. It was my belief, that if we could change the environment, we could change the outcome. If we could provide an early intervention service with the kind of environment I had envisaged, then the need for a secure unit in many cases could be avoided in the first place.

It was these kind of conversations that led to senior staff asking me 'to test the water' with young people in the secure unit by way of providing that change of environment all be it temporarily, taking them to Pear Tree House for rural activities. This process led to a request from social services to develop the scheme further for children in foster care and local authority children homes.

The contrast was to be that of a large clinical secure environment, or local authority housing in an urban environment, against that of a semi agricultural rural idyll. The idea, new to many, seemed nothing more than blatantly obvious to myself. The first summer scheme was quickly developed into plans to open our first children's home, utilising a small terraced house, which opened in November 1990. The model was based on something halfway between foster care and residential care, taking the method of staff management and putting the service in an ordinary house. Whilst the quality of accommodation was perfectly adequate, it looked like a tidy, rented house not a valued and personalised home. This was all that I thought was required (and all I could afford) due to the fact that the link with Pear Tree House was maintained providing that aspect of an alternative environment. As my circumstances changed and I had need to retrieve my family home, the financial limitations placed on me at the time led me to look at other ways of maintaining the unique selling point and at the same time demonstrate the point that environment is significant, if not key, to progress.

In 1994 an opportunity presented to open our second home, a larger Victorian property with original features. This led to the idea of developing the decor to be able to bring about the 'wow factor' from any budding interior designer. As a young entrepreneur needing to develop a fledgling business that, by pushing the boundaries of expected standards, I had developed another unique selling point which would encourage future business. At the same time I had created an environment that the children appreciated and developed a sense of ownership over, also creating a high quality environment for our staff to work in.

The expected aim was that in this environment, coupled with the activities and experiences we offered, that children would respond and behaviour would improve. Placements lasted longer and because of the stable environment staff turnover was low. People liked the formulae, whether adult or child, and because of that local authorities wanted to use the service.

This simple formula was the foundation to our 'Recovery and Intervention Plan'. As a businessman, who as head of service, gets to visit many other residential services run as businesses, I find myself constantly amazed that it seems to be the formulae that continues to escape the majority. Whilst this 'Therapeutic approach' has become a complex document, its foundation continues to be the very first idea, 'Change the environment and you change the outcome'!

So why is our environment so significant to our attitude and behaviour? In this chapter I hope to provide information that explores why I believe that as natural beings in a natural world we are responsive to, and impacted on, by the environment we live and work in.

As a countryman and now (due to the success of Pear Tree) a farmer and land owner, I know what every farmer knows, when nurturing animals of any description, if you get the environment wrong they will experience problems and they will fail to develop properly. Get the environment right and they thrive. *Simple yet often overlooked.*

*“Human beings are just complicated animals”* (Monty Roberts 2016).

Much of what we are to consider in this chapter are my own thoughts and ideas as a result of over thirty years of running a business, teaching in many institutions and over twenty-five years experience of running Pear Tree Projects. We will explore the following.

Weather and the changing seasons

Pear Tree School environment

‘Resi Care’ or a High Quality Structured Environment

A walk through a Pear Tree Home

Paintings Pictures and Fittings

Role Model Leadership, control the space, control the environment and manage the atmosphere.

Use of Positive Language

### **Weather, and the changing seasons**

If we are in any doubt of the significance of our environment, perhaps we should look no further to demonstrate the point than to consider an issue that we all are subject to, 'The Great British Weather'. As a young teacher I can recall learning from other teachers that the weather had a direct effect on children in the classroom. A rainy day makes children sleepy, windy weather results in hyperactivity, snow, excitable, sunny days result in restlessness.

Many would agree that the weather has a direct effect on our mental health. Which may explain the reason Scotland seems to have been occupied for centuries by unhappy individuals wishing everything were different. Giving rise to the saying 'The dour Scot'! They don't need independence, just some sunshine, and everything will seem better. Looking further afield countries north of the Arctic Circle experience higher rates of suicide during the dark winter months. SAD or 'Seasonal Affective Disorder' is thought to affect many and indeed this appears to be relevant from a Pear Tree perspective.

As a young man I formed the belief that the month of October was an unlucky month for me. As time went on I realised that as a person responsive to the needs of others it wasn't myself that was experiencing bad luck, but many around me. I've monitored this since 1987 and as a result the last two weeks in October and the first two weeks in November are known to my office as the 'Silly Season'. This is a time when sickness among staff and emotional crises among staff and children seem to reach a peak. Year upon year this seems to be relevant and when I looked at the factors there seemed to be a simple explanation that can be explained by looking at the Solar Calendar. I also believe that this is the calendar most country-people work to, this led me to design what I have called the Countryman's Calendar. I designed this a number of years ago to be helpful to people suffering with SAD, I believe it is useful in the way it helps people perceive the changing seasons.

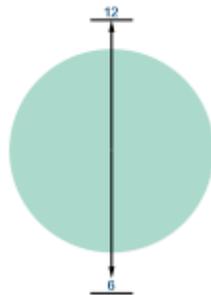
The first question I asked people around me was. “How do you visualise the year? As a continuous time line one following into the next, or as a circle, like a clock face which is a repetitive cycle?” Amongst the people around me (which I admit is by no means sufficient to be a scientific experiment but sufficient enough to be thought provoking), a pattern emerged. Those that saw the year as a simple time-line were mainly from urban backgrounds where the time of year had little if any relevance to their jobs or lifestyle.

Those that saw the year as a clock face, although from mixed backgrounds, were mainly from a more rural background, their lifestyle and employment tasks were directly related to the time of year and the changing seasons. The main difference was where people visualised the start of the year. For some it was in September with the start of the school year, it is also the time farmers have come to the end of harvest and are thinking of sowing seeds for the next years harvest. Other people saw it start at the 1st of May. For many country pursuits the employment of staff starts at this time, as does the jumping season in horse racing.

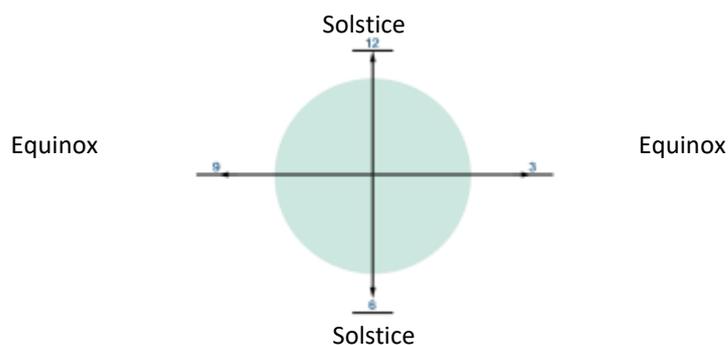
Whilst you may be thinking 'How is any of this relevant?' The fact is whether you have an urban or rural lifestyle we are all affected by the changing seasons with or without knowing it and as society has progressed it has lost touch with the natural world and many facts have been forgotten. (Desmond Morris Urban Zoo)

I was listening to a popular BBC Radio 2 programme where they were asking the question 'Why does the longest day seem to last for a while and then it gets dark?' The answer continued to escape them, but can be found by looking at the Solar Calendar, and in fact was known to the pagans (as their life depended on it). This was later adopted and adapted by the Christians, known as the Gregorian calendar. The following, once understood, seems simple but took me until my forties to figure out.

If we think of the year as a clock face and start at the number 12 this represents the Winter Solstice. On or around the 21<sup>st</sup> of December. Draw a line straight down to the number 6 and we have the Summer Solstice. On or around the 21<sup>st</sup> June. Our Year is divided into two. Most people know about the longest and the shortest day.



Now here's the next trick, which I find few people know about. If we go to the number 3 this represents the Spring Equinox, on or around the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. An important time for me as it represents the time of the year when in a single 24 hour period there is equal amounts of daylight and darkness, at a time when the daylight hours are increasing and the warmer summer months are on their way (significant if you lived as I did in a stone house, poorly insulated, with no central heating.) Draw a line straight across and you find number 9 that represents the Autumn Equinox. The time of year when once again there are equal amounts of daylight and darkness in a 24 hour period but as the nights draw in the daylight hours are getting less and represents the start of the darker winter months.



This was brought home to me in the autumn of 1995. As a child I had travelled extensively with my parents, but as an adult driving a fledgling business I had never been away from home (that was also work) until my new bride-to-be swept me off my feet and took me to Jamaica to get married. We left a bright beautiful England on the tenth of September 1995 and were married, retuning two weeks later. To my horror we returned from the bright colourful beauty of the Caribbean to the dark and miserable storm clouds of England in autumn. It had only been two weeks but the landscape I had left behind was gone for the winter. It took me a while to realise my depressed state was not due to being newly married but we had gone over the autumn equinox. On or around the 21<sup>st</sup> of each relevant month it is either the Winter or Summer Solstice or the Spring or Autumn Equinox. Now we have dates to work from we can quickly add the rest of the year, as the Earth moves slowly around the Sun taking all year to do it. The effect on the earth is that of gradual change until reaching these tipping points. If we have 12 months in a year and 4 seasons then it is a simple equation to work out that there are 3 months in each season. But that doesn't fit, or does it? If we use the meteorological calendar that works off the changing temperatures it doesn't but with the solar calendar it does. This is very similar to the Horticultural Calendar, as plants depend on sunlight for growth and development.

It goes something like this

Spring - starts in the second week of February, March and April.

Summer - Starts in the second week of May, June, July. Which explains why the 21<sup>st</sup> of June is called Mid-Summers Day. (How could it be Mid-Summers Day if Summer starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> June as the meteorological Calendar states?)

Now for the missing piece of the Jigsaw.

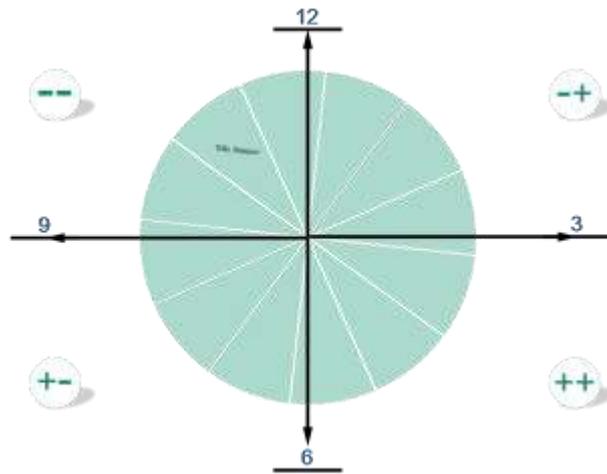
Autumn - starts in the second week of August, September and October. "But August is summer!" It is from a temperature point of view, but as we know the nights have started to cut in. From a countryman's perspective the corn is being harvested because, like autumn leaves, the plant has lived its life and has died, leaving the new seed as a food product. We often see the first fields being ploughed in August and Country Pursuits (which were all based around feeding the estates or managing a threat to food in the form of foxes, such as hunting and shooting start in August). We've all heard of 'the Glorious twelfth', the start of the Grouse shooting season. The reason the Solar Calendar appears to be ahead of the other calendars is that it takes a while for the Earth to heat up from the sunlight. The earth then holds the heat like a radiator as the light begins to fade away in August.

Winter – Second week in November December January. Again as with the Mid Summers Day, how can we have Mid Winters day on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December three weeks after the so-called start of winter, the 1<sup>st</sup> of December? This is because the Metrological Calendar based on temperature is a month behind the Solar Calendar.

***It is the halfway point between the equinox and the solstice that defines the time of the changing seasons.***

This also explains the structure of the school holidays, which in days gone by when we were all connected to nature much more, because most people lived on farms. The holidays we're based not just around when it is a nice time to be off but when the children were needed to help on the farm.

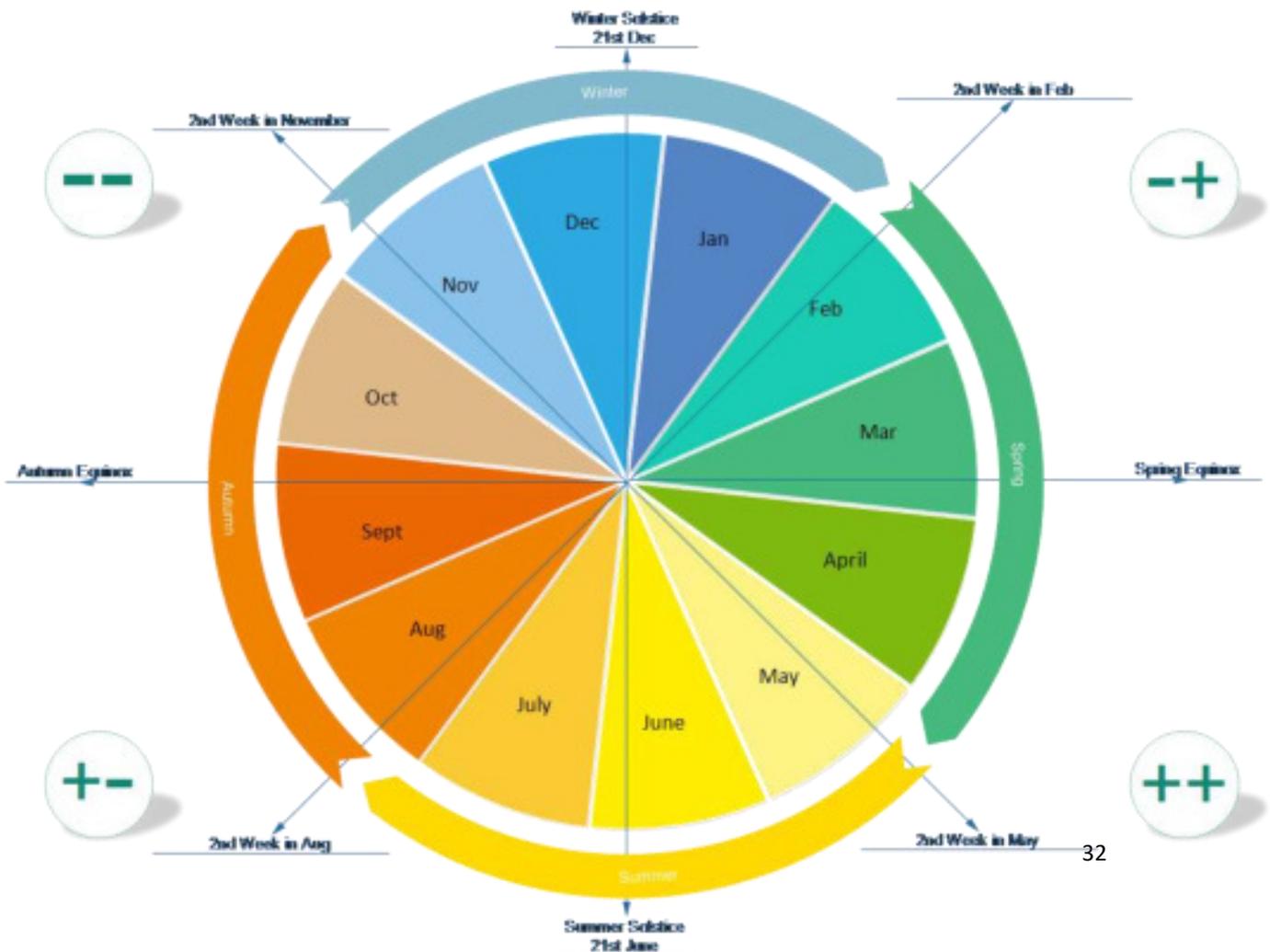
Easter - lambing time, whit week - hay time, summer - harvest, October - (many can still remember was called until recently) tatty picking week! Christmas - turkey plucking and the big winter feast. The early schools not only based their holiday times around this farming year, but also the times 9am – 3pm, allowed the children to do choirs on the farm before and after lessons.



How is this relevant to the silly season? The answer is if we look at the year from January in quarters.

The first quarter is dark but it's getting lighter. This gives us a negative followed by a positive (which is denoted as - +) the second quarter is light and it's getting lighter. This can be seen as a positive followed by a positive, ++. The third quarter is light but it's beginning to get darker + - The last quarter which covers the silly season is dark and it's only going to get darker - -. Until the second half of November when we begin to get ready for that winter celebration taken from the Pagans by the Christians - 'Christmas'. At this time we decorate our homes and add coloured lights to make everything look more cheerful. Four days before the main event we have the Winter Solstice, the next tipping point when we then move from a double negative to a negative followed by a positive, - + it's dark, but it's getting lighter.

The point of the Countryman's Calendar is that it demonstrates what's going on and despite our perception of a dark miserable six months of winter; *it is actually only twelve weeks.*



It is my observation that we all feel these changes and they affect our mood and more importantly for some our resistance to illnesses and resilience to difficulties. Whilst the difficult time seems to be October and November, we already acknowledge that Christmas is a difficult time of year specifically for children in care because as the rest of the world seems to be enjoying itself with over indulgence, material items (in the form of presents) and time with loving families. Children in care, by definition, don't have this. Whilst some may get to go home, these are the ones I worry about the most, as the expectations never live up to reality. This over emotionally charged time of year usually leads to disappointment.

As a result we bombard this time of year with positive energy and experiences. Towards the end of November, to avoid the main Christmas rush, we usually have a trip to London. This takes in one of the world's most spectacular cities ready for the festive season. Museums and attractions intermingled with the red and blue of the Household Cavalry, and of course Christmas lights.

The first Friday in December has become the traditional day for each house to go and choose its Christmas tree and deliver it to the home. By having a specific date we avoid the uneducated fashion of putting them up earlier in November (by doing so devaluing the whole process) and at the same time not leaving it too late.

The second week sees our annual Christmas party, a formal dinner dance complete with band and silver service sit-down meal, making it a social occasion to be looked forward to for weeks before. The build up to Christmas continues with the delivery of turkeys to all homes including our gift of a turkey to members of staff. (Some of the children if appropriate may have been involved in the preparation and dressing of the turkeys). A visit to a Church Carol Service is also an expectation for staff and children.

The budget also allows for the purchase of gifts by the children for the specific staff on duty on Christmas Day, to be given by the children at that time when they are opening their presents. This process encourages the use of empathic skills and thinking of others. The thought that goes into these presents gives another opportunity to demonstrate kindness.

The effect bucks the trend in the industry. When other services, (in any other industry they would be called our competitors) are spending money on increased staffing levels and overtime to manage the critical period. Our staff and children are benefitting from the condensed dose of positive energy and enjoying a proper Christmas, for new children often for the first time. This I've heard being refereed to by Pear Tree staff as 'A Pear Tree Christmas'! The inference on something quite special that is unique to the children in Pear Tree.

Whilst the Christmas period lasts a month, it is only one example of the way Pear Tree and those that work here control the environment. This is evident whether in one of our residential homes, in the classroom or on the farm and at School.

In July 2015 we celebrated our twenty fifth anniversary. This was marked by five days of special activities. To start the celebrations on Thursday we held an open day for social workers to showcase our children's achievements. Friday, a picnic lunch around the lake followed by prize giving and speeches, culminating in showing a very special film of Pear Tree through the last twenty-five years. This was followed in the evening by a family orientated BBQ with band and chocolate fountain. Saturday evening was the grown up version, which was the first time a social occasion was arranged for adults only. Sunday saw a small country fair open to the local community including a fishing competition and a dog show. Pear Tree children were amongst the prize-winners in each. (It was very rewarding and some what amusing to hear it announced across the PA that one of our young men had the biggest and longest!) The Monday evening saw a music and comedy night to raise money for The Great North Air Ambulance.

If you were in any doubt as to the impact of positive energy and experiences you only had to look at the statistics of the important information forms (reporting negative behaviour incidents) produced for the period six weeks prior to the event numbering 114 and six weeks after the event 54.

### **Pear Tree School, a warm rural welcome**

In keeping with the idea of providing an alternative environment, our School is based on two of our three farms. (The third, a magically tranquil place on the North York Moors, which has holiday cottages, is kept for weekend trips and holidays and which makes possible many activities including pony trekking in, or around, its forty acres.)

The main school base is another small farm, and any child attending for the first time will have no indication that once through the farmyard gate you are in what is, at the point of writing, an Ofsted rated Outstanding School. Opened in 2005 it has only ever been rated Outstanding. There is no school sign, but a farm sign whom many will have driven past without ever being aware that it is anything other than a farm. On arrival in the old farmyard, now used as the main car park, a sign welcomes you to the Farm Office. Once in the reception areas, there are purposely no photos of the hierarchy of the school with the Head Teacher pictured at the top. (In fact as Head I was once proudly mistaken by a person checking us out prior to her interview as 'the gardener'. This caused her slight embarrassment as the following day she only realised half way through her interview!) The values I have always maintained from the beginning are there may be a hierarchy of roles, but never relationships and as we are all people first and staff second therefore a presentation of hierarchy in our environment is unnecessary. As with many issues, I have often felt we were the odd ones out (with the inference on odd) until in Spring 2015 when this approach was validated in the book 'Transforming Lives through Values' by Dr Neil Hawkes. This is a wonderful book that I recommend to everyone and in it Dr Hawkes talks of the importance of signage, or in our case the absence of it.

In September 2011 we took possession of 'The Manor' and with it 210 acres of prime agricultural land next to a village with public footpaths running through it. This was to be developed to be our second school base and add many other elements to our school curriculum. Our immediate problem was two-fold. Firstly as the place had been left empty for many years the villagers had become used to going wherever they wanted to. Secondly the many walkers seemed to want to walk their dogs through the fields with cows, calves and a new Bull. These as you may or may not know are attracted to dogs. Cows with newborn calves see dogs as a threat and therefore will pursue dogs in order to defend their calves. In these circumstances it is often better to let your dog off the lead so they pursue the dog and not you holding the dog. The dog will escape and evade the cows and the cows as a result will leave the walker alone.

The most common language used by farmers appears to be KEEP TO FOOTPATH, KEEP DOGS ON LEAD. By contrast to the surprise of the newly appointed farm manager our signs said:

*"The Manor Welcomes Walkers Please take whatever action necessary to avoid livestock.*

*Follow The Country Code. We hope you enjoy our land"*

The entrance to any facility says so much about who you are and for everyone arriving it is the start of his or her experience with you. As the saying goes, 'You only get one chance at first impressions'.

Whilst at our first farm, in the farmhouse my aim was for it to look, from an outsider's point of view, as if they were looking through the window like any other farm house. Despite functioning as an excellent classroom and meeting room the initial appearance is no different to any other farmhouse kitchen and lounge.

On the farm a similar theme is evident. The place operates as any other working farm or equestrian facilities. The routine, working practice and activities are all what you would expect anywhere else regardless of the fact it is a school. In fact we once had a young man come for a look around as part of an assessment process. It was by no means a certainty that he would want to come or indeed that we would want him to come. This angry little boy went on to be an outstanding student and one of our most successful young men. Years later I would ask him what happened during our assessment as there seemed to be a point of definite change in response and attitude. His reply was one of clarity. "It was when you took me in the tractor!" "I knew at that point that you were going to teach me real jobs that needed doing and all this was not just laid on for my entertainment". This is one example of the environment having an immediate impact that gave this young man the rest of his life back. It is a real place, of genuine authenticity not artificial like a theme park, designed 'for the kids,' and yet by doing so undermining the process.

Whether it is the tranquil nature of the landscape that in many places the young people of Pear Tree have helped to create or the colourful and marvellous gardens, the Peacocks on the lawn, the ducks on the pond, or the pig, sheep and goose that hang out together. The secret garden leading to the tree house, the den by the river, there is thought behind the environment and the experience we hope our people, young or old are to have within it. 'Intelligent Consideration' most definitely, but also from the heart passion. We want to do our best.

In the context of the farms, the opportunity to develop relationships with animals that may be the first step in the right direction of developing appropriate and worthwhile relationships with others.

#### **'Resi Care', or High Quality Structured Environment?**

Earlier I spoke of how our school based on a farm was a genuine place, a real place, not artificial 'For The Kids'. This should not be more evident than in the place where they sleep at night. 'The Home'.

Once again as far as the rest of the industry is concerned we seem to be the odd one out, by not being odd! Having been to countless 'Resi Homes' I can write the script to how they were designed, and I have to say for all but a few, very badly, despite their Ofsted Report.

The story goes like this, walk up the path, at this point they may already vary in that some may keep within the spirit of the children act and not be immediately obvious from the curb appeal perspective that it is any different from the other properties in the area. Or it may be strikingly obvious that it is a residential home due to size and stature. The state of the garden and the quality of the presentation within home, curtains still closed in the middle of the afternoon, or an England flag flying out of the window. Sometimes broken windows.

Once through the front door, into a reception area, you are greeted with shelves of leaflets for help, STDs and HIV, to name but a few. This entrance reminds everyone inside that they are in care, they need help and are in a care home! The reception area is near to or served by the office, where most people are occupied doing really important stuff! Ask them where their children are and they probably won't be able to tell you!

You are then shown to a room that has many common themes to it. The place has been set up for children, therefore its decor and fittings are what someone who probably works in an office who doesn't have to live and work there, thought would be suitable and appealing to the children. The pictures, if there are any, are nondescript, colourful sweets, patterns or the most common Manhattan Sky line. They are often hung badly, on walls that either need a bigger or a smaller picture, or too high to be out of the way. One home had the words *'I solemnly swear I am up to no good' - 'Harry Potter'*, painted on the wall. Talk about promoting the negative, it is difficult to address graffiti when it's been used by the grown ups! The narrative, glorifying poor behaviour by an idolised character, negative reinforcement promoted as positive, the use of sign writing or wall stickers is used to avoid the need for pictures.

It is at this point I would ask you two questions.

1. *Have you ever been in a family home where the pictures and decor have been purchased to satisfy the tastes entirely of the children residing within?*
2. *If the answer was yes, was it a positive functioning family home?*

Next the fittings, a big screen TV, probably too big for the room but it is important because it represents the second most important activity in the home. The most important is round the corner, the Xbox. This would be fine if it was provided to complement a vast array of various activities. The reality is it is used to help kill time.

A visit to the bedroom may also give clues to the lifestyle and standards within the home. Old dirt and chaos, no sense of ownership or direction. It is clear here that the problems and expectations of life before being accommodated has been allowed to continue and fester within the care home without being challenged and the young person helped to move on.

All of the above does not represent all homes but in my experience it is relevant in most. The only exception would be some small homes with only one two or three young people being looked after, by both local authority and private providers whom have by the nature of the building been able to provide a much more homely and domestic in nature, home. The problem is most defiantly exasperated, as the homes get larger in size.

My reason for visiting is usually to assess a child to see if he or she is suitable for a placement at Pear Tree. The reason, usually because the current placement, the one I'm visiting hasn't worked. My assessment usually comes down to 'if I change the environment can I change the outcome'? Sometimes this is really difficult because the behaviour is often directly related to the environment, and sometimes people don't want change even if it is for the better.

When I talk to staff about the young person and life within the home, there is sometimes a language barrier to cross. Recently I assessed a young person who was placed in a very tidy small home looking after only two young people. When I asked about the structure the young person had, the home's manager, a young man I took an instant liking to, and who was by the end of the conversation to have earned my respect, claimed he had put in lots of structure in the home. On examination I thought I would hear about a busy timetable of events to help educate his charge. What he explained was that since his recent arrival as manager the structure he had had to put in place was a staff rota and a regular routine of buying weekly supplies. His journey had not been easy and his starting point, the very beginning. I continue to wish him well.

The child couldn't come to us, partly because he didn't want to and partly because his routine and minimal expectation was so low it was now entrenched in his expectation and would be difficult to turn around, especially as he had no intention of ever wanting to. We don't need children to be motivated or prepared to come to Pear Tree but we do need a level of responsiveness to what we will offer them and sometimes we can't undo the damage that has already been caused-sometimes by the system after being taken into care.

My point is that all homes are giving off subliminal messages whether they realise it or not, about the expectations of the home, the commitment of the staff and the quality of the relationships. How much do you care? Regretfully many of these messages are not the right ones and the effect is felt on the children and it presents itself in their behaviour where they continue to ask the question hoping for the right answer. 'How much do you care?' Regretfully often in the way they are dealt with, systematically, the answer continues to be the wrong one. It is these subliminal messages that, if were the right ones in the first place, would give the right answer in the first instance.

Forgive me if I give the impression that I dislike residential care, or the people in it. Far from it, I have been directly involved for over thirty years. I believe it can be a most needed and worthwhile experience for young people and a controlled environment if done properly. However the industry has many pitfalls that staff at all levels, front line and management can fall into and I see many falling into them even though they don't realise it themselves. Many of these people have committed their lives to looking after some of the most problematic and difficult young people, in the most difficult of circumstances and surroundings. All the more reason that we should be looking to overcome as many problems as we can, as new admissions walk through the door, with the environment we create. The homes should be clear about the kind of problems they are able to deal with and set their stall out accordingly. We don't just owe it to the children, but the staff as well.

#### **A walk through a Pear Tree Home – “We shape buildings and then they shape us” Winston Churchill**

A walk through a Pear Tree home is a very different experience. In all the years of showing new social workers around, the response is one of amazement and surprise. Today using our experience of showing people around we have a set formulae. The visit starts off at the school, with a talk from my office about the kind of environment we have created. To do this I use what we call 'the story boards' to illustrate the point. These are numerous photos of the children doing activities and the bullet points from our various documents, putting the photos into context.

Again patterns have developed, the professionals (of which eight out of ten will be female) are armed with bags and files, and their defences high. Quite rightly they are concerned about where they may be sending their young person and are full of preconceived ideas about what a residential home and a special school may involve. Half-way through the storyboards I see them begin to relax and become more in tune with the process and myself. A walk around the farm and the chance to interact with some children and animals sees the nature and the tone of the conversation changing completely. They are now ready to visit a home and see where their child may be living.

The homes manager is usually the person to conduct this visit, as it is important they get to meet staff other than myself. However I have had years of doing this myself previously and the feedback from the different managers is always the same. "It's not what we expected" and amazement at the level of personal ownership displayed by the staff and children. It is a home, their home and clues that it is a 'residential home' have been sensitively thought through with what I call 'Intelligent Consideration'.

Previously while discussing the kind of environment we have created, using a farm to be a school, whilst it is a real working place it is also somewhat enchanting and idyllic, it is also beyond the financial means of all but a few to have as their main dwelling. All right as a school, a place to be part of and work in but not realistic in terms of everyday living accommodation.

Likewise I have visited homes and special schools that have been set in a large country house/small stately home. This also fails to prepare young people for the realities of life after discharge.

Our model, in my view, hits the right notes. Whilst we have one home that is a farmhouse, this is kept for the youngest and most vulnerable. These children need an intense dose of positive energy in that dramatically different environment prior to moving into another of our homes as part of a journey to independence. Our other homes are high standard, Edwardian Victorian properties in good areas of town, near local facilities that are utilised as part of the 'learning programme'. I have personally selected these properties after considering countless others, due to the functionality of their layout and the ambience of the property. Over the years we have been able to use the increased value (the equity) to trade up to improve the quality of the homes available.

As you walk up the garden path, the home will not be obvious to any passer by that it is a 'residential home' it's size, structure and style will be similar to the neighbours. There are no signs, or unnecessary official paraphernalia. (Like an investors in people badge on the wall, that immediately says this place is not a family home! Ours has never come out of its box in the cupboard.) On entering one can see the original features enhanced and part of the home, not hidden behind protective screening. The quality of the furniture all make huge statements as to how we live and the way children and staff are valued. In one home it still has the original sofa within the quiet room from when the home opened in 1997. Not because we make damaged items last, because it is pristine. It's the room everyone is proud of.

### **Paintings, photographs and fittings**

It was once put to me that the paintings on the walls were not interesting to the children. If you have considered my comments earlier you will know they aren't meant to be. They are meant to be a grown up educated choice to make the place look and feel like a positive functioning family home. (The Authentic Warmth Dimension of Professional Childcare' by R J Cameron and C Maginn.)

I have been fortunate enough to lead an interesting and varied life despite the intense commitment given to this organisation. This has allowed me to be guest at some wonderful places and family homes. In these most positive environments the artwork has been varied but usually reflects the theme of the kind of property it is, its connection to an area and the lifestyle of its occupants. Some times modern contemporary art, but this is usually in the homes of people who don't have that kind of connection to the context of the place or the very wealthy who can afford to be experimental.

The cave man started cave paintings in exactly the same way, to reflect the life and environment of his surroundings. The paintings I have chosen meet this formulae of educated good taste and reflect the kind of things the children and staff may be exposed to or get to experience. I was once a guest of the Governor of Edinburgh Castle and stayed the night in quarters within the Castle itself. The format was just the same as in our homes and limited edition prints in the same quality of framing hung to fill the space within the same manner, as how pictures are hung as the size against the wall are equally as important as the subject matter or it will just feel wrong, like a wonky picture. (At one point my own staff laughed because I would straighten pictures. I did so because they were wonky and that makes me feel uncomfortable. Whilst they thought that was odd. To me it's odd not to want to have straight pictures.)

In the Castle the subject was Military Men and Battles. Ours are the landscape of the area, dogs, horses, fishing and farm animals and other country pursuits. They may reflect my tastes, so they should; I sourced them and paid for them. Then outside of Pear Tree the manager or key person responsible, if they want to create a genuine sense of ownership as would be found in a regular family home, should make these choices to set your stall out as to the kind of environment you wish to make. They shouldn't be a selection chosen by the office to fill a gap.

I say this now as after years of 'Intelligent Consideration' putting our heart and soul into each property, if in years to come they are to be moved around and replaced with photos of a bag of sweets, I will turn in my grave!

As a small child my mother used to work in an accountant's that were in fact based behind one of our larger residential homes. Like myself, her employers were flexible and accommodating around school holidays and I regularly used to go and wait for her in this building, a large Victorian house with elegant features. There was one picture in particular I used to look at. It was there for years. As I grew up and started my own business I still visited as a client despite the fact my mother had left years earlier due to ill health. It was reassuring to see it in the same place, still there after all those years, as was most of the people and it spoke volumes of the stability and consistency of the firm. A quality I admired and have aspired to and achieved.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the environment we create and as I have explained the way this environment impacts on how people feel. Exposure to artwork is important and it is felt by those around whether they realise it or not. Likewise the use of photographs can be equally effective, but their biggest quality is in being able to change the perception a child may have of their self image, boost their self esteem and make them feel at home and part of 'the family'. Poster size photos of children doing activities can be found in their bedrooms and group photos of shared experiences can be found through the house. I particularly like the group photos in their School uniforms, which also go to reinforce a positive self-image within the context of being embedded within education.

The colour schemes are also important. As with the weather having an effect on children in the classroom, so I'm led to believe colour has an impact on the way the brain is stimulated also. Yellow - exciting, Red - alerting, Blue - focused and Green - relaxing. Hence many of our rooms are mellow colours and we have coined the phrase a 'Pear Tree Green'. Which has been adopted as part of our corporate logo. Blue often used for a meeting room. I was also to learn in our early days how patterned wallpaper could have a negative impact on some one with ASD due to the amount of visual stimulation the brain experiences whilst in that environment, therefore used sparingly.

Posters may be suitable in a child's bedroom (age and positivity appropriate) but not in the main body of the house. Likewise notices should never be seen outside of a designated work space like the staff sleep-in room or a notice board in a child's bedroom. I once walked into a Pear Tree home kitchen to find a hand written poster/notice cello-taped to the kitchen cupboard entitled 'This weeks Menu' to the shock and disappointment of the staff it was immediately taken down as it undermined the sense of place and would represent the start of a dangerous factor 'Erosion'. Once you allow one, they will be followed by many.

The office is usually found in an upstairs bedroom study type place. In two of the larger homes there is an office on the ground floor, but a visitor would have to be shown where it is, as it is not in your face in the entrance hall. This demonstrates how from the child's perspective there are spaces defined for different reasons and not mixed up. The office is like a home office for any home-working professional who doesn't allow work to take over the domestic living space. The School has a reception and an office next to it. It is a farm and farms are commercial/work places. By doing so we maintain that element allowed for in English planning law. A sense of place!

Time for another question.

1. *Why would English planning law allow for a sense of place if our environment and factors within it were not important?*
2. *Indeed the whole purpose of the planning department is to preserve our environment with 'Intelligent Consideration'.*

## **'Role Model Leadership', control the space, control the environment, manage the atmosphere**

Whilst above we have discussed the Solar Calendar and its effect on the weather and the environment we have created in our School and within our residential homes, these are all external factors that have to a greater or lesser degree an impact on people's mood and behaviour. My argument from the beginning is that small factors are important. However the biggest issue is how people function in that environment and how professionals manage the workspace wherever it is, to control the atmosphere and mood of the people who are being looked after, managed and educated.

This is all about our mental health, whether it is due to looking after hormonal teenagers or genuinely distressed children as a result of trauma, in our case usually both. It is difficult remaining positive when others are not. However it is much easier remaining positive and buoyant if you're working environment is of a high standard than it is when it isn't.

Low mood, and mild depression are common factors, not just among the children but from time to time it may be relevant for staff also. 'The Woe Is Me Syndrome' and its impact, if not recognised, can affect an entire household. Dr Bruce Perry spoke of his concern at the Hardwick Hall Conference 17/10/2014 that modern technology, Facebook and similar social media applications have added to an already prevalent problem in that people are becoming more self obsessed. The technology adding to the tools available to be constantly uploading and updating images of ones self.

The fact is that depression can lead to selfishness and it's the job of the professional, carer, or in some cases the line manager to recognise what's happening and make concerted efforts to take control of the environment and control the atmosphere. This can be done in the way problems are tackled but in a positive way, the way your sentences are structured focusing on what to do and not on what not to do and being conscious of your tone of voice and body gestures. Strong but sympathetic approaches focusing on the way forward.

Whenever I have to deal with difficult situations, like debriefing following a restraint, or disruptive behaviour. A lesson from the classroom teachers is 'Control the Space'. Take the subject of concern from their current location to a location of your choice. 'Step into my office' is a good simple example but it needn't be your office, another room will do, but by relocating you are already testing out responsiveness and letting the subject know you are in control. From that point the task whatever it is, is easier.

### **The importance of language**

A Positive Environment needs Positive Language.

Using positive language tends to reduce conflict, improve communication, reduce defensiveness in others and helps portray the speaker as credible and respectable

### **Negative & Positive Language**

Negative phrasing and language often have the following characteristics:

- tells the child what cannot be done.
- has a subtle tone of blame.
- includes words like can't, won't, unable to
- does not stress positive actions that would be appropriate, or positive consequences.

Positive phrasing and language have the following qualities:

- tells the child what can be done
- suggests alternatives and choices available to the recipient
- sounds helpful and encouraging rather than bureaucratic
- stresses positive actions and positive consequences that can be anticipated.

Keep sentences short and simple. Focus on *what to do* rather than what not to do.

- Try saying, "Slow down and walk" instead of "Stop running."
- Try saying, "Keep your feet on the floor" instead of "Don't climb on the table."
- Try saying, "Use a quiet voice inside" instead of "Stop shouting."

Catch children being good. All children want attention. It is better to give them positive attention for good behaviour than negative attention for misbehaviour. Comment on something positive about each child, each day. Better yet, strive for several times a day. And share the good news. When children have done something positive, mention it to other children and to staff.

This use of language is imperative to create a harmonious atmosphere within a positive environment.

## 7. The Importance of Values

(Inspired by Dr. Neil Hawkes, From My Heart: Transforming Lives Through Values.)

[www.valuesbasededucation.com](http://www.valuesbasededucation.com)

### The Importance of Values

*"Dear Teacher,  
I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no man should witness. Gas chambers built by LEARNED engineers, children poisoned by EDUCATED physicians; infants killed by TRAINED nurses, women and babies shot and burned by HIGH SCHOOL and COLLEGE graduates.  
So I am suspicious of education. My request is: help your students become human. Your efforts must never produce monsters, skilled psychopaths, educated Eichmann's.  
Reading, writing and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more humane."*

**Haim Ginott**

#### Acknowledgment

Mrs Taylor (Matthew's Mum) for realising the importance of language in teaching values and providing us with the information to improve our effectiveness.

From 1990 to 2015 onwards Pear Tree Projects has endeavoured to look after, and educate some of the region's most difficult and complex children and young people. Whilst they have all been survivors of sexual abuse, in some cases this has included young people who have gone on to harm others. The above quote articulates beautifully the dilemma we have often faced when striving to increase their skill-base. Thankfully I believe we have always placed greater importance on teaching values and growing as a person above academic achievement, with in many cases, remarkable results. The above leaves no doubt the importance of such work.

David Bartlett April 2015.

## Introduction

In early 2015 Matthew Taylor came into my office and presented me with a book. Neil Hawkes , 'From my Heart- Transforming Lives Through Values' Matthew told me his mother had identified this book and knew it was relevant to our cause, so got it to us. He exclaimed "This is what you do David, this is what we do, this is Pear Tree." Such an assessment I thought was complimentary but if it was indeed Pear Tree there was no rush to read it. At the end of Spring term I was conscious that I still hadn't properly read this book and therefore I would take it on holiday with me. I hadn't had a single day away from Pear Tree business in two years and I was looking forward to the break and thought it would take me ages to relax, it might be just the thing to allow me to wind down slowly. To my disappointment I had left it in my office, to my families distress I was so sure I should read it we called at the office at 2am on our way to the airport and I am so glad that I did. This is a ground-breaking book and as a result I am hopeful that we become registered with the 'International Values Education Trust'. I would recommend you take the time to read it. This book has provided an epiphany moment for me, like a door opening and a lot of questions answered, I feel like he has finally given permission to talk about Values. The very thing that for so long in social work I feel we have been actively discouraged from discussing.

At the time of writing this document I am sat in the lookout tower on Long Island Bahamas watching the sun set. The values I was taught by my parents were to work hard, save hard and live life. See no boundaries as travel feeds the brain. What we now know from the neuroscientist is that this is no longer an old wives tale but backed up with science. 'Novelty grows neurons' they say! To add flavour and colour to the discussion, I've taken a photograph so you can see what I'm seeing now!

## Rationale

The following document is not designed to educate you on why we should start to be more concerned with teaching values. The fact of the matter is we have been doing it so well for so long. The purpose of this document is to look at the whole issue of 'Value based Education' from a Pear Tree perspective. It is so reassuring to see that such an eminently respected international educator has articulated a plan that is so intertwined with our own work.

In 1995 I was asked by the Kolvin unit to document our 'treatment plan,' the result was our first 'Recovery and Intervention Plan.' The basis of which was 'Environment ' followed by 'Values, activities ' and finally 'Assessment'. Dr Hawke's work mirrors our own almost exactly, particularly if you take his emphasis on reflection is actually an assessment.

While on holiday I took three books with me. The one already mentioned. 'Islam and the West' (written immediately after the events of 9/11) and 'The Churchill Factor' by Boris Johnson. Three great books that I really enjoyed reading. It came to me after I had finished the last that they were all about values. The subject is so important I was motivated to write this document and share it with you as quickly as possible.

## Value Based Education

Whenever you start to consider values today and talk about them with colleagues or friends, the strangest thing happens nearly every time. Someone uses the term or says "You mean old fashioned values?" Do I? Are they old fashioned and when did they go out of fashion?

In my view they are as old as the job of being a parent. We live in a relatively civilised world at the moment, that is if you are lucky enough to live in the North East of England! Look around the world and you will see it is full of conflict but we are certainly not in a world of tooth and claw, fighting in isolation for survival every day. In fact it's a pretty good time to be alive and mankind and the societies within it are on the whole doing very well indeed compared to their ancestors (apart from the Islamic fundamentalists who are the only group of people who would have us all return to seventh century Arabia at the first opportunity). This is because each generation is looking to build on the foundations of the last, because we were taught by our parents to do so. The art of bringing up children from cave man days onwards has been successful due to good parenting, preparing their children for the world around them and the life they are to lead.

Good parenting was in fact discovered by good parents and not by academics. These academics would wish you to believe that not only they discovered it but also that it was only discovered recently! The academics have been fortunate enough to be able to observe the good parents (which most are) and identify which bits work and which bits don't. Then write books about them.

Somewhere in recent time something went wrong, we forgot the obvious and I think highly likely we listened to some academics wishing to make a name for themselves, who quite simply dropped the ball. They had us looking the other way and they had us forgetting what our parents taught us, which is the importance of values and virtues. This is the only conceivable answer to the question, When did they become old fashioned? By definition that means they have become out of fashion and forgotten.

So in answer to the question How old are values? The answer has to be prehistoric. In fact Aristotle is quoted to have said,

*"Children become just by performing just acts. By imitating virtue we become virtuous. Starting with politeness the beginning of respect and gratitude, where morality begins. From this other skills such as prudence which allows us to think of what is good for us. This governs other virtues such as temperance, courage and justice".*

Ah ha, so there you have it, I wonder what his mum had to say about that! Possibly the first academic to put forward what his mum taught him as his own ideas!!

From the above text it is clear to see that he had a pretty good idea of another important concept as well, which is sequential learning. The well-established if not pretty obvious idea that children need to learn certain things in order to be able to move on to the next thing competently. Something I will return to shortly.

'When did values become out of fashion or old fashioned?' In my opinion (and it is just my opinion) the answer is recently. If we have been talking in terms of since the dawn of mankind, it is with in the blink of an eye. Post World War Two in fact and dare I say it but its probable decline was to come out of forward progressive 1960s thinking. At this time people were encouraged to think for themselves and break established moulds. It is also a time that the Church of England, has and continues to see, dramatically declining numbers in Church services and the notion of a proactive Sunday School a thing of distant memory. This is not to say that the Church of England is the only religion promoting worthwhile values, far from it but in post war Britain it was probably the main source of values education for the family unit as a whole.

There are many reasons for this but a contributing factor has to be that we are living in isolation much more, as communities that were once strongly held together through work are now distributed as families become mobile in order to move to find work.

This also comes at a time when progressive governments have tried to find ways of demonstrating how much they and their party, whichever one it was, has done for Education. The focus has been on what can be measured more easily. The development of a National Curriculum in 1988 took away the flexibility for teachers to teach what they thought was relevant for their particular children. It is at this point that certain assumptions were made regarding parents and I think likewise that parents were making about teachers. Each thought the other was doing it! Teaching values!

The fact is that in most functional homes (in a roundabout way), parents have been teaching Values. Although I have yet to come across a parent who has sat down with a child and discussed, considered and analysed the meaning of the word prudence, (as just an example). Indeed if there is someone out there who has, they are by any means exceptional. In 2012 all departments were asked to consider what were our corporate values ? In every case they were discussed in the form of what we do and how we live, but being able to name them was for most not even thought of. (I still have all the notes of these discussions on my tablet computer and have just reviewed them.)

In these functional homes children have generally got the idea, to a level that means they can function in society, and I would probably include myself in that description. Being able to give an account of a particular value and its definition would have certainly tested the memory banks. That was until I read Dr Neil Hawkes 'From My Heart, Transforming Lives Through Values'. In this marvellous book he explains the importance of naming values and then measuring how well you live up to them. This process being fundamental to helping children learn about values and this then in sequence helps everything else in life fit together.

For many children who live with parents who have not been able to live up to key values, they have not been able to get the message. The subliminal clues that are present in most functional homes are just not there. So how are they to learn? It has always amazed me that the process of sequential learning has also all but been forgotten and we have an education system that is determined to fit children into the process with or without key skills, social and emotional as well as academic, regardless and are then surprised when it all goes wrong.

As a horse trainer you would never consider asking a rider to get on a young horse that hasn't been trained to accept a rider. It would be traumatic for the horse and may damage any chance any one will have in the future of successfully training it. It would also be incredibly dangerous for the rider.

Remember the words of Monty Roberts, the wonderful wise old cowboy when he said "If all of learning is 1-10 the most important parts are 0-3" I believe, as he does, the same goes for children.

It may be claimed that I am over exaggerating and that there isn't a problem. Let us look at a few problems we all can relate to. You may think my comments are verging on the political, so be it. The fact is how we organise society and what values we put before others is politics itself and although many people believe you shouldn't get involved in politics this doesn't help the debate.

Another factor that I've often mentioned which I feel has had a negative impact on how we bring up our children is the 1989 Children Act. This is an Act of Parliament which I have read countless times and believe it to be absolutely and fundamentally sound. It came into force on the 14/10/1991. A date I remember well as it was a date I had co-ordinated with the head of children's services for

Durham County Council to have submitted an application for registration of a children's home. This was with the full knowledge that it did not meet the criteria due to it being a small dwelling house with no more than three children. The date was symbolic as it was thought the infant Pear Tree was the first to apply under the new Act. The idea was to add to our professional credibility and focus the minds of those that would have to consider it before they rejected it, on the value of small homes. It would be another nine years before this would be acted upon with the development of The Care Standards Act 2000. I do believe we had a significant role to play in the process of bringing down the sizes of these monstrous institutions to that of a normal family home. Small homes are commonplace now but back then, my idea of using an ordinary house with only a few children staffed by professionals was unheard of, it was a new idea.

We digress from the point. Following the implication of the Act, the way it was implemented and the way professionals interpreted it and took out the points they wanted to and suppressed others, was shocking.

The implementation placed children at the centre of everything, rights without responsibilities. Values became even more forgotten about. As a young teacher I can recall expressions of alarm and disbelief as it was worked through in the staff room of then one of the biggest special schools in the country. I distinctly recall comments such as 'there will be riots on the streets in twenty years time' (2011 did in fact see such riots on an unforgivable scale).

Not long after, we began to read in the local papers and through the education grape-vine reports of dawn raids on Head Teachers who had broken up fights in the play ground being arrested for "child abuse" due to the way they had been forced to get hold of the culprits. Can you imagine the cruelty imposed on someone who had spent all their life working to promote the education of children being subjected to such a trial, even if it never got to court! What would it do for their personal professional development, never mind their self-esteem and self-respect. Needless to say shock waves ran through the professional services and many resided themselves to the fact that their job was now limited and precarious, new survival strategies needed to developed. In most cases stick to the curriculum and those that can't behave would be excluded or moved on.

But what of the impact on society? I believe that we actually see the impact daily and are paying the price for it out of our taxes at an unaffordable rate. With just a few in mind to demonstrate the point.

## **Binge Drinking**

Could it be conceivable two or three generations ago to have our city streets littered with people who have had too much to drink? It's at this point younger people (under thirty) are saying "What's the problem? It's normal" and the older people are saying "Dammed right it wouldn't have happened, you would have been arrested for being drunk and disorderly and worst case scenario thrown in the police cells to sober up over night to be released full of apology and embarrassment the following morning!". Today hardly anyone gets arrested for being drunk and disorderly, the cells couldn't cope with it. There is a greater cost, as this not only takes up huge amount of police time but it's treated as a health problem, taking up ambulances and paramedics and clogging up accident and emergency departments. (28/4/15-1in3 admissions to A&E are as a result of alcohol-BBC News) At the same time cancer sufferers are denied life-prolonging medicines despite maybe having spent a lifetime paying into their National Insurance, because it's too expensive. There is no money to pay for it. All this because as Aristotle may say 'We failed to teach those young adults about prudence'. Which asks us to consider what is good for us. The young adults who like to get picked up by ambulances may exclaim "But we pay taxes!" not enough my friend, not enough !

## The Banking Crisis

In 2008 the world came very close to being thrown back to the dark ages as it became apparent the world's supply of money was disappearing and most of what we thought we had was gone. Many young bankers, I say young because on the financial markets, they were. In earlier less experienced days when I was trying to get my business ventures to the next level, I spent time with these guys, on the stock dealing room floor. I recall one of them asking me to re-mortgage my house to pay for this new stock that was a dead cert. When I enquired as to the depth of his experience he replied that he was twenty two. It was in these times of losing relatively large amounts of cash in the early noughties that I was reminded of my values which was to invest in myself and get on and graft. But as we were saying these young guys were selling high value mortgages to people who couldn't afford them against houses that weren't worth the money. Their value was in fashionable ideas that house prices only go up regardless. A lot of money literally went south in Florida holiday homes which in many cases were wooden sheds on a sand bank! When the realisation was made that the bank's asset sheet was based on hope and a prayer, the house of cards came crashing in.

When in this process did the young bankers stop and think, should I be doing this, is it right, am I doing the right thing for my bank and my customers. Where was the loyalty, the self governance or morality? 'Out the window man as long as I get my bonus (commission) cheque'. What of integrity? They fell foul of one of the most dangerous negative values of all 'Greed'. Greed that nearly financially crippled the world.

So how is this relevant to you working at Pear Tree today? Apart from the fact we have had to endure five years of austerity as a result of these guy's poor values and the fact that our NHS is haemorrhaging money with increasing need. It is because it is a question of values or the lack of them and the fact that in our work we see the absence of boundaries and self-governing on a daily basis. Let's look at three that are directly relevant:

## Cyber bullying

In 2013 we contracted a then top of his game guy to come and provide training on the up to date issue of cyber bullying/e-safety and it's consequences. This well meaning professional ex-policeman soon found himself out of his depth. His material was out of date, which our two young teachers were keen to bring him up to date using their laptops as he spoke. But his difficulty was being surrounded by people who knew far more about abuse generally than he did and his difficulty was the impact of cyber bullying specifically over general bullying. I can recall at the time discussing to some criticism the fact that it was as a lack of foundations to their character or personality that created a cyber bully and likewise to those that fell foul to the bullies tricks, to the point of it becoming harmful to them. A lack of resilience and self-protection strategies and the simple ability to switch off the device or get another SIM card. It is a problem to do with bullying and values and not a modern technological problem, that's just a distraction. The scaremongering in my eyes was blown out of the water that evening when I collected my kids from the school bus and asked them if they had heard of or been on 'Chat Roulette'. The reply of scorn and distaste was palpable, "Of course not Dad, why would we want to do that, it's where the pervs go". A good example of the teaching of values paying off and children prepared for the dangers of the modern world and how to avoid its problems. In my view children experiencing cyber problems of any kind are kids with other problems too and we spend far too much time worrying about the technology and not enough time building the foundations which should be teaching values.

A good modern example which I regularly come across is the next issue, access to the Internet.

## Access to the Internet

Some parents go to great lengths to protect their children from harmful images or information available on the Internet. There are many examples of when this is absolutely necessary. While we spend great effort trying to buttress up the fortress to keep them safe, do we spend enough time giving them the skills to be able to build self-governance and resilience. To be able to slay the dragon without needing the castle to hide in.

This issue is coming under greater focus now as a result of young people becoming radicalised. I can't really comprehend how situations such as these aren't to do with the values taught or implied within the family home as negative as they must be for young people to want to go and fight in a Holy Jihad.

We need to give children the facts in all their distasteful details and encourage them to make the right decisions. This was brought home to me recently when I visited a ten year old girl who had been accessing child pornography using her Kindle. The problem was that she had been a victim of child sexual abuse. She was just trying to find answers to her questions in the same way an ill person might research their illness. We need to put systems in place to help her through her trauma, it is the trauma that is the issue not the technology. Access needs to be stopped for a while until there is some resolve and then reintroduced with boundaries and build on successes.

## Obesity

This is defiantly a modern issue and one which I think the food manufactures have a lot to answer for in the way they contaminate and over-process most of our food with either too much salt or sugar. Over the years of watching new children come through the door, a definite change has occurred. Twenty or so years ago all you wanted to do was get some good home cooking into them and build them up into fine young men and women. Now the story is reversed and we find overweight young people who we need to teach how to moderate their intake and provide healthy diets and get them out, to begin with just moving around, exercise and motivation being the next step. A very simple equation has to be played out because of negative values such as 'gluttony' and a lack of direction, the course of action required is eat less and do more. Nationally this has become a huge problem facing the NHS and the government. Yet we pay enhanced incentives to those that are morbidly obese which is only likely to encourage them to remain so.

The government needs to start the process of placing values at the heart of these issues, adopting a behaviourist approach and making personal responsibility, actions and consequences relevant to everyone. Politicians also need to convince the population that they have re-discovered the values of honesty and integrity if we are to see improvement in this area.

By now you've maybe got the idea that I am quite keen on teaching values. The fact is I always have been. The only area I think I have failed this organisation, probably through a limited education myself, is in the need to identify key words describing values and then measure how well we live up to them, the way described by Neil Hawkes. Before we do that and look at key words, I would like to take the opportunity to tell another story. You know I like stories, and this one is aptly fitting. Where does my strong value base come from? Answer, the same person that Aristotle's came from, most things in life start with your mum.

I would first of all go back to my maternal grandparents. My grandfather was born in 1895, yes, that is **1895** and was a very strong Labour man and Union man. The 12<sup>th</sup> son of a miner- the whole family saved money enough to be able to ensure that he never went down the pit. He worked for the local council, in their offices, and became, I am led to believe, one of the founding members, or contributors, of The Labour Party. His wife, my grandmother, became a suffragette and was very politically motivated in the early 20's. She was born in 1899 and with regret, passed away in 1996 – I

say 'with regret' as had she lived only a few years more, she would have been one of the very few people ever to have lived across the three centuries and yes, she had some stories to tell.

Despite coming from a very poor, mining background, they brought their children up to work hard and do well. One of their sons, my Uncle, was one of the people who left County Durham to move to South Africa in the 60's, and like a lot of people who emigrated there at that time, found life to be good – big house, swimming pool and "staff", from the local black community.

In 1970 my Mother took me there, to see the country and to decide whether or not it was a place we should also make our home. The trip was meant to last for six months and quickly became fraught with dangers. South Africa in the 60's & 70's was not a good place - apartheid was at its height and permeated life and the culture of the place to an extraordinary degree – to a level that was completely unacceptable to my mother. She was the one who would stand in the Post Office, in the queue for 'Whites Only' and when she got to the counter, would pull a black man over from the opposite queue – who had been waiting far longer as the rules were that no black person could be served when a white person was waiting – and she would refuse to move until he was served.

Actions like this did not go down well and it soon came to a head when we were to go on a holiday, on a safari to the Kruger National Park. The country is one of the most beautiful in the world; the sunsets and mountain ranges are impregnated upon my mind today however an event would take place that would leave a lasting impression on a small 4 year olds' mind and one that has, in all its distant memory, become part of me.

Our trip was to last several nights and at one point we were to reside overnight in a small village of mud-huts. Safari in the 70's was very different to what it is today: not as commercialised and these were literally 'mud-huts' albeit done to a good standard. However, the family maid, a stoic woman, one of the most loyal and conscientious people you could ever find, was directed towards a tin-sheet shed at the outer-edge of the village, where she was to reside with the other maids, on a bare concrete floor, open to the Bush and the previous week, a maid had been taken by a lion.

Keeping cool and her powder as dry as ever, my mother waited until nightfall. I was tucked up in my bed but acutely aware of what was going on. She disappeared and quickly returned, not just with our maid but all of the maids and I can recall there being literally no room on the floor in our hut, as every maid was found a place to sleep. This was not without its dangers, which were to be experienced at first-hand.

The following morning as the sun rose, I can remember the sound of the distant Land Rovers roaring towards the village. Acting on a tip-off, the South African Police had come to confront this 'disgraceful English woman' who had dared to go against the grain, and arrest any black person they could find in breach of their conditions.

The maids all jumped out of bed and I can remember them rushing out of the back-door, out of windows, and scurrying back to their tin-sheet shed like the frightened animals they were depicted to be.

My mother, disabled through ill-health most of her life, but with a heart of a lion, confronted the South African Police with their machine guns pointing at the doorstep. She had made it – the maids were all back where they were supposed to be – but just in time! The Police made their point and my mother made hers.

It will be of no surprise to you to hear me say that her actions on that occasion, and in every day life since, when she was helping people of all capacities, was inspirational.

I was brought up knowing the family history that I have presented to you in its briefest form and that protecting the weak and vulnerable, was the most honourable of things to do. It is with that in mind

that I continue to promote the values that she taught me, with the knowledge that a lot of our young people have not had the advantages that I had.

Just looking at this as a small child I was to see and learn so many values in this one experience. Courage, compassion, kindness, humility, responsibly, tolerance, justice, integrity. These are the ones that immediately come to the forefront of my mind.

During this holiday whilst walking around the island we came across an elderly German couple. They were keen to share holiday experiences. They told me that they hadn't been back to South Africa since 1992 as it was "Much better before they got rid of the apartheid' . Having just finished, Boris Johnson's The Churchill Factor, I thought of my experiences and Churchill's fight for justice and felt a bit Churchillian to say the least. To avoid further Anglo-Deutsch troubles we moved on. That night the old man found himself caught out in a tropical downpour. I beckoned him to take shelter in our house. This reminded me of the Bible story 'The Good Samaritan', amazing things, values, when you begin to think about them.

## **Looking at specific Values as key words.**

I can't think of a better place to start other than with the words of Aristotle. The following is an analytical appraisal of just one of his quotes.

"Children become just by doing just acts".

Let us consider this in a Pear Tree context. This once again highlights the importance of working on the farms. We have always said that in most cases for these children this is the first time they will have ever been given the responsibility for looking after something else as opposed to being looked after and the centre of attention.

The routine of the animal husbandry involved within the farm environment helps to drum it home over a period of time.

"By imitating virtue we become virtuous, starting with politeness the beginnings of respect".

One aspect of Pear Tree only a few people get to see is the initial assessment procedure that happens once a referral is made. This starts with an information gathering meeting with the social worker. This may be the first time we have met and at this point I am keen that they get a holistic view of our work. First meeting in my office, we then look at what I call the story boards then discuss the child and then a walk round the farm. Then it is over to the house manager (of the home with a vacancy), taking them back for a visit to the home.

This is then followed by a visit to the child. With both of these two meetings I am always conscious of the fact that it is the start of a relationship and in the case of the child this maybe for the rest of their childhood. Start as you mean to go on with a polite introduction and in nearly every case a handshake. This is often met with bemusement and occasionally uncertainty. There is sometimes the need to show how to shake hands, properly and firmly! Often I can see the social worker looking on as if to say, "Where does he think he is, a public school or something. Has he any idea how to work with these kind of kids?". In my mind I'm saying, "You better believe it, the question is do you? At this point questions are already being answered. I want to know how tuned in the social worker is, how responsive the child is to physical touch, direction and open to discussion. In addition I've set the tone for the future relationship with not just myself, but every one at Pear Tree.

During an OFSTED inspection of the school some years ago the inspector joined me on the farm yard waiting the arrival of the children in the morning. They arrived as always with their school uniforms on, exiting the cars and politely saying good morning to the inspector and myself. She turned to me and said, "David you've got some of the hardest to place, difficult children in the region yet that was more impressive than I've seen in any mainstream school. You need to explain to me how you've

done it and why you've still got them here and not reintegrated them back to mainstream school". An overall assessment of the school and a look at some risk assessments sorted that out, but we still had to design another procedure.

As said earlier good manners and politeness are an expectation. In the vast majority of cases if not all the children have been admitted due to their capacity to respond to expectations. Maintain and keep those expectations going and they will live up to them. Their starting point on that journey may be the issue that causes variation in this equation.

As Aristotle said 'politeness is the beginnings of respect'. So one thing leads to another - sequential learning. How many times have I said "Is it polite or good manners for a child to jump in someone's car and take control of what every one has to listen to on the radio?" Those members of staff that allow that then wonder why the children don't have any respect. Start and maintain the little things that you may think aren't important or significant.

*"If we treat people as they are we make them worse. If we treat people as they ought to be, we help them to become what they are capable of becoming."* Goethe.

Recently a member of staff, intelligent and able, said to me that when I walk through the main barn at Toy Top it's like nothing he has ever seen before, the children reacting to myself like moths around the lamp. The reason is in terms of relationships with children. Myself and some more respected staff are pushing buttons most people don't even know exist. To use an analogy, again from the horse world, it's like a dressage rider watching as others are trying to ride and hang on. We so much want to teach others these things and I will attempt to again in this document, as I have done in many others. Perhaps I will try and say it another way but the reader has to be open to the prospect there are skills to learn and want to learn them. For many it means making changes, primarily to the way you relate to and interact with the children on a daily basis. I will talk more about that later.

Back to Aristotle. "Respect and gratitude, where morality begins". Aristotle was probably referring to how we teach little children, the early years, not the developmentally delayed teenagers we are struggling with but the point is valid. By living in an environment that expects please and (just as important) thank you, we are developing the brain to understand the concept of gratitude. This in itself is getting those mirror neurons to work. The part of the brain that promotes empathy and empathy is, as said before one of the most significant life skills needed to be learnt. If you think of others and can demonstrate that you are genuine in that, the world will react very differently as a result as apposed to if you don't. Key to helping the rehabilitation of any kind of offender.

"From this **prudence**" Which asks us to consider what is good for us how many thought it was a good name for a cat, or a song from the 1980's, Dear Prudence (By Siouxsie and the Banshees!)

I wish I had been more prudent years ago and not bought shares in Ratners. If you're over forty you'll know what I mean. This was the high street jewellers that announced to the world the reason they could sell their stuff so cheap was because, "It was total crap". They subsequently went bankrupt, I lost the lot. That night I found I was more concerned with losing the couple of pound coins out of my back pocket, that I was going to use to buy my tea with. That was real cash not just the paper exercise I was involved in with Ratners. I went hungry that night, and it taught me lot about dear old prudence. Every child that leaves our care at eighteen struggles with budgeting and looking after themselves. What a good skill to have, '**Prudence**'.

"This then governs other virtues such as temperance, courage and justice."

**Temperance**, this could be useful, the ability to govern ones temper and moods! If we can teach children the importance of temperance, as a life skill, how important could that be?

**Courage**, let's be clear, I had to be brave to set this organisation up in the first place, and continue to invest in it year after year. Myself and colleagues show courage dealing with other professionals when

challenged, often defending our values and likewise there are occasions when we have to challenge others on behalf of the children and to preserve our values. Every member of staff faced with conflict and challenging behaviour demonstrates a great deal of courage and we pass on this value to our children, encouraging them to be brave every time we take them out of their comfort zone. This often leads to another value in **trust** as we use this process to develop **trust**. It is important to remember that these children have to use considerable **courage** in order to **trust**! It is a hidden value that permeates everything we do and is very much part of the culture and ethos of the place without it being overtly so.

**Justice**, has to be seen to be done, whether it is two children in conflict or dealing with a bully. It can often be that we seek justice ensuring our young person has their situation accurately represented and not scapegoated by parents as has sometimes been the case.

In the above I have focused entirely on the words of Aristotle in one quote, to demonstrate the point. We have been incredibly successful in teaching values for years. Long may it continue, but now I feel with added confidence and the identified need to build the language and understanding of specific words into the curriculum.

There are many more values to consider such as **kindness, compassion, tolerance, honesty**, (the culture demands it from staff and children alike) **integrity, responsibility, peace**, which we strive for. By now I am sure you understand the point and what I am trying to achieve. There are many resources that can be found to list and explain these, the words of Aristotle have served us well in being able to demonstrate how they are directly related to our work, and the rest you can work out for your self, I **trust** you to do so.

## The Importance of the Educator

As an appraisal of an important piece of work by Dr Neil Hawkes I would like to draw your attention to a couple of important factors that I think demonstrate how intertwined our work has been. He talks about the importance of our environment which has been as you know fundamental to our work, also in which we excel beyond any others. The importance of signage, or in our case lack of it, at the entrance to the home or school. Do you find photos of the staff in order of rank? You bet you don't. This highlights one of the most important values of mine that I have maintained from the start and until my last day, we may have hierarchy of roles but never relationships. How many places do you find the maintenance man held in such high regard. Doesn't that speak volumes as to the sincerity and importance of this value?

Likewise one of the reasons we have such a valued maintenance man is because of his age and with that his wisdom and experience, (I have used his counsel on many occasions) and his ability to be open and honest with every one he meets, staff or child. Through this journey (not the holiday but the research) I find work by Martin Buber on the impact of relationships. This is something I have documented many times without being as specific as to the actions required by staff which Buber articulates so well. He talked about two kinds of relationships (I- Thou) fully engaged allowing authentic self to shine through. (I- It) automatic and functional. Superficial-like buying a bus ticket.

Throughout the years of interviewing and employing people (which by now is in the hundreds) this is the heart of the subject. I could give you a staff list and divide it into two with a line down the middle. On one side the genuinely successful people who can be open and sincere. Something that children can spot straight away. Those people have gone on to make an impact on many children's lives by being with them in heart and soul. On the other side of that line would be the staff that turn up, make the tea, take kids out and usually have problems because they talk to them like they are buying a bus ticket. If you want to avoid problems and make an impact, open your heart let the real person be seen

and develop a proper therapeutic relationship.

'Let it shine through your eyes' as Dr Hawkes describes. I recall in the very first Pear Tree activity days back in 1990 - we took a group of some twenty children ice-skating. I had the kids following me around and falling over. This was fledgling days and I had to make it work. There was a teenage girl who wouldn't come on the ice. I skated over to her looked her in the eye and she followed. Later I was chastised by my colleague (who was older, wiser and much more experienced) for giving her 'the eye' to get her skating. It was most defiantly not a come on, I used my eyes to translate the message- "I'm here with you now, I won't let you fall, take this first step with me, you need to it's important". I've been giving the same message ever since, using my eyes. Whether it's getting on a horse for the first time or in crisis coming out of restraint. In the above example I was only twenty four and my senior was and later did struggle with the success of the young upstart. It was one of many difficulties I had to overcome.

This makes the point, to be able to have an impact you have to have a genuine relationship. That's why on occasions we see moths round the lamp. It's nothing to do with hierarchy it's the sincerity of the relationship as our maintenance man knows.

## Conclusion

By now I hope you are feeling empowered by the new knowledge and understanding you've gained and confidence in knowing what a good job you've been doing for so long.

In 2011 when we first visited Stapleton Manor I met the estate agent, whom I had never met before. The deal was to be over two million pounds, I said to the agent, "As you don't know me would you like a reference so you know I'm not wasting your time?" His reply was, "We know who you are and your capacity to deliver". That's where my business reputation built on values has taken me. **Integrity** is my highest priority as I always seek to do what I say I will do. That's my **honour** at stake.

My values are such that I want people to join me in the process of taking this quest to the next level. Whether we are registered with the 'International Values in Education Trust' or not is a moot point, the process is the whole point. The impact of teaching values to our children should be that they make more progress, faster. The impact upon staff will be increased levels of targeted support. The greater impact will be, in my view, an increasingly successful quest for a harmonious atmosphere and from that, **peace**.

David Bartlett  
April 2015  
Sat under a palm tree on Long Island Bahamas.

## ***Postscript 1***

Following writing this document I was made aware of two incidents that reflect the importance of values. The first demonstrates the absence of consideration and kindness, unwittingly promoting division. The second a multitude of positive values.

The first incident was during a formal lesson in school with three children and a teacher, supported by two young residential social care workers (RSCW). Halfway through the session one of the RSCW offered to make the other a drink, stood up and proceeded to do so and then sat and drank their drink without offering to A) ask the teacher if it was ok to do so and B) offer to make the teacher and students a drink. This incident not only demonstrates appalling bad manners and sets a bad example, it reminds those without a drink that there is one rule for carers and one for students. It also undermines the leadership of the teacher and results in a difficult situation-creating disharmony.

The second is of a House Manager and is full of evidence as to the quality of the relationships within the home and parenting provided to the children. The three girls A B and C were invited to the wedding of an ex-member of staff. In preparation for this they were taken shopping to buy dresses for the occasion.

The first girl 'A' immediately chose a dress that was overtly sexual, and inappropriate for the occasion. She was told so and to choose another. She then explained to the House manager that she was out of touch with what young people wear today and was being unreasonable. Girl 'A' was told that the dress was being bought for a purpose and the house manager did indeed know better as to what was appropriate for that purpose and that standards were standards to be upheld if indeed she did still want to go to the wedding. Girl 'A' promptly chose another (appropriate) dress.

Girl 'B' chose well with help and support.

Girl 'C' liked the first dress she tried a lot but thought it wise to look further and indeed looked at many dresses in many shops, ultimately deciding her favourite was the very first one she had tried on. They returned to the first shop to find it was no longer available in her size. Disappointed she left empty handed.

Later the house manager was out shopping with her husband when she came across the same dress in the required size. Using her own money she proceeded to purchase it. Whilst at the checkout she realised its stitching was coming away at the zip. The house manager enquired if they had another dress without damage but was told that it was the last one in that size. A discount was agreed and she took it home and in her own time repaired the zip. 'C' got her favourite dress and at a discount price.

The above demonstrates beautifully how for girl 'A' choice within educated boundaries was given, along with educating in taste and decorum. How girl 'C' was ***patient, considered*** and ***thoughtful***. The house Manager was also ***thoughtful, considerate*** and ***kind***. Taking personal ***responsibility*** to help girl 'C' to look her best on this special day.

Also worth mentioning is the quality and genuineness of the relationships held between the girls and the member of staff who despite moving on to a new life wants to include the girls in her most special day.

The latter example reminds me of the contribution made by members of staff who share my values and have promoted them conscientiously and consistently, in some cases for many years. I value their contribution. The ***value*** of their contribution is immeasurable.

## What is a value?

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

- [Aristotle](#)

‘A *value* is a principle that guides our thinking and behaviour’

‘The values that we hold in our hearts are expressed in our behaviours and can be described as our virtues’

Value = Principle

- Values are the ideals or standards that people use to direct their behaviour
- Values are what people strive to realise in their lives

Virtue = Behaviour

- A behaviour showing high moral standards
- A quality considered morally good or desirable in a person

Vice is the opposite—a habit that spoils one’s chances of achieving personal happiness. By definition, vice is bad; there cannot be a good vice.

### Values

1. Integrity
2. Kindness
3. Courage
4. Respect
5. Responsibility
6. Happiness
7. Love
8. Unity
9. Honesty
10. Friendship
11. Freedom
12. Patience
13. Appreciation
14. Co-operation
15. Harmony

### Virtues

1. [Frugality](#)
2. [Industry](#)
3. [Contentment](#)
4. [Chastity](#)
5. [Perseverance](#)
6. [Persistence](#)
7. [Fair-mindedness](#)
8. [Tolerance](#)
9. [Self-respect](#)
10. [Humility](#)
11. [Politeness](#)
12. [Charisma](#)
13. [Friendliness](#)
14. [Sportsmanship](#)
15. [Cleanliness](#)

### Vices

1. Wastefulness
2. Laziness
3. Discontent
4. Promiscuity
5. Yielding
6. Discontinuity
7. Prejudice
8. Intolerance
9. Dishonour
10. [Arrogance](#)
11. [Rudeness](#)
12. Repulsiveness
13. Unfriendliness
14. [Dishonesty](#)
15. [Dirtiness](#)

## ***Postscript 2***

Following the release of this document at a presentation to managers on the 10th of June, where all houses were asked to go and repeat the presentation at their staff meetings and from that discuss what each house considers their values to be. The school was also to do the same.

As a result the following was compiled and each house manager then brought this information back to the boardroom table to put their point of view forward. From this and considering all the relevant factors the following corporate values were agreed. They had to be adopted by all departments and also could be easily taught to our children.

The decided values were

Courage  
Integrity  
Responsibility  
Respect  
Kindness

Whilst the initial discussion considered the importance of love, as being fundamental to everything of worthwhile value, I put forward the view that this should not be adopted due to the fact that, with regret, this was a value that our children had little if any experience of. That wasn't to say it wasn't achievable in their lives and case studies were discussed about children who had, as a result of being successful in the above values, found love and sustainable relationships. Similarly for friendship and happiness.

Honesty was thought to be significant but the meeting agreed that you couldn't have Integrity without Honesty. It was noted that amongst the departments they had all agreed independently on three of the five being Respect, Responsibility and Kindness.

I explained that these were to be corporate values and as such Integrity must feature, as it was not possible to function as an organisation without it. From a child's point of view it was also important to acknowledge the fact that we are asking them to show courage in allowing us to take them out of their comfort zones by being involved in activities and starting the process of developing relationships.

The five above values were adopted as a result of careful analytical 'intelligent consideration'. It was also agreed that the desired outcomes as a result of embracing these values would be Empathy, Happiness and Love.

David Bartlett  
Head of Service  
August 2015.

Vice can be seen as deficiency or excess of virtue, this allows one to assess if someone has either (or both) a deficiency or excess of our (5) corporate values and a further 10 important values. The value of identifying this is that it is possible to track the progress of an individual as they (hopefully) move toward the value and away from the vice(s). The 'ideal' is for an individual to score in the green area, this builds in the normal fluctuations of behavior and acknowledges that nobody is 'perfect' whilst showing that the unwanted traits (in red) can be moved toward the desirable value what Aristotle called the "Golden" Mean.

The video, Aristotle & Virtue Theory: Crash Course Philosophy, explains this in some detail [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=523&v=PrvtOWEXDIQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=523&v=PrvtOWEXDIQ)

What follows is the selected text taken from the presentation that was delivered to our young people. This presentation was designed to introduce the concept of values with simple explanations and actual examples

Vices	Values	Vices
Hypocritical	Integrity	Deceitful
Selfish	Kind	Buys favour/Bribery
Cowardly	Courageous	Reckless
Neglectful	Respectful	Excessive flattery
Irresponsible	Responsible	Worries
Sad	Happy	Gullible
Negligent	Nurturing	Overindulging
Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Dishonest	Honest	Inconsiderate
Hateful	Friendly	Clingy, Needy
Insensitive	Empathetic	Overly Sympathetic
Impatient	Patient	Hesitant
Critical	Grateful	Overly familiar
Naïve	Trustworthy	Negligent
Inconsistent	Consistent	Lack of creativity

## What are Values?

Principles or standards of behaviour.

One's judgement of what is important in life.

### **COURAGE**

The ability to do something that frightens you.

To be brave.

### **INTEGRITY**

The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles.

Knowing what is right and wrong.

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

Being accountable, dependable and trustworthy.

Taking responsibility means never blaming anyone else for anything you are being, doing or feeling.

### **RESPECT**

Having due regard for the feelings, wishes, or rights of others.

Respect can be both given and received.

### **KINDNESS**

Helpfulness towards someone in need, not in return for anything.

To be kind to yourself and to others.

### **Virtues & Vices**

#### **Virtue**

A behaviour showing high moral standards.

A quality considered morally good or desirable in a person.

#### **Vice**

The opposite—a habit that spoils one's chances of achieving personal happiness.

By definition, vice is bad.

### **COURAGE**

- Trying a food that you've never tried before.
- Engaging in a new experience.
- Doing something that might be a little risky such as riding a horse or bike for the first time.
- Standing up for a person who is being picked on.
- Helping out a person or animal in need, even if it might put you in a little bit of danger.
- Standing up for yourself.
- Doing something by yourself for the first time.

### **INTEGRITY**

- Keep your promises even if it takes extra effort.
- Do not gossip or talking badly about someone.

- Do not let someone else take the blame for something you did.
- If someone gives you confidential information, never tell anyone what you know.
- Show respect to coworkers with appropriate conversation and empathy.
- Be responsible. Do what you say you will do.

#### RESPONSIBILITY

- Be accountable.
- Stop blaming
- Acknowledge what happens
- Accentuate the positive. Move through your day with positive attitude
- A responsible person continues to grow emotionally.
- Say “thank you.” Accept praise graciously. When someone acknowledges you, say, “thank you.”
- Practice healthy self--focus.

#### RESPECT

- Listen to others when they speak.
- Value other people's opinions.
- Be considerate of people's likes and dislikes.
- Don't mock or tease people.
- Be sensitive to other people's feelings.
- Don't pressure someone to do something he or she doesn't want to do.
- Show manners towards people, you will make them feel valuable.

#### KINDNESS

- Be a friend who listens
- Be kind to someone you dislike
- Listen with all your senses
- Cook a meal for someone
- Show Your Appreciation to Someone in Your Life
- Make someone a drink without asking
- Hold a door open

Although Values teaching will be embedded across the curriculum there will also be discreet lessons where our core values will be discussed and debated.

## 8. The value of activities.

*Great Speeches by Native Americans (Dover Thrift Editions)*

UNNAMED (Iroquois)

"If the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education" (1744)

Benjamin Franklin tells the story of the speech that follows, how at a council between them and the government of Virginia, the Iroquois were offered a college education for some of their young men.

"We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in those colleges, and that the maintenance of our young men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinced, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal, and we thank you heartily. But you who are wise must know that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some experience of it: several of our young people were formerly brought up at the colleges of the northern provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences; but when they came back to us, they were bad runners; ignorant of every means of living in the woods; unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin, take a deer, or kill an enemy; spoke our language imperfectly; were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, or counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less obliged by your kind offer, though we decline in accepting it: and to show our grateful sense of it, if the gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take great care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them."

Bob Blaisdell

As corporate parents, it is our duty to help our young people develop and be prepared for the world in which they will become young adults. Fig 1 is perhaps my favourite speech ever made, by an Indian chief debating the way two opposing cultures prepare their adolescents for adult life. The speech made all those years ago demonstrates that they had similar issues to ourselves today and in fact the debate goes on.

You only have to watch the news to see politicians regularly debating the quality of the National Curriculum and what we should do with it. Whilst the competent, academic young people are always well catered for, there are times when the debate has focused on the less academic.

The great debate in the sixties and seventies was about the value of the 11+ and even then, whilst the value of grammar schools was never questioned, the issue was what to do with the less academic.

As a left handed dyslexic with buck teeth, flat feet, poor eye sight, and the fact that I was pigeon holed as having learning difficulties as a child myself, has understandably given me great empathy for these young people today, who have had difficulty with education and struggle with academic tasks.

Whilst we often think about activities in either an educational or leisure context and as a good way of keeping young people occupied, happy and out of trouble. The other most important element is spending time with suitable adult role models. Parents often teach their children how to be parents themselves through care and practical tasks such as housekeeping and gardening. In this, the opportunity to spend time with a young person, to interact and influence is so important.

Recent research has questioned the value of, or the absence of young men in particular and spending time with suitable adult male role models. As it is often men that are missing from the equation.

In a Pear Tree situation, we have a unique opportunity to not only help young people recover from abuse, but to do many things as part of a wide and varied structured curriculum. This looks at the young person as a whole human being and provides them with the skills that are to become so important in later life and in many cases lead to employment. (Personal holistic competence)

In fact, the most significant thing that we can do to reduce the likelihood of the cycle of abuse continuing, is helping young people develop skills, so that when they do leave us they are able to function in a meaningful day time activity. Whether this is education, voluntary work or hopefully employment. In my view helping people improve their 'Personal Holistic Competence' is the solution to most social, emotional and behavioural problems for any group of people.

Preparing young people for a lifetime of being dependent on the welfare state, when they have the ability to do more than that, is unacceptable.

My hope is that, in this document, you will see how as educationalists and parents it is possible to break activities down into key elements and recognise their value. By doing so, you can see how some activities bring more to young people than you might think, and some bring very little. With this information, it is possible to use it to plan your day better and to understand the value of your work as well as your colleagues.

The other issue is to help you to manage your time and input. It is my belief that the young people who come to Pear Tree, have been so badly damaged by their experiences, that we have so much to do with so little time to do it in. The clock is ticking from day one, and we don't have time to hang around and waste time on less worthwhile activities.

The overriding issue here is 'balance,' and this document is designed to help you with that. Having an overview of the big picture is so important for everyone working in our environment.

## Evaluating Activities

As a teacher, we are familiar with breaking tasks down into smaller parts, helping children to learn each part in order, and then putting these tasks together to help children to understand the concept and become competent at the task. This is called sequential learning.

In a care environment, many people will do this without realising and in fact, I regularly see people doing this. I have seen many people present as the most natural of teachers. I have also come across teachers with very little natural ability, but who know what they've been taught and can go through a process.

This seems to be a good time to quote a very experienced and respected forensic psychologist, now retired, who once said to me "*there is no correlation between qualifications and competencies*".

In a similar way, I have seen carers at their best, when they draw on their skills as parents, as opposed to just going through a process, remembering protocols, procedures and policies.

This is when nurturing can be experienced, as you decide on a strategy to set young people up to succeed and not to fail.

The following are examples of certain activities that demonstrate how they can be broken down into component parts.

It is important to remember at this point, that we are talking about activities within the context of the Pear Tree curriculum so it is looking at how things are done here.

The following are the examples of chosen activities.

1. Mountain biking
2. Going to the cinema /theatre
3. Going out for a meal at a restaurant/takeaway
4. Fishing
5. Playing football
6. Swimming
7. Ice skating, on real ice and artificial ice
8. Horse Riding
9. Working on the Farms/Gardening
10. Holiday in France
11. Arts and Crafts

To look at these activities, it is clear that they have many attributes to them. These include what we hope that the student involved feels or how they can benefit from the activity and by what proportion.

The common themes/attributes that are reoccurring fall into the following categories:

- Broaden Horizons
- Educational
- Therapeutic
- Improve Skills
- Leisure
- Physical Fitness

If we are to measure these, how can we break these down and what elements define the categories, for example, broadening horizons? In my view, and it's not scientific, but I hope credible, these attributes can be broken down into the following elements by assessing the activity against the following.

### **Broadening Horizons**

- **Outside familiar environment**, our young people have missed out on so much of what life has to offer and their life experiences have had such a negative impact, that we hope to show them an alternative to their previous experiences.
- **Experiential**; that they will benefit from the experience and learn through the process.
- **New Culture**. The culture that has been familiar has often been negative and as a result, restricting their opportunities.
- **New Language**. What can be more relevant to broadening the horizons than exposure to a new language.

### **Vocabulary**

We have discussed in this section the relevance of experiencing a different language. This is only evident when going to a foreign country on holiday, France in particular. There is another factor which is relevant to most activities that Broaden Horizons and that is the use of and development of a child's vocabulary.

When we were successful in recruiting a special needs teacher, who had been awarded Special Needs Teacher of the Year Award in a national competition, (being nominated by a parent of one of his students) he was amazed at the level of vocabulary used by our children as a direct result of the length and breadth of the activities they are involved in. Far and beyond what he was familiar with in mainstream school.

Obviously, how would you know what a Kerry Hill or a White Park is if you hadn't worked on the farm? How would you know your Rainbow from your Brown trout if you hadn't been fishing? Or your courgette from your cucumbers if you hadn't worked in the gardens? Not to mention making sure you get your lynch pin in the right hole! "It's a tractor thing."

With every activity there is a wealth of new language skills the children are exposed to and learn without realising on a daily basis.

### **New Language**

Therefore to take this into account the following formula is needed for this particular element.

- 5 = Exposure to a Foreign Language.
- 4 = Exposure to a Complex Discussion with many new words.
- 3 = Exposure to a Good Discussion including new words.
- 2 = Exposure to a Discussion with a few new words.
- 1 = Limited communication no new words.
- 0 = No worthwhile communication.

## Educational

- **Communication and listening skills.** If an activity is to be considered within in an educational context, clear instruction and receiving and understanding instruction have to be present. The ability for the pupils to give feedback and ask questions needs to be evident in the process.
- **Cross Curriculum Content.** An educational activity outside of the classroom should show evidence of encompassing a number of different subjects.
- **Inspiring.** The activity should demonstrate its ability to inspire pupils to want to learn more .
- **Encourage creativity.** I was once in a meeting of directors from a number of organisations. At one point, we discussed our backgrounds. Whilst our jobs were nothing to do with the Arts, we all had artistic backgrounds and had studied Art. Therefore, being creative can develop into a variety of roles and positions. I understand that the same is representative of heads of all kinds of organisations, so never underestimate the importance of the Arts and being creative.

## Therapeutic

The definition of 'therapy' is 'to help a person heal'. Therefore, a therapeutic activity, (as opposed to a therapy session with a therapist) can be broken down to the following:

- **Enjoyable.** Let's not underestimate the value of having fun, and the value of laughter in the healing process.
- **Stimulating senses.** A therapeutic activity would be higher in value, if it was able to demonstrate how it was able to stimulate the pupils senses.
- **Interaction.** The process of interacting with an instructor or other pupils.
- **Promoting empathy.** This is one of the most important aspects of a pupil's personality to develop, and arguably the most valuable skill to have. Therefore, activities that promote empathy in a therapeutic context, should be recognised and valued. This can also promote moral awareness.

## Improving Skills

- **Dexterity.** (Fine motor skills)
- **Hand eye/Foot co-ordination.** (Gross Motor Skills)
- **Focus.** The ability to maintain concentration on the task in hand
- **Confidence.** The expectation that an activity will allow the pupil to build on success and increase in confidence.

## Social Skills

The client group which we look after have come from abusive backgrounds, where they have been raised by negative role models. Often, as a result of anxiety by the abusers, or later, carers are unsure of how to look after and deal with the kinds of behaviour that develops, and as a result the children often being isolated.

Anyone who works with young people with emotional and behaviour difficulties, knows that the worst thing that we can do is to continue to keep these young people isolated where they are unable to move forward. This often results in young people presenting as being socially inept, often presenting as a little odd to the outside world.

Therefore, working on young people's social skills is a significant step in the right direction towards that normal developmental pathway and helps them to be able to interact with the outside world better, therefore, opening up other opportunities.

When looking at activities that promote social skills, within a Pear Tree perspective we evaluate them in order to break them down into the following component parts.

- **Communication.** How the activity will involve talking and listening.
- **Confidence.** Will the activity allow young people to build on success.
- **Interaction,** with outside people i.e. people from outside the home and wider organisation.
- **Presentation.** How young people would need to be dressed, what kind of uniform, clothes may be needed. The kind of social interaction that may be required for a given circumstance.

### Leisure

Let's not forget the importance of having fun. Helping young people to learn how to utilise local leisure facilities and develop hobbies and interests, increase the chance of that young adult leaving our care, being able to develop some structure in their lives and maintaining that all important 'meaningful daytime activity'.

From a Pear Tree perspective, these activities can be broken down into the following elements to be evaluated.

- **Enjoyable**
- **Stimulating**
- **Relaxing**
- **Structured.** In terms of evaluation, the value would increase with the presence of structure.

### Physical Fitness

One of the most common themes on the news at the moment, appears to be how the nation is dealing with obesity, and in particular childhood obesity.

Therefore, the importance of encouraging children to be physically active from a young age is so important and what better way of doing that than helping children enjoy sport.

From a Pear Tree perspective, having our sporty members of staff being excellent adult role models, is a great way of covering all angles.

From an evaluation perspective, we can break these activities down to cover the following:

- **Cardiovascular.** Getting the heart and lungs working.
- **Stamina.** Keeping it sustained.
- **Fresh air.** An activity would be higher in value if it was being active outside in the fresh air. Due to increased levels of dopamine and vitamin D brought about by exposure to daylight.
- **Team Work.** An activity which encompasses a level of team work, would be higher in value than one that didn't because of what those additional elements bring to a young person's development.

We have the ability to consider an activity, look at its attributes, and break these attributes down into elements. We can then evaluate the elements to enable us to consider how we build up a picture of the attributes to be able to measure/assess the overall value of the activity.

## Educational activities

Please remember that visiting somewhere of educational interest isn't an educational activity until you put something more into it such as:

1. Preparation before you go
2. Learn a bit about where you're going before you go yourself. If not, then never pretend to know, children will see straight through it. Explain that you know nothing about the subject and you're going to learn together!
3. A good briefing about where you're going and what you hope to see and learn
4. Ensure that there is good communication and good listening skills going on
5. Collect material to use afterwards
6. Afterwards, there should be a good debriefing involving the visit being written up and there should be a discussion and record of what they've learned. This is often done by our teachers in the classroom, but could be any member of staff. If it is to be done by different people to the one on the visit, make sure you help them by providing them with plenty of material to work with.

## Measuring Elements

To see how this can be measured let us have a look at a good activity and evaluate what is going on? To consider the attributes, we need to measure the elements?

To consider broadening horizons, we are going to look at the elements listed above under that section and give each element a value from 1 - 5. 1 being not a lot of that element being involved to 5 meaning a lot of that element is involved. There is an element of guess-work and personal judgement, don't be frightened to play with it.

Whilst we may have different people debating the question; is it a 4 or a 5? or even a 3 or a 4, it is unlikely that you would be in dispute over a 1 or 5. Therefore, the small areas of discussion are balanced out, to give an overall picture and it's the overall picture that counts.

The graphs below demonstrate the process.

By adding the values together you arrive at a total, which to conclude the value of the attributes, fits into a range as follows.

$$0 - 4 = 1$$

$$5 - 9 = 2$$

$$10 - 14 = 3$$

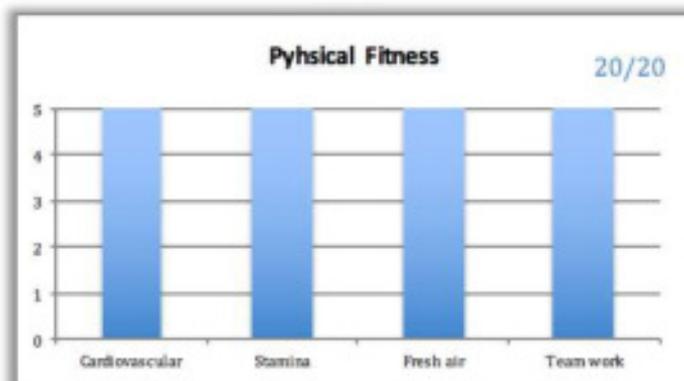
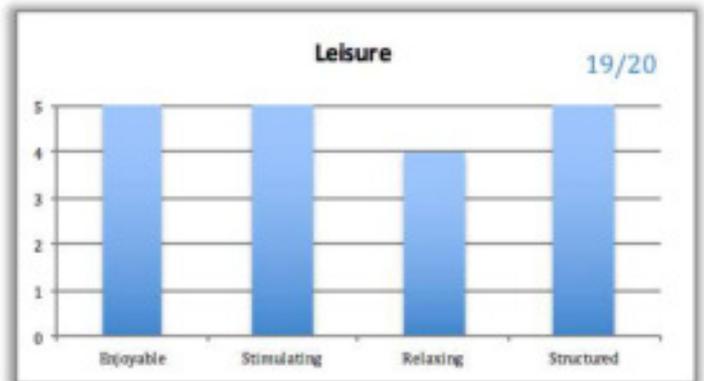
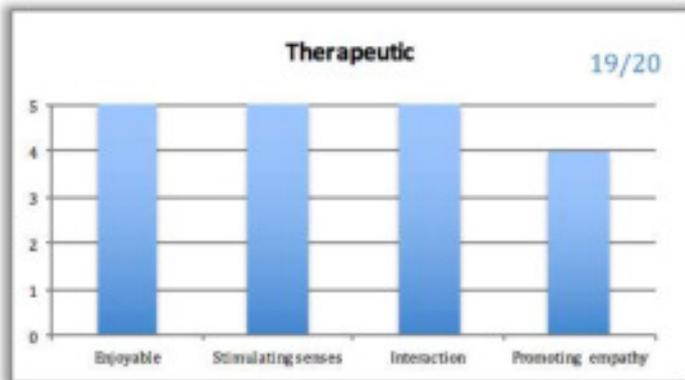
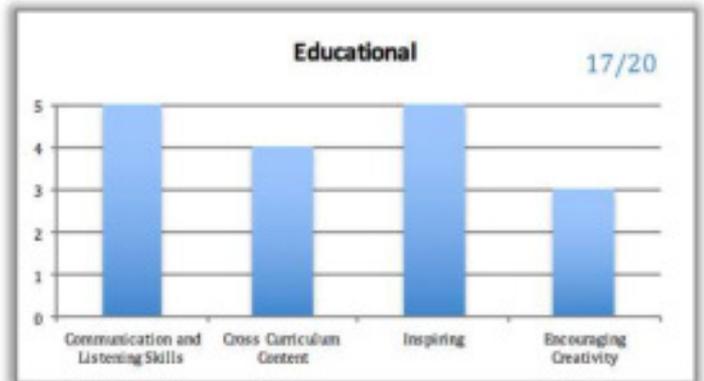
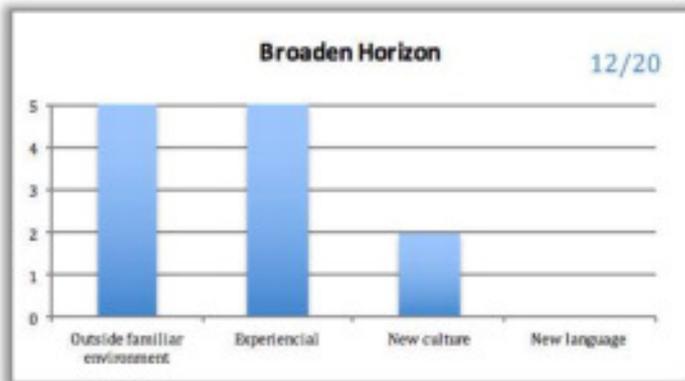
$$15 - 19 = 4$$

$$20 = 5$$

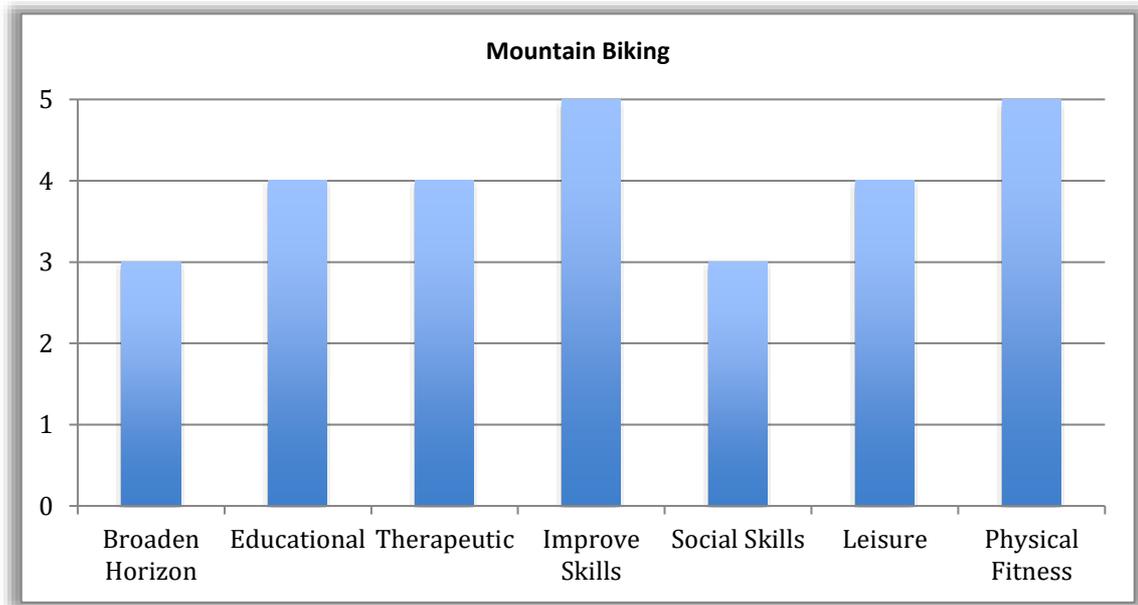
On the final graph, which measures the attributes, you can see that mountain biking is one of those activities that literally ticks all of the right boxes, with a high value in all attributes.

Looking at the range of activities

Mountain Biking  
Graph showing assessment of elements



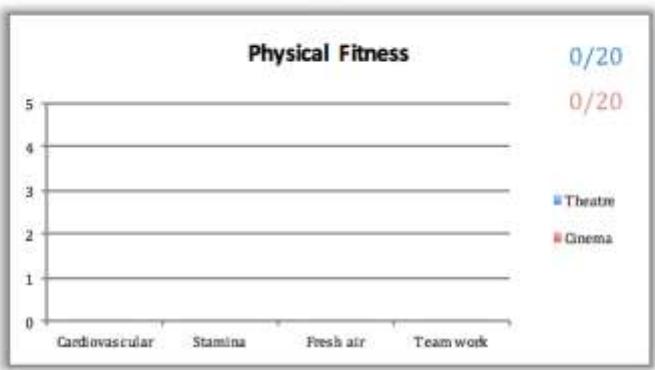
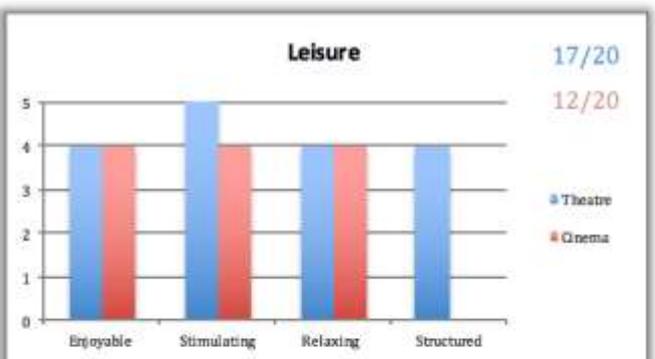
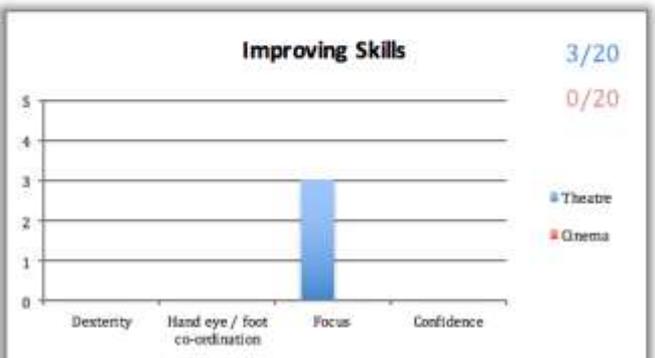
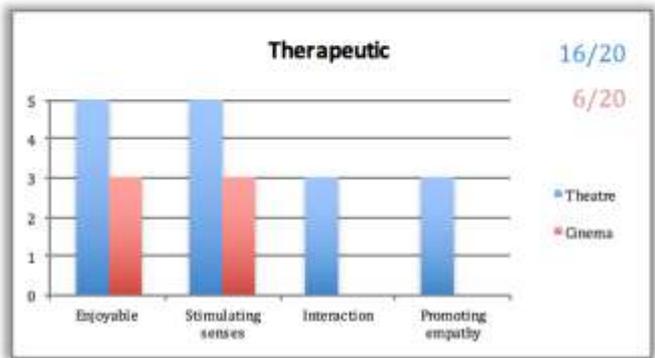
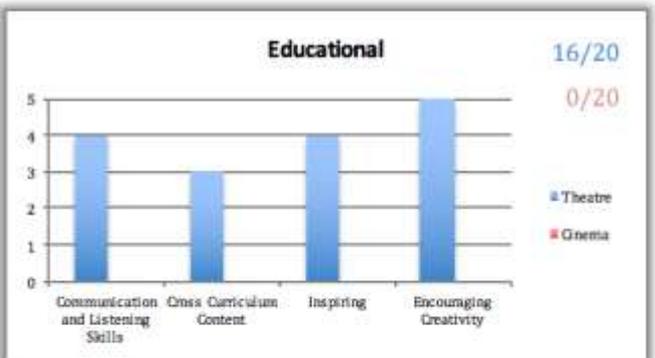
Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes



It continues to be my aspiration that all young people at Pear Tree, providing it's appropriate, experience the following at some point during their time with us:

- Receive a new bike for Christmas
- Receive education and training on how to use and maintain their bike
- Take their bike with them on discharge

**The Cinema and Theatre**  
**Graph showing assessment of elements**



## **Cinema**

Here, it is clear that there are no broadening of horizons, it cannot be called educational and there are elements of therapeutic activity. It is not an activity that will improve skills, or social skills, or anything to do with physical fitness. It is however, a good leisure activity to do for the right reasons, at the right time! Such as a treat or to see the latest must-see blockbuster. Personally, I would keep this for the films that are at their best on the big screen and never during the day! The end result is children full of energy, looking for something else to do on an evening.

## **Going to the theatre**

This, you may feel is the same as going to the cinema, however, it demonstrates an important point in that this is a different kind of experience. It incorporates many more elements and different values due to the nature of the performance.

For example, it broadens horizons due to the environment and expectations of the theatre.

There is a strong educational attribute due to the elements listed. There is interaction with the performers, and it encompasses the arts, singing, stage craft, scenery design etc. in a way that could be argued for the cinema. Theatre is real and literally in front of your eyes not lost in the Hollywood bling.

This is without question often inspiring as the show often incorporates young people of a similar age, they again are not distant Hollywood figures but real people in front of you. All this has to help to encourage creativity!

Therapy also scores higher due to the infrequency of the attendance, it is altogether a more stimulating experience, and there is interaction with people and performers.

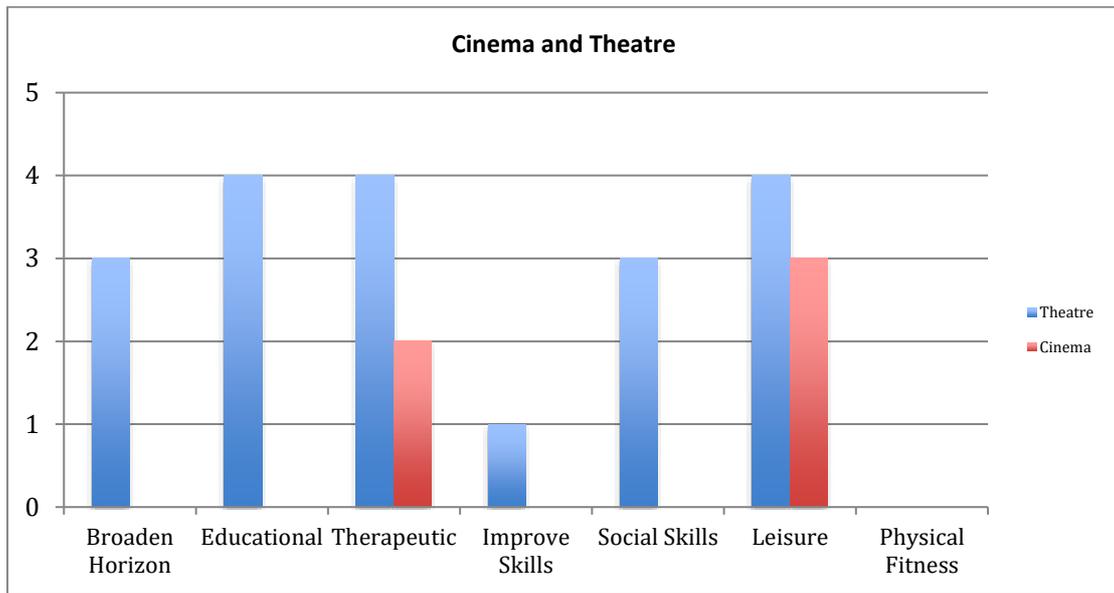
I would also argue that it incorporates an element of promoting empathy due to the nature of the story being shown. This is not exclusive to the stage against the film industry which as a strong supporter of the arts covers many in depth thought provoking stories also. However, these are often the ones missed and the nature of the stories which our children visit, which are more superficial in the film industry. However, even pantomimes have morals and hidden meanings which are much more evident.

There is also evidence of improving skills due to the need to focus and concentrate. It incorporates social skills due to the need to dress smartly (or should be, if not it is a missed opportunity). Along with interaction and direct communication from the actor on stage.

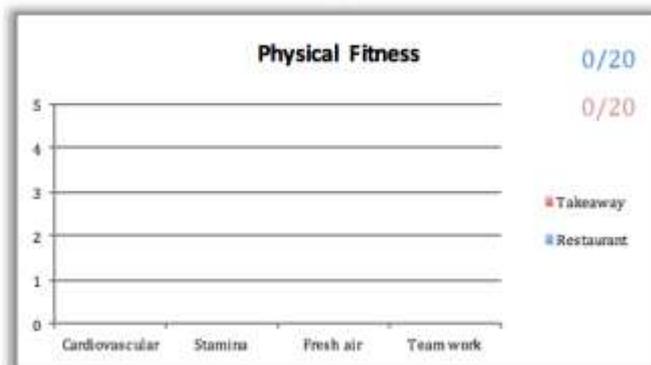
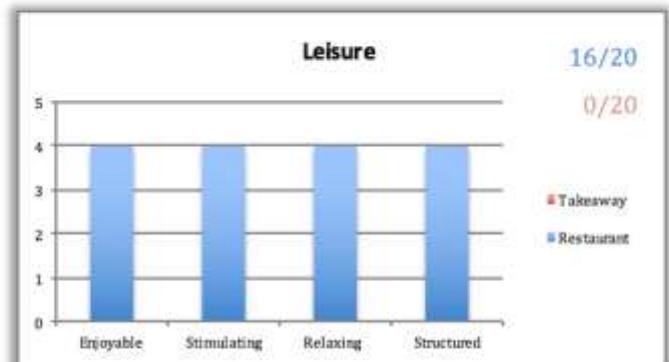
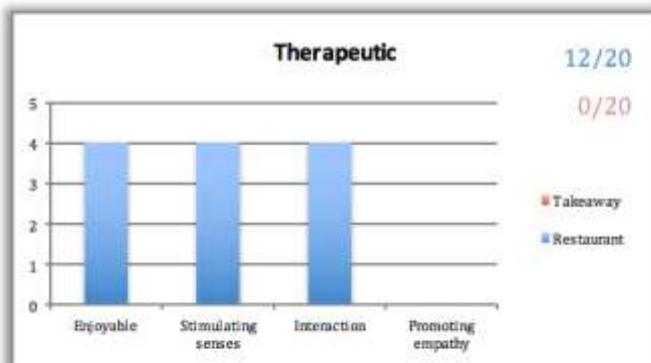
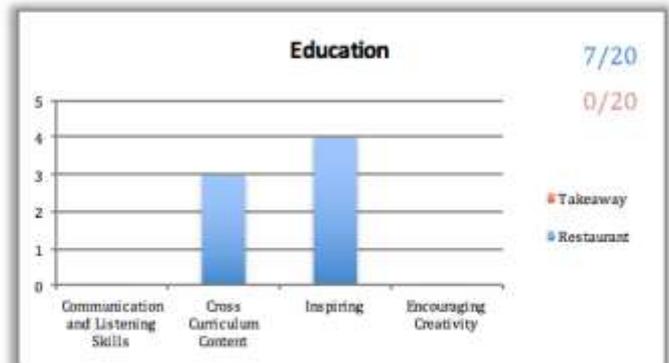
Finally, the leisure aspect is stronger, due to higher values and the element of structure in terms of the expectations and protocols of the theatre, once evident at the cinema also but lost now, as our anything goes culture takes over. This is no surprise but physical fitness is not featured.

All of these reasons are why going to the theatre is listed as a requirement in the 'Personal Holistic Competence Assessment'

Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes



**Meals out at a restaurant/Meals out at a takeaway**  
**Graph showing assessment of elements**



When I say takeaway, perhaps I mean junk food at a restaurant that also serves takeaway!

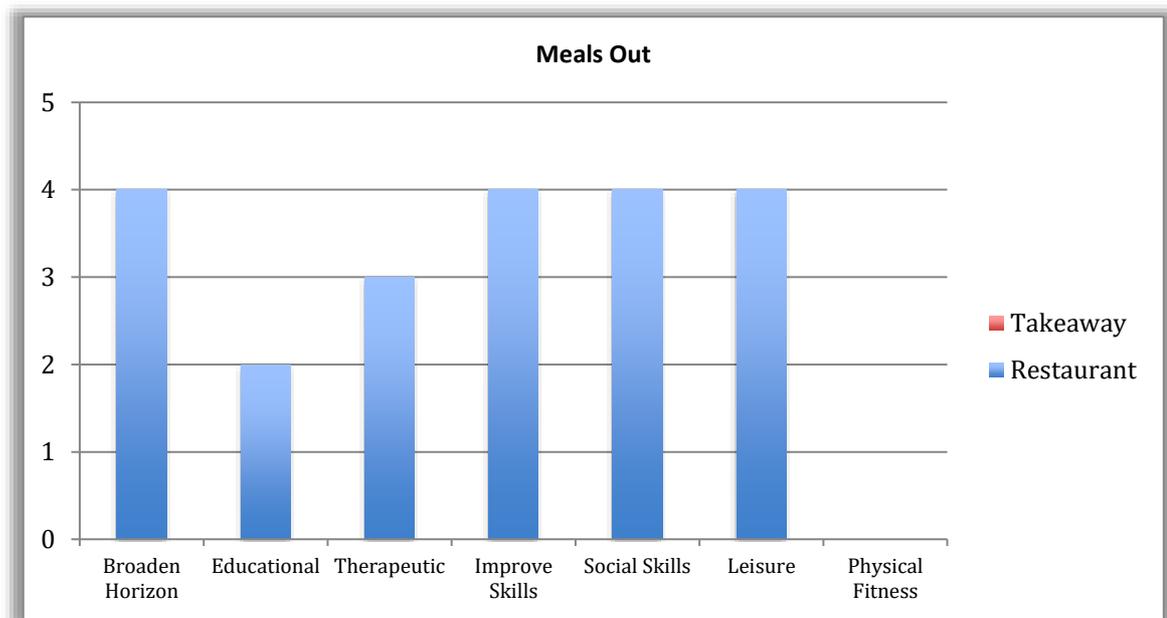
Years ago, I can recall two members of staff debating the correct place to go during a visit to a nearby market town. One person said we should only visit the cafe. The other opted for the tearooms. The first suggestion because it was more appropriate and the second because it was a different environment. There was no difference in cost.

The answer of course, is they are both right depending on what's going on at the time and what kind of experience that you want at that time. It certainly raised discussion about being able to take our young people anywhere at any time and expect good behaviour and it also demonstrated the fact that the second person wanted to give them a more special experience and "broaden their horizons".

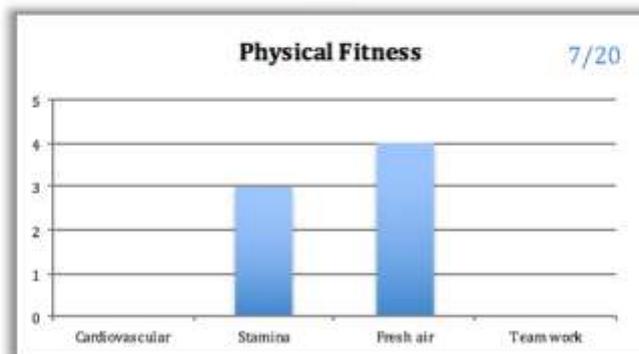
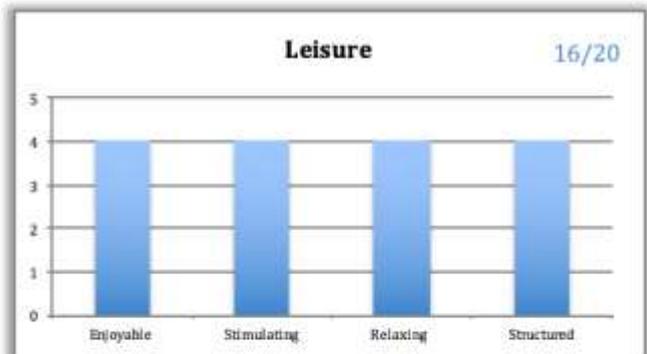
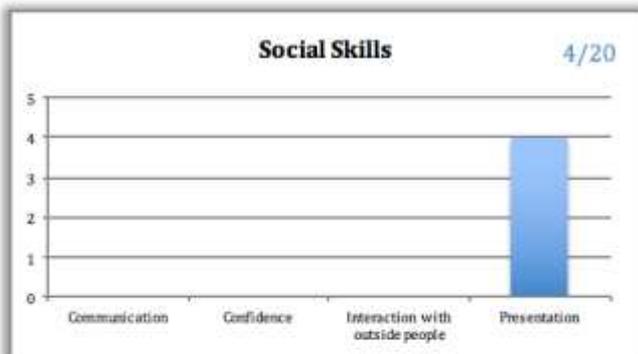
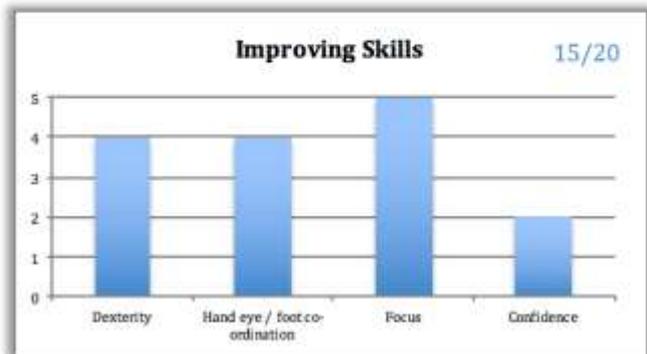
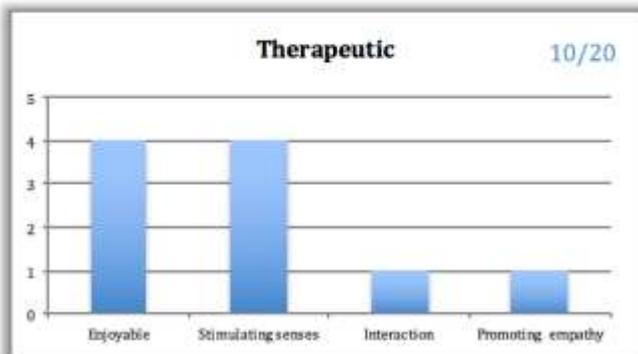
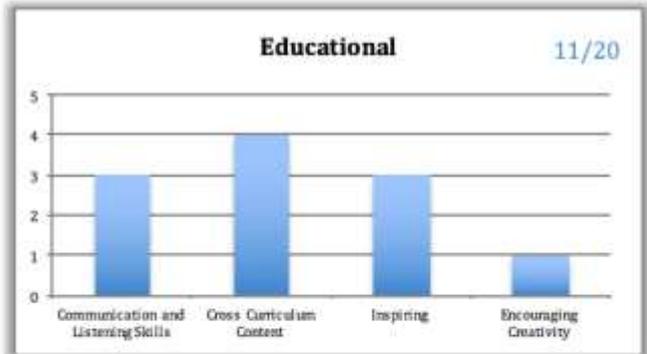
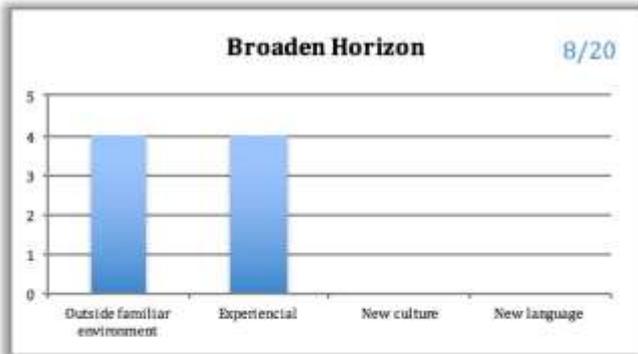
If you use our system to measure the experience, you'll see that in a restaurant there is broadening of horizons and all the other attributes add to the nature of the experience. Even skills are improved, due to learning about the correct cutlery and focusing on the process. Promoting good social skills is very evident.

However, if you go to a junk food takeaway chain, it literally brings nothing to the table other than being fed and not very well at that!

Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes



**Fishing**  
Graph showing assessment of elements

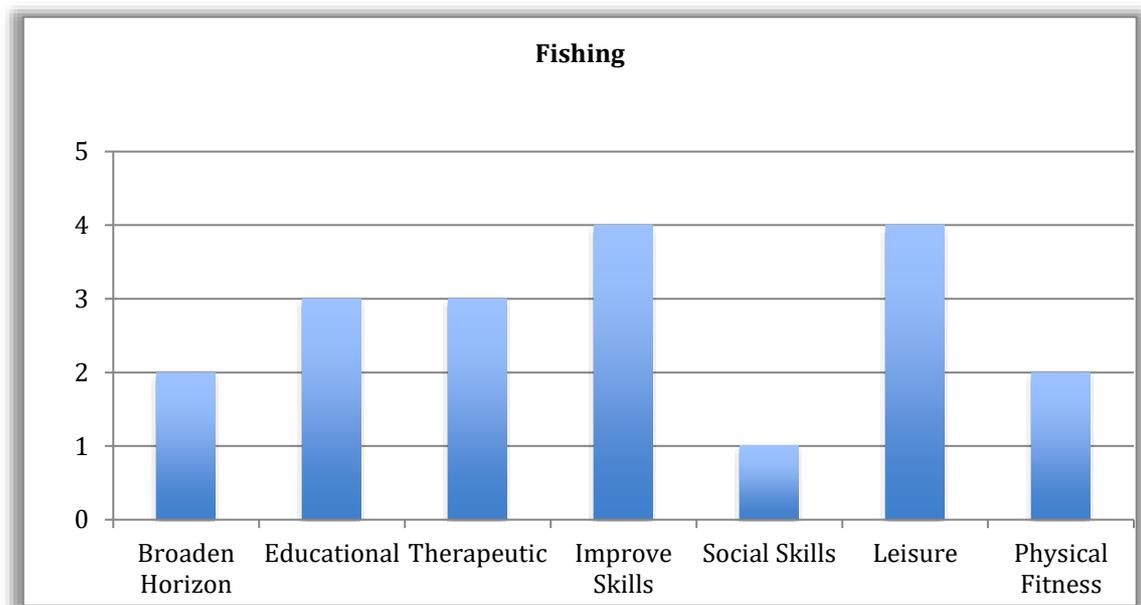


Many people love fishing. After football, it is the nation's second favourite sport.

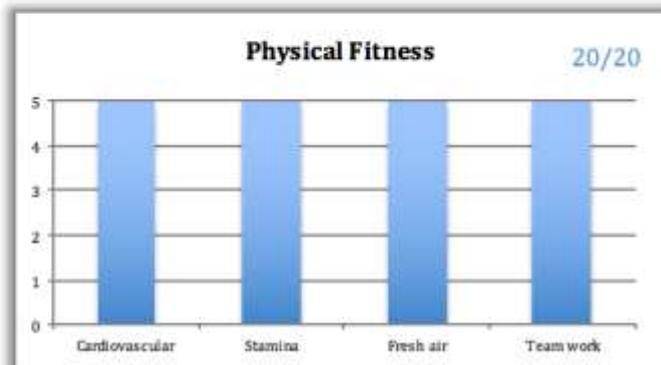
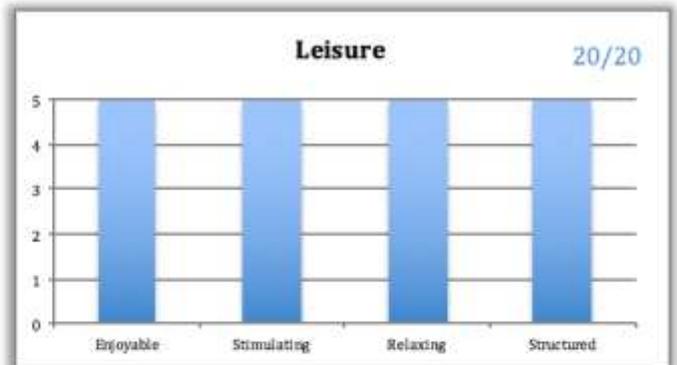
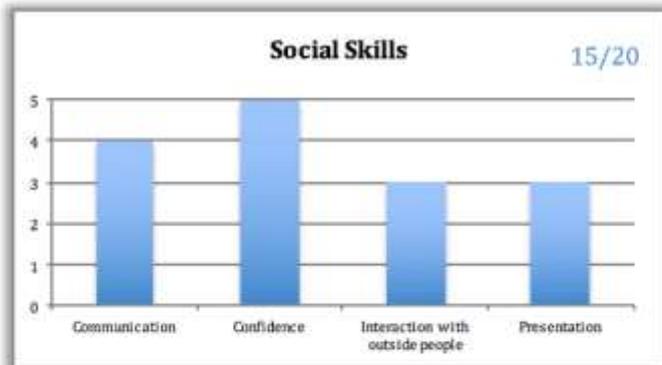
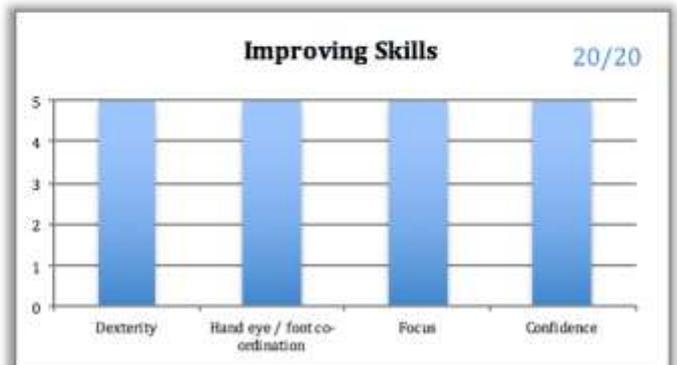
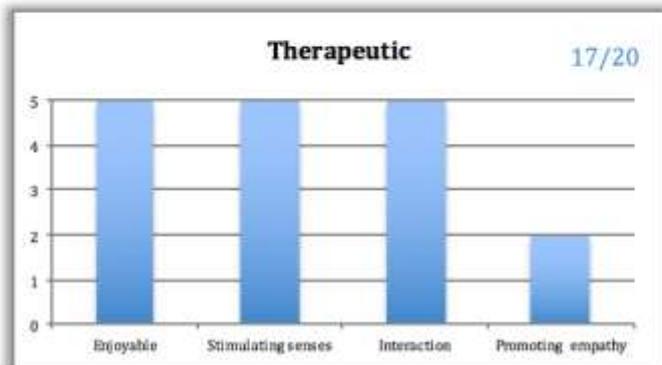
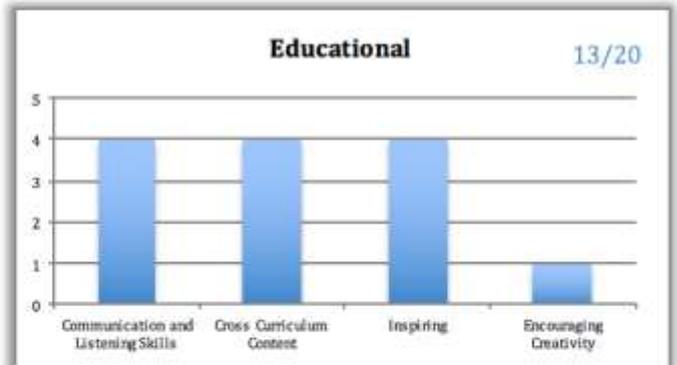
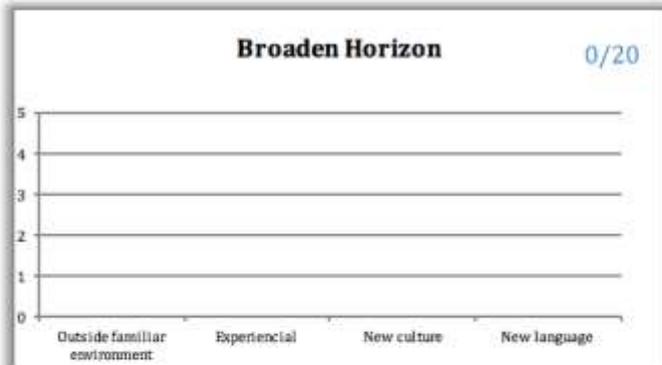
Looking at our system, it is clear to see that it has many benefits for young people, many elements resulting in each attribute being registered. The development of the fisheries project at the Manor, means that it has been able to develop strongly as a cross curricular activity, involving geography, science and environmental studies and rural science. Also, learning to tie flies is very creative.

Contrary to first impressions, even when dispatching fish, there is the promotion of empathy as you are considering the event from the fish's perspective and how to do it as humanely as possible.

Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes

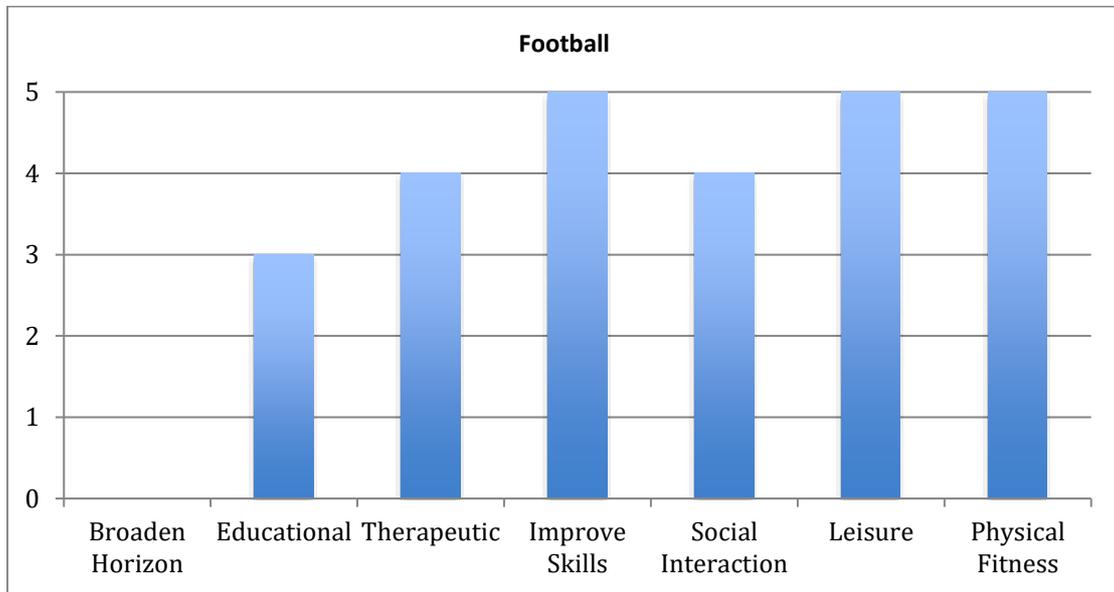


**Football**  
Graph showing assessment of elements

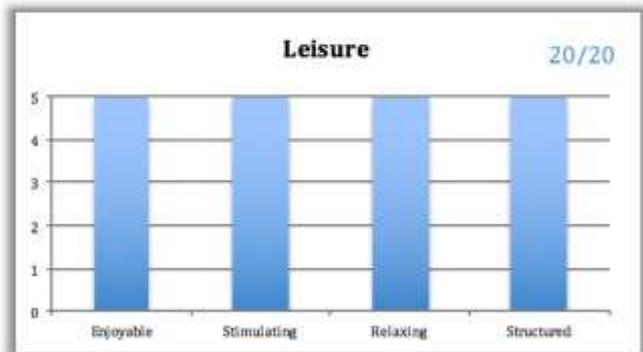
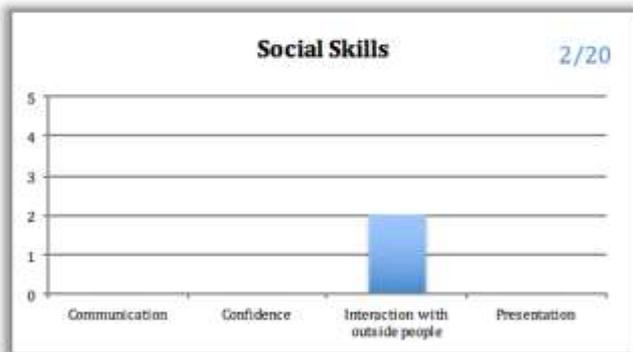
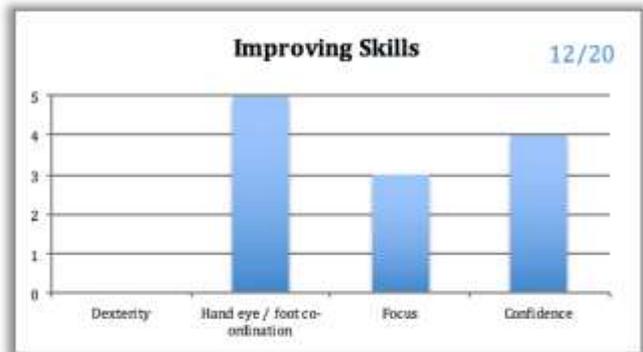
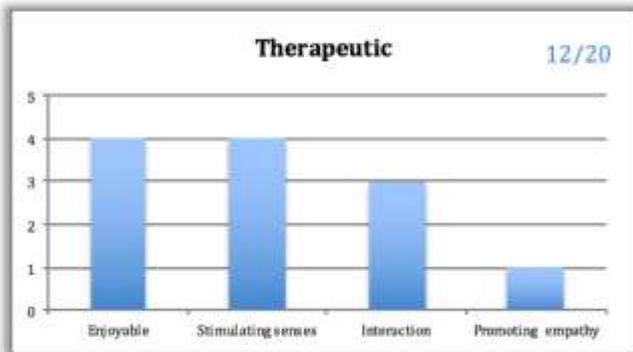
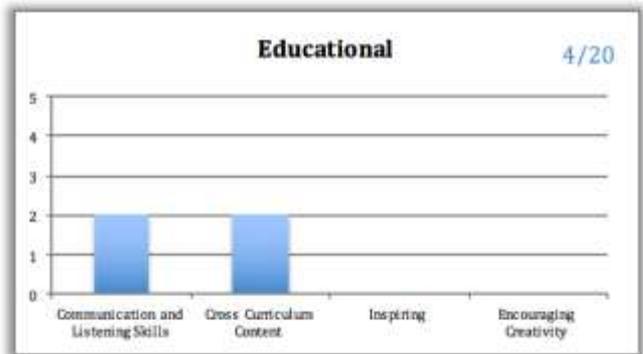
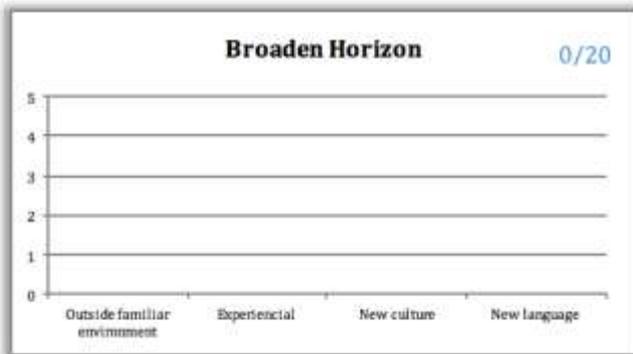


Whilst there are many ways of having a game of footy, even a casual game in the park brings many strong attributes and even more when it has been developed into a structured league match.

The element worth talking about here is 'team work!' A good game, depends on good team work, and anyone who doesn't understand it, is soon taught it by their team mates. The camaraderie that is forthcoming, is so important and as a result, many other elements begin to thrive.



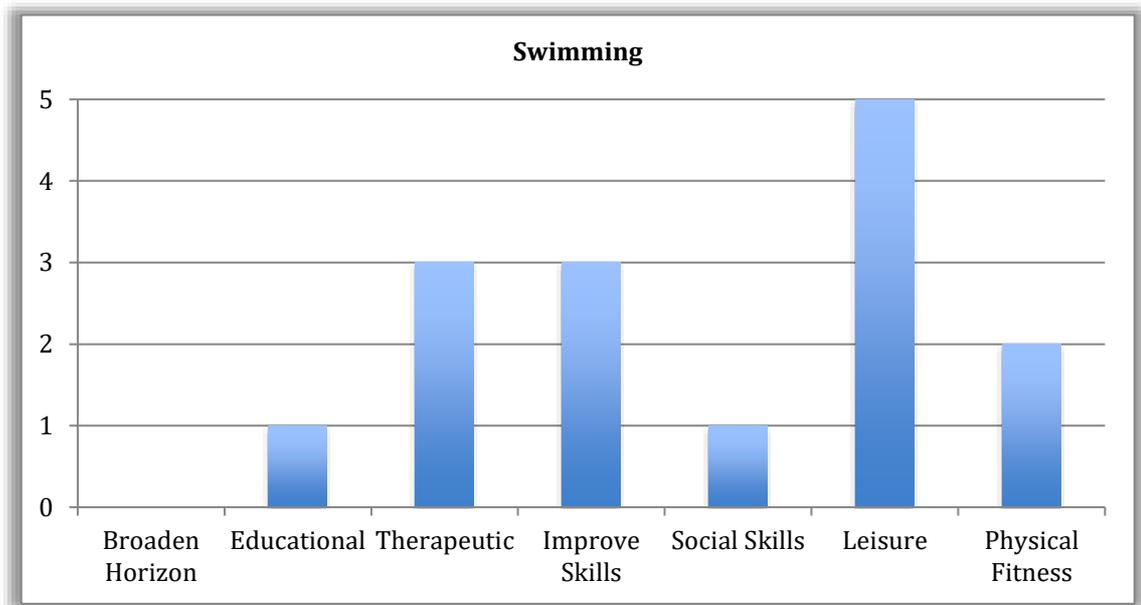
**Swimming**  
Graph showing assessment of elements



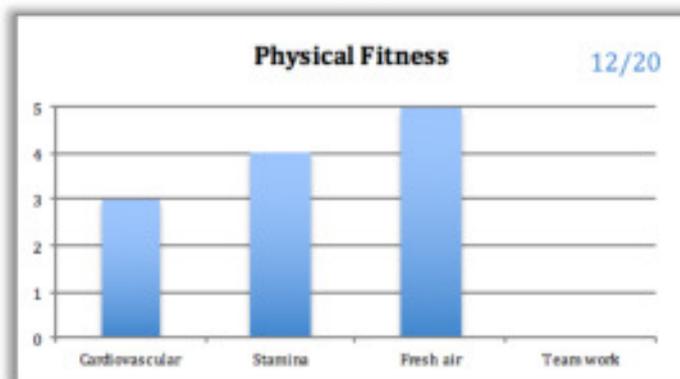
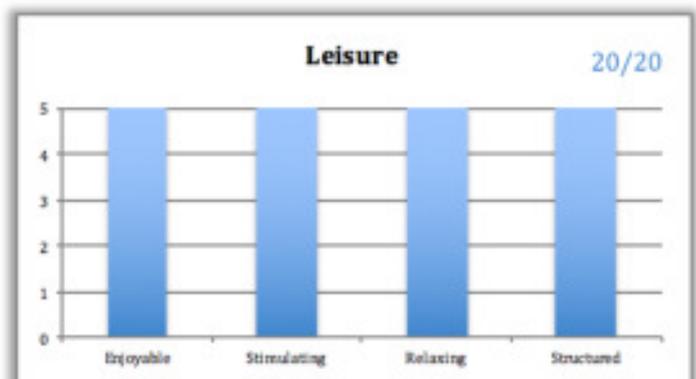
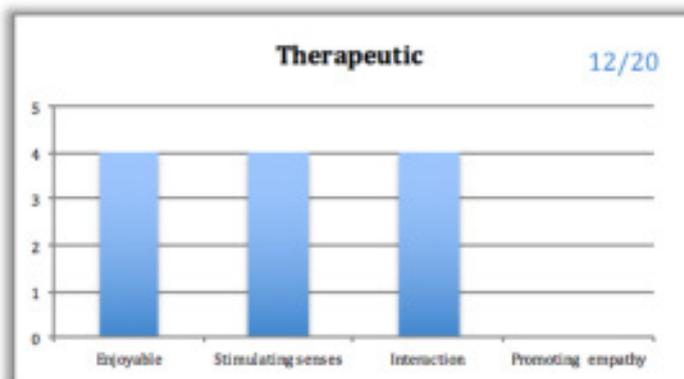
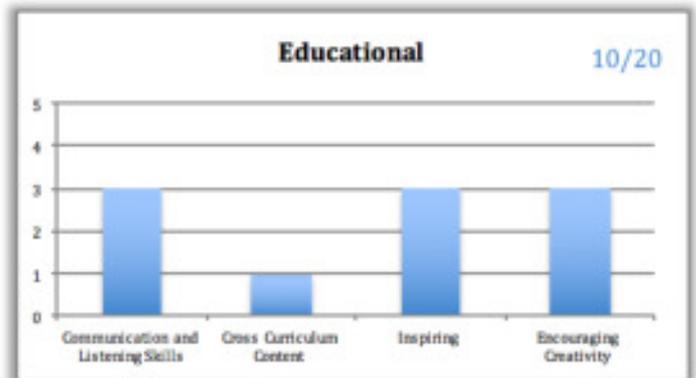
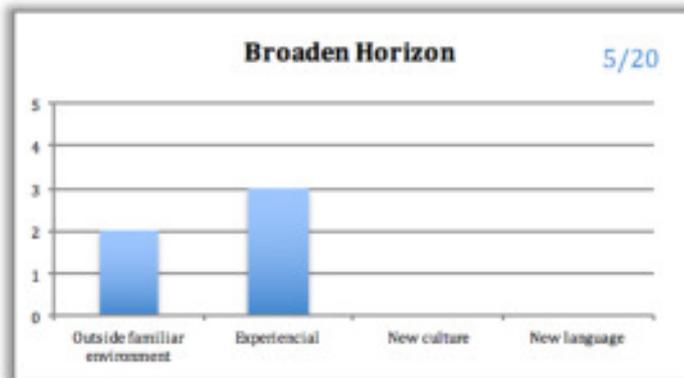
This is one of those activities that can be of good value or just a play about depending on how it is delivered. In the context of a swimming club its value increases, due to the elements of structure, teamwork, interaction etc. Generally speaking, in the context of an evening's activity, it becomes a worthwhile leisure activity.

Whenever young people are taken swimming, by adding some structure and instruction, you make the most out of it and increase its value.

Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes

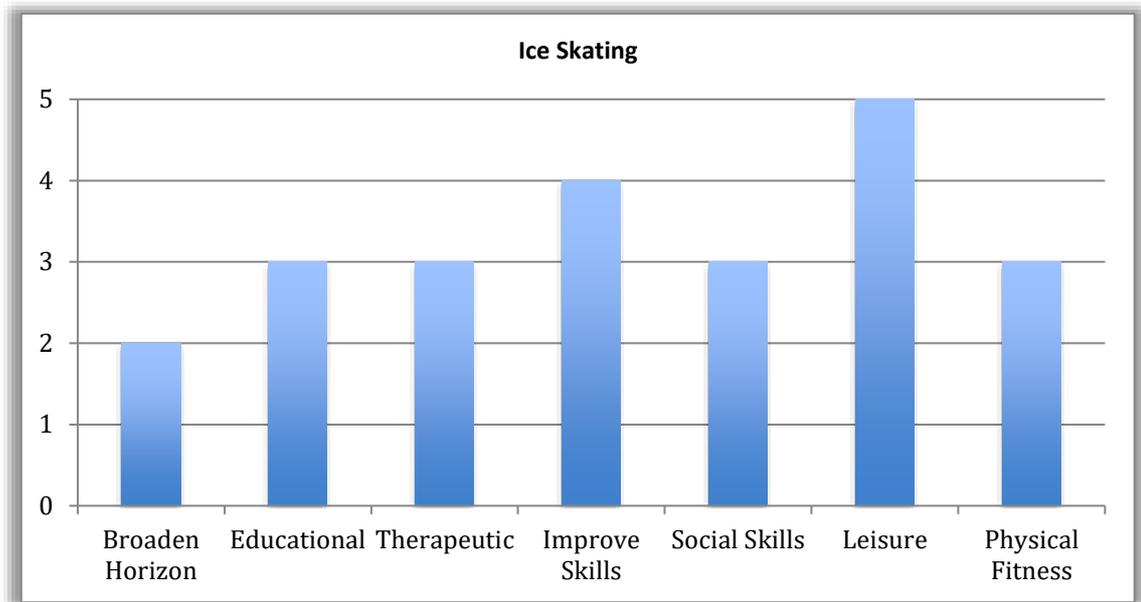


**Ice Skating**  
Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes

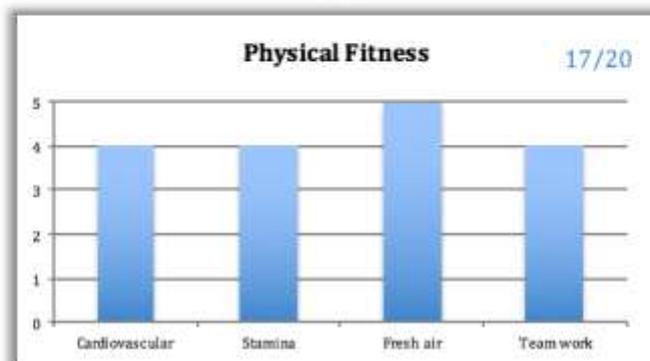
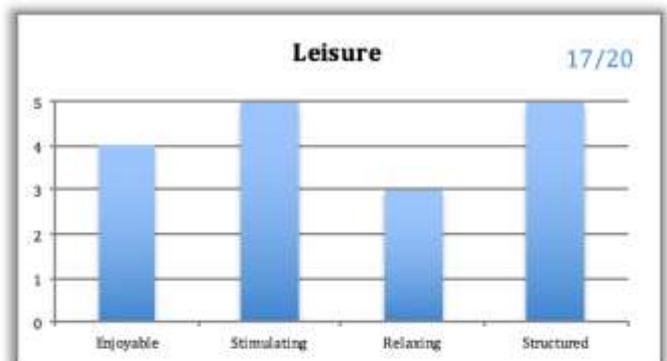
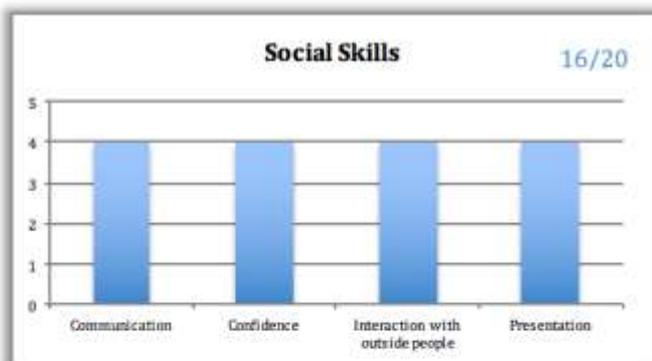
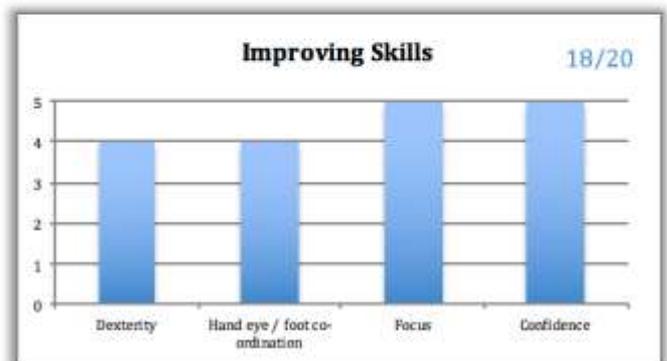
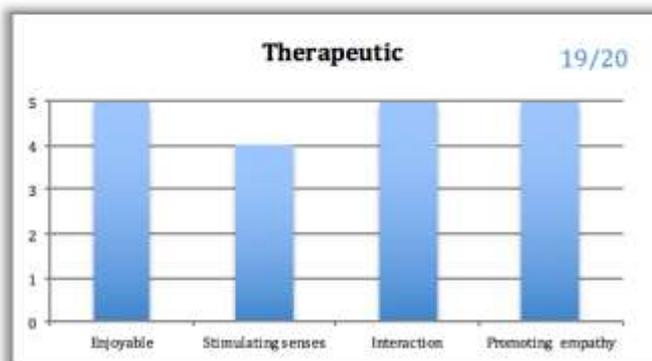
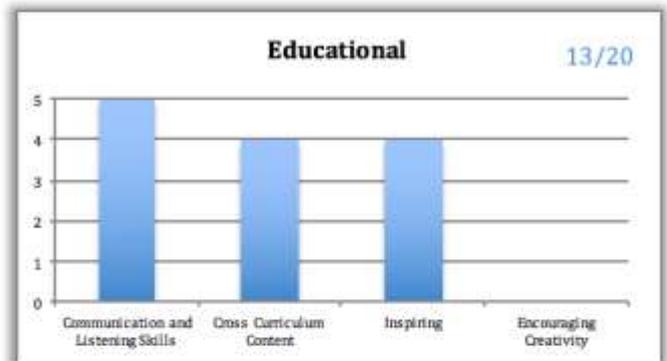
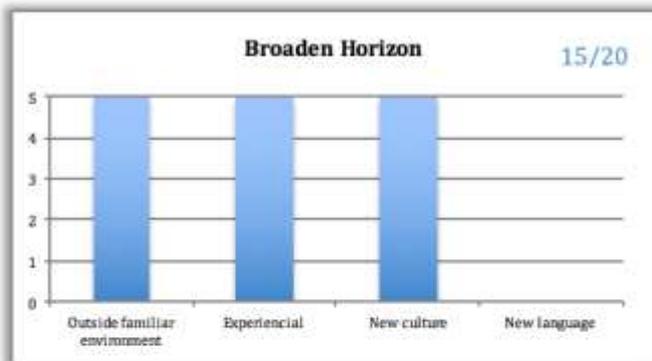


This is also a good fun thing to do! Whilst it broadens horizons and is educational, it is strong on improving skills, physical fitness and leisure. It is worth noting here, that the skills value would reduce if the activity was on artificial ice and so it is worth the journey for the real thing. Likewise, often at some holiday parks, you would often find plastic ice, other than killing time, move on!

Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes



**Horse Riding**  
Graph showing assessment of elements



As horse riding plays such an important part of the Pear Tree timetable, I feel that it is only right that I offer some explanation as to why.

It is also worth mentioning at this point, that three of our pupils as a result of learning to ride, have gone on and been paid to ride for other people.

I've always said that the actual process of riding is only 20% of the activity, the remaining 80% is in the looking after and bonding with an animal that needs the right kind of care to get results. Without the 80% you might as well ride a bike!

Therefore, when looking at this activity, it must also include stable management and working on the yard.

From our graphs, you can see that it has a high value of attributes, as a result of many strong elements.

The ones which I think are worth highlighting are the educational value, as there has to be clear direction using communication and listening skills for safety reasons and this is always acknowledged early in a young person's time on the farm.

Indeed, Ofsted identified the way in which working with the horses gave pupils responsibility and the way in which they dealt with it was remarkable.

There is cross curriculum content in terms of different types of feed, and materials from an agricultural source, rural science, English in reading instructions and feed labels and putting the right horse into the correct stable. It involves an element of mathematics, at feed round time.

This has resulted in some of our young people have been inspired enough to go and work elsewhere (as a result of learning to ride) and have even been paid to do so. There is also creativity to be found when building show jumping or cross country courses and often in general problem solving.

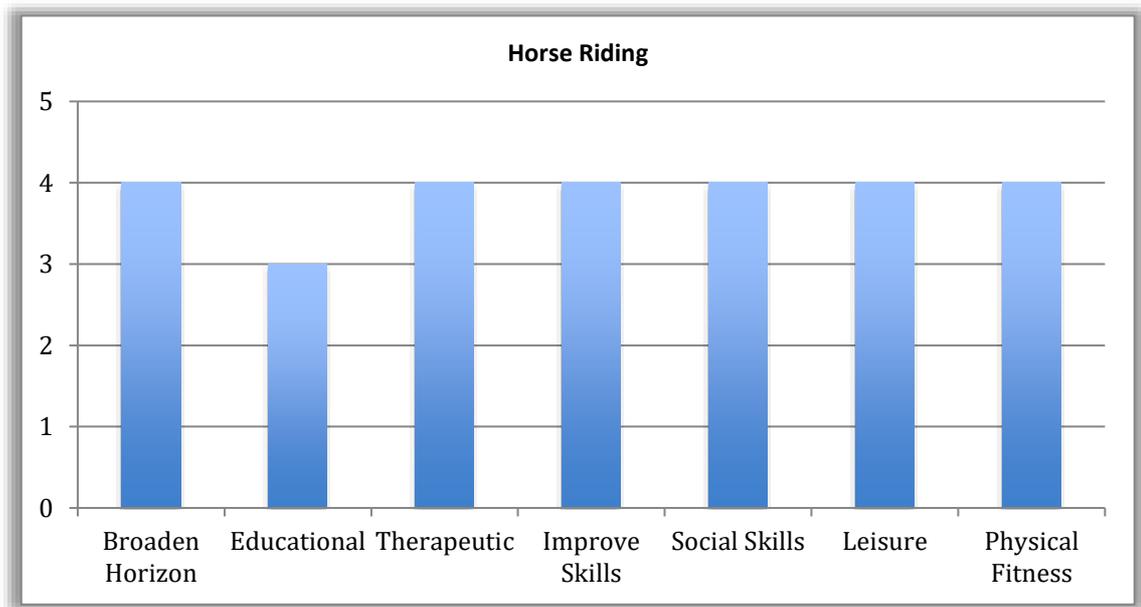
From a therapeutic perspective, it is enjoyable and stimulating. There is good interaction as whenever working with animals, you are constantly considering things from their point of view, which involves ample amounts of promoting empathy.

Improving skills comes out highly in all areas, but is particularly important for building confidence. Here, it is worth talking about Desmond Morris' observations made in the sixties, regarding the fact that many children enjoy riding until adolescence when the boys begin to lose interest. He links it with the positioning of the body and thrusting movements adding to sexual awareness. If we link that to our young people's experience and recognising that they are often anxious over many things in life regardless, then helping young people overcome anxiety and build confidence mustn't be underestimated. Personally, I think that boys lose interest because it is too much like hard work for easier rewards elsewhere and they get sick of having crushed nuts!

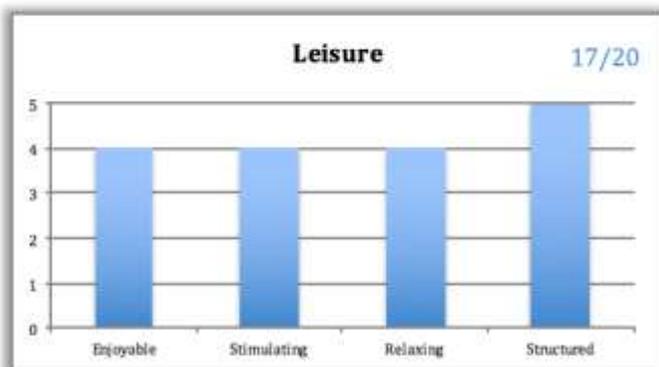
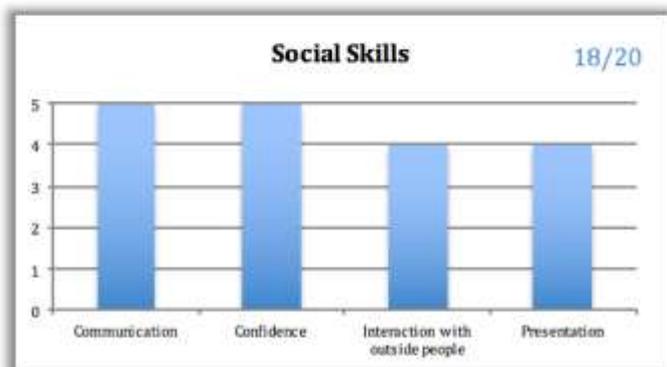
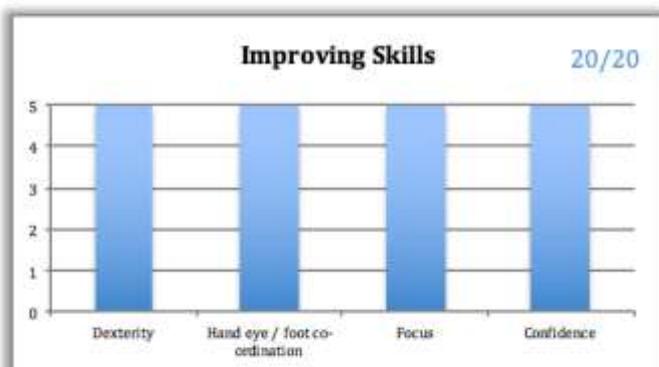
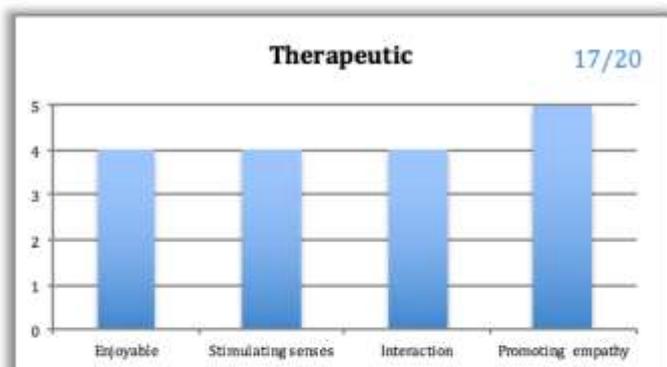
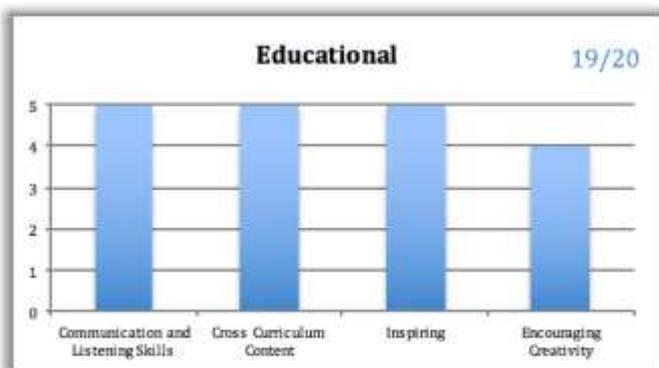
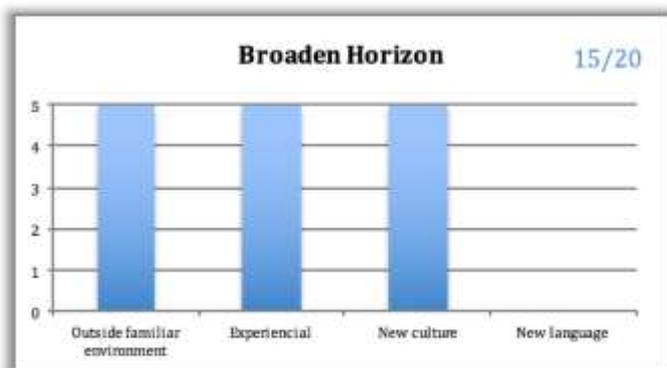
Social skills come out high here as well as leisure. In physical fitness, the one to consider from the yards perspective is team work. The values of how the yard is run are important. How many times have you heard me say we are not finished until we are all finished.

The three young people who went on to other places to be employed were able to make the transition relatively seamlessly as the environment, culture and expectations were very similar.

Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes



**General Farm Work and Gardening**  
**Graph showing assessment of elements**



Once a member of staff was discussing with me our way of training young people and preparing them for the working world. He commented that the work ethics and culture could have been taught by having a workshop or factory setting and that it was because of my love of the countryside that we used farms. It was at that point I knew I had to write this document as so many important points had been missed.

Indeed, when looking at the range of different activities, coupled with the environment, the scope of opportunity becomes apparent.

When looking at this section, we could have measured separate activities such as using the strimmer, driving the all terrain vehicle, or the tractor for various different reasons. We could have looked at time in the garden or working in the woods. However, the fact is, that it is the overall experience that is important and the skills measured over a period of time and not just on one occasion. It is a diverse high value activity bringing many attributes, as a result of many high value elements.

It without question, broadens horizons, yet I still have to deal with members of staff who tell me that their children don't want to come to the farm. They are forgetting that initially, it is very much outside of their familiar environment and the anxiety that goes with that to begin with but this is soon overcome.

There are high elements of educational value, communication and cross curriculum in the way of English, Mathematics, Geography and Science. It is inspiring young people to want to learn more. The practical tasks and improvisation very much encourage creativity at a basic level.

From a therapeutic perspective, it has high elements, particularly promoting empathy whenever looking after livestock.

Improving skills is a strong point, as using the kind of machinery that we have, starting with driving a wheelbarrow in a straight line, leading to tractor work. Here young people can see the concept of progression with the tools available to be used which start with small tools, each one leading to another, as skills and competence are demonstrated.

- Sweeping brush
- Wheelbarrow
- Small red tractor with wheelbarrow trailer
- Ride on lawn mower.
- Full sized tractor.
- Full sized tractor with simple attachments.
- Full sized tractor with complex attachments.

In order to drive the full sized tractor you must start by using a sweeping brush and then a wheelbarrow. This is nothing new but many have overlooked the concept.

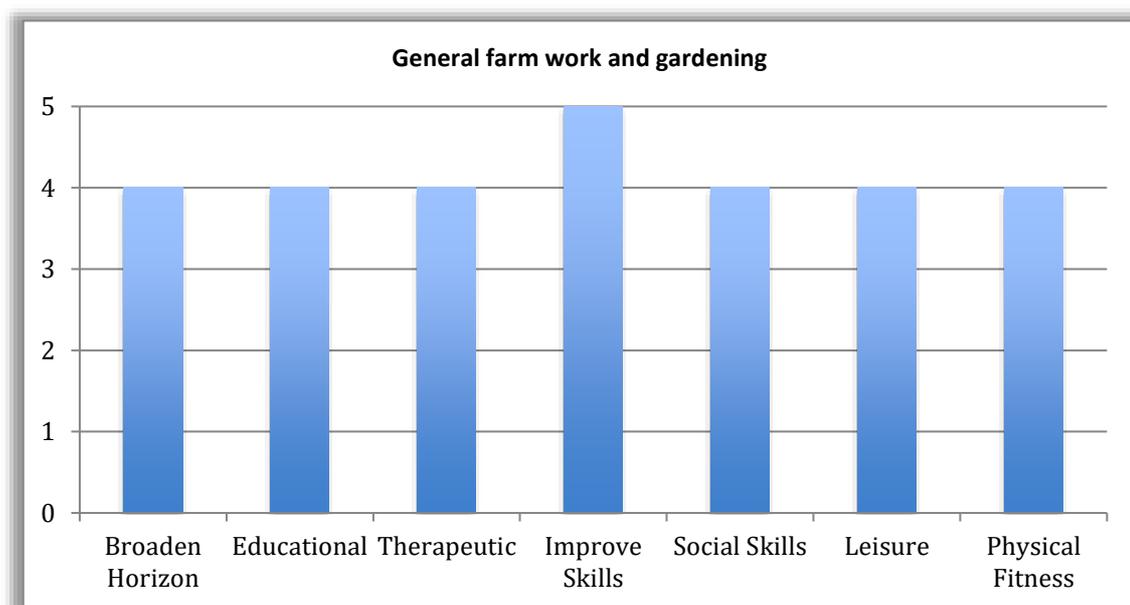
It is indeed the concept that is in plain sight for our students with progression real and achievable resulting in the reward of the next level.

As with the horses, one young man has gone on to become a qualified forklift truck driver and worked for three years in an engineering factory. This young man was no more outstanding than anyone else when he first came to us and he learned everything on the farm, demonstrating the value of transferable skills.

Social skills also has a part to play, as it is important to wear the right work clothes when regularly coming into contact with vets, farriers, feed merchants etc.

Finally, leisure and physical fitness also demonstrate strong elements. Again, the important factors here are teamwork and fresh air. This was demonstrated very well this year at hay time, as we had young men working together to achieve an outcome. They were absolutely exhausted, but loved every minute of it.

Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes



Dr Bruce Perry, in his presentation at Hardwick Hall on the 17th November 2014, spoke about the benefit of calming activities and the importance of rhythm in a child's life. He mentioned the calming rhythm that goes with casting a line while fishing, the process of sitting quietly side by side with a Carer whilst doing this activity.

He talked about a facility he had been asked to consult with to help an extremely damaged child. Here the most successful member of staff able to help this child was the caretaker. He described how he allowed the child to watch him milk the cow every morning and each day he placed a second milking stool next to him for the child. Over many weeks the child got closer and closer to him, eventually one day sitting next to him. When Dr Perry asked the caretaker, where did you learn to do that he replied "It was obvious, I used to work with horses". Dr Perry Concluded by saying, "If you've ever come across those horse whisperers don't dismiss them, they've got so much to offer"!

Many of the high value activities discussed have that rhythmical element to it and we add to this by building in routine and structure.

<http://childtrauma.org>

Current research is demonstrating that contact with nature (in whatever way it is organised) is improving our health more than we realise.

Young people who back pack for 3 days or more show higher creative and cognitive abilities than those that don't.

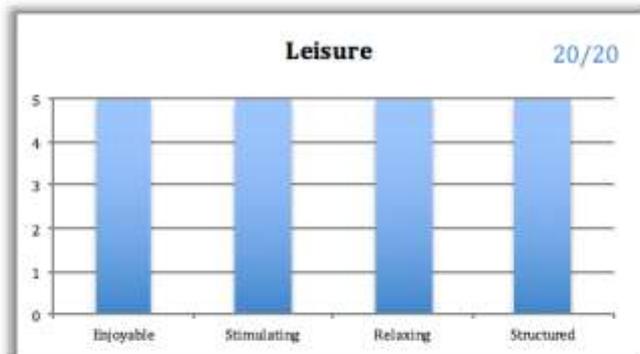
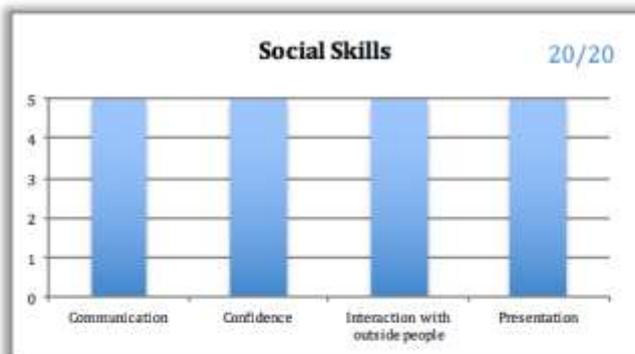
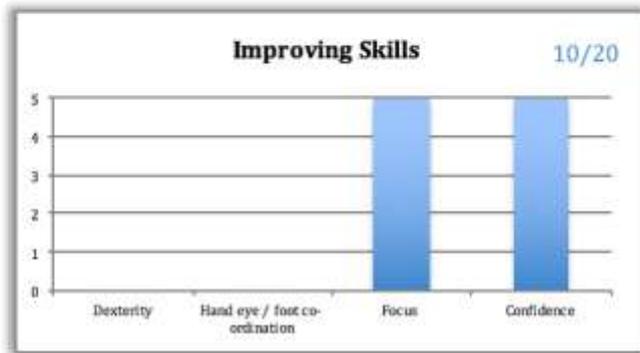
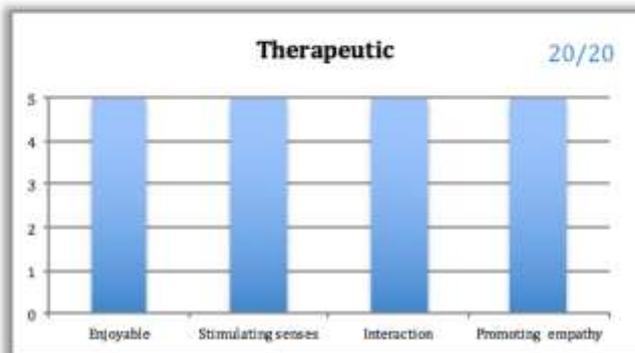
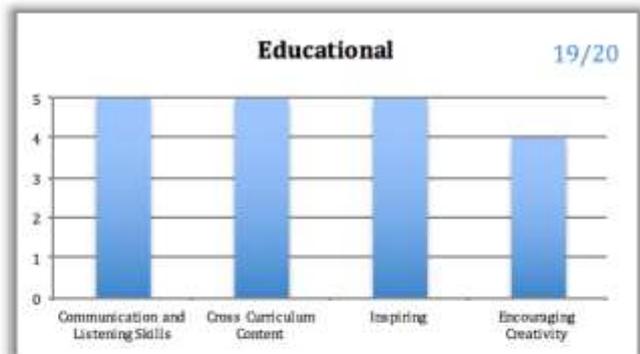
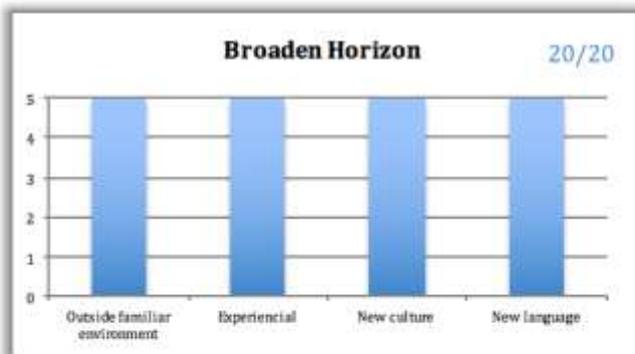
It reduces stress, enhances cognitive abilities, problem solving, academic performance, nutrition, eyesight, improved social relationships and self discipline (self regulation).

Hospital patients that can see natural landscapes recover faster than those that don't.  
Marc Bekoff Rewilding our hearts. 2014.

With the above in mind Marc discusses students and patients, this represents the Pear Tree children in requiring both an education and recovery. Indeed the term therapeutic means “to heal”. Therefore the above research indicates the importance of contact with nature as significant to the value of our work.

Therefore the importance of outdoor education and rural science whether in a structured way during the school week or in an informal way during holidays and weekends is significant, not just for the time they are experiencing nature but to support and enhance everything else undertaken by everyone else.

**The Holiday in France**  
**Graph showing assessment of elements**



Pear Tree holidays started in 1994 at the "Blue Dolphin" caravan park at Scarborough. 1996 saw the first day trip to London, 1997 the first foreign holiday to Euro Disney. This five day holiday consisted of two days in the theme park, a day in Paris and on the journey home we took in the war graves. I remember visiting Notre Dame Cathedral and one young boy began to cry because the characters from the Hunchback of Notre Dame weren't there. He was clearly confused by Disney and the real world! 1998 saw the first trip to Normandy again, using caravan parks.

In 2003, we took a group of young people to the Bahamas to swim with dolphins. A lack of referrals led me to think it would either be my swansong or get people in the profession talking about us. It worked, with winners all round as the young people had a wonderful time, along with the staff, and the referrals started to come thick and fast.

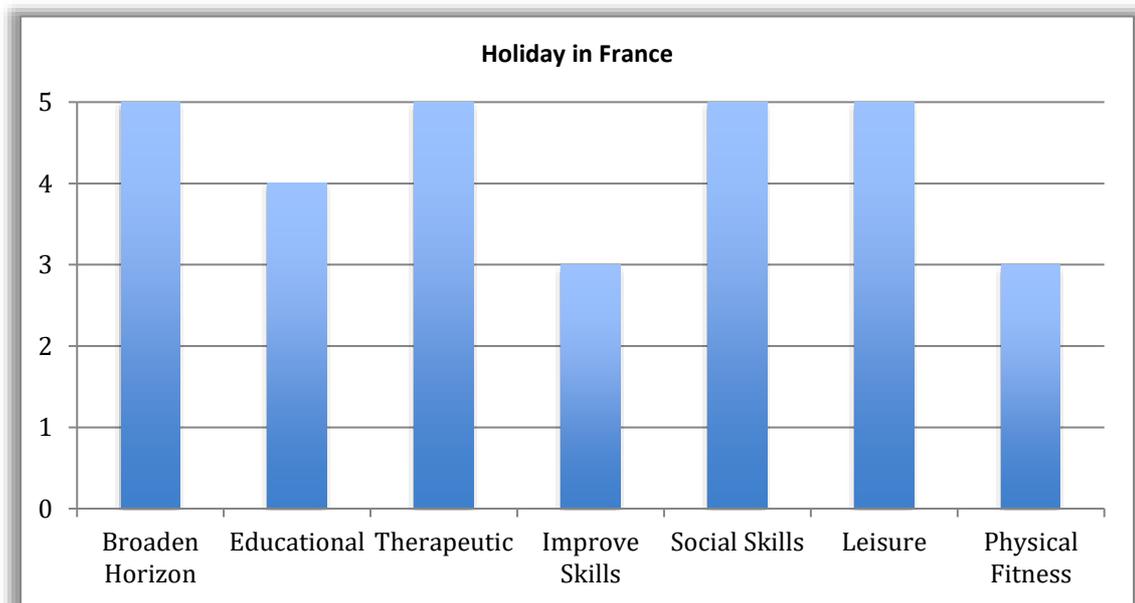
However, the most successful holiday that ticks all of the right boxes is, without doubt the trip to Normandy as a result of finding a superb holiday cottage to rent year after year.

This takes on board so many high value elements. The ones worth highlighting that you won't find anywhere else are of course broadening of horizons, and new language in particular. The country may be next door but culturally it is a world away.

It is also an exceptional educational experience, with so many cross-curricular features- languages, Geography and History being the obvious ones. From the Bayeux Tapestry depicting the most significant event in the history of the British Isles, being the last time that we were successfully invaded. This, through to the events of World War Two, which are still in living memory.

From a kid's point of view, it has "tanks". What could be better than that! Oh yes, they're near the Beach, perfect!!

So leisure and just having fun feature highly as well.



## Playing

At this point, it is worth talking about the value of just having fun. Whilst we are measuring elements and considering how we can value them and in many ways, discussing what others may call values in a general context, this document helps to substantiate the values and acknowledge what each element brings to the day. However, we must not forget the value of fun. Paddling in the river, making a camp etc. It is worth looking at the "National Trust ", 50 things to do before you're 11  $\frac{3}{4}$  (<https://www.50things.org.uk/>). Whilst most of our young people are older, they have certainly missed out, so we should make sure that they have done as many things on the list as they can. Flying a kite, building a den, climbing a tree, visiting an island to name but a few.

Our young people need the opportunity to play, but usually due to the nature of their problems, there needs to be some kind of guidance and usually 'role model leadership' and always clear boundaries. However, when possible, stand back!  
To the experienced parent, the children playing nicely without concern, produces the most beautiful music. You can also tell the second it changes to something less harmonious.

Desmond Morris describes the Play Rules as being:

You shall investigate the unfamiliar, until it has become familiar.  
You shall impose rhythmic, repetition on the familiar.  
You shall vary this repetition in as many ways as possible.  
You shall select the most satisfying of these variations and develop these at the expense of others.  
You shall combine and recombine these variations with one another.  
You shall do all of this for its own sake and as an end to itself.

Certainly, these are the rules of play that I have applied to my holiday, which are a grown up way of playing. These rules could be applied to many of the activities above also.

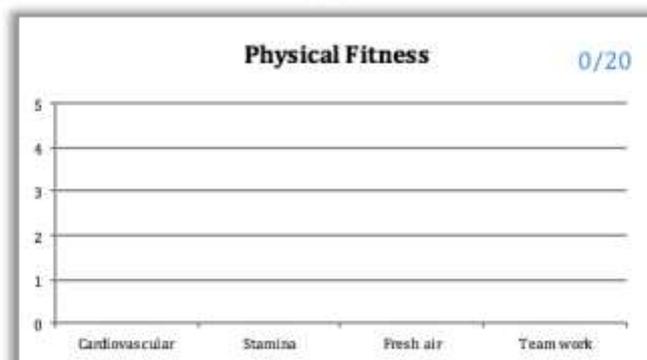
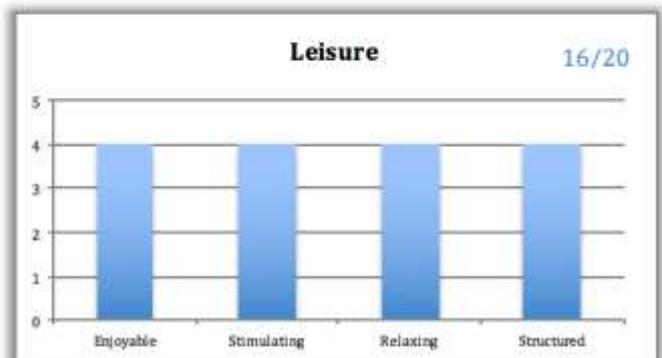
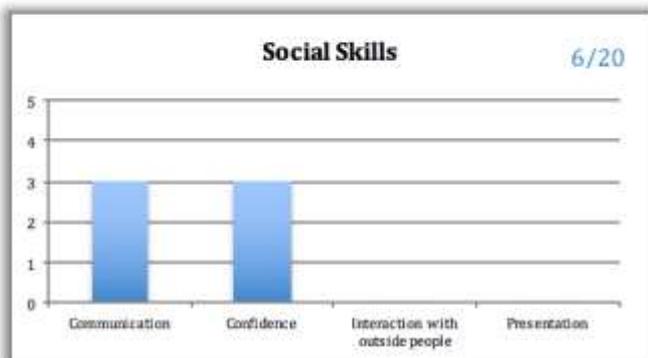
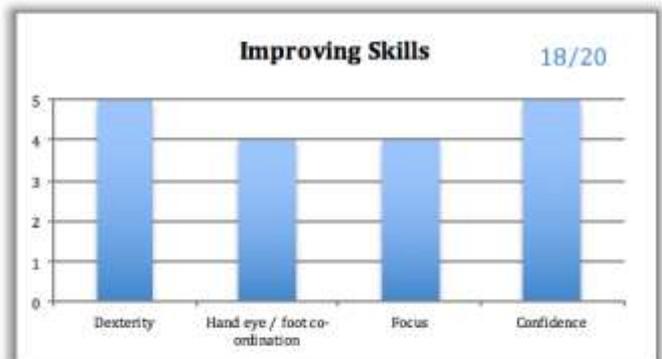
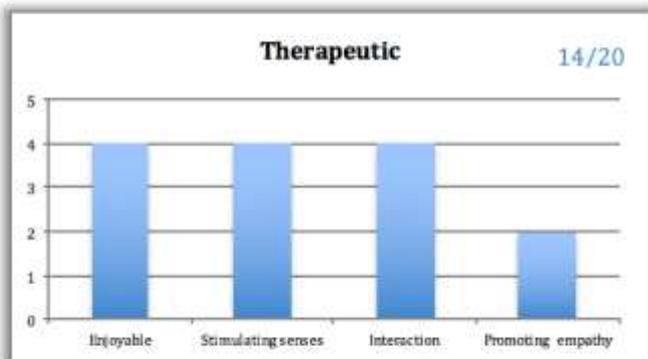
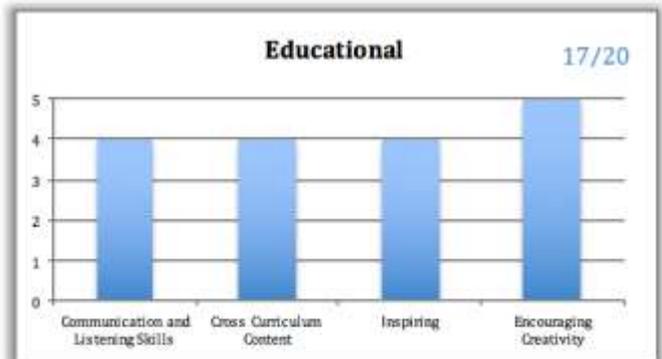
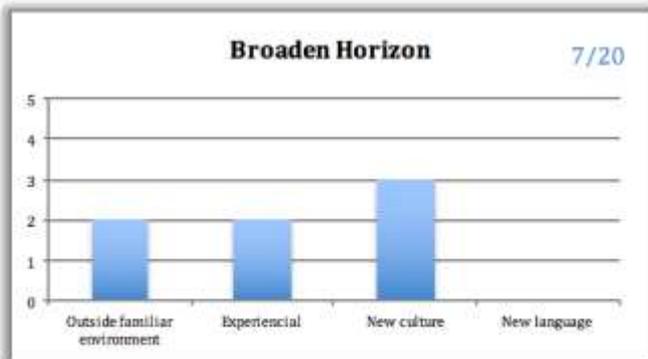
Here, also a word of warning. In his experiments with apes, he concluded that the absence of play often resulted in juveniles being anti sexual and anti parental. Now where have I heard that one before?

Play is such an important part of a child's development and yet the young people that come to us, who are often older than their years, for them it has already gone wrong. How can we help to put it right? Going back for some young people and being allowed the time to heal and regain aspects of a missed childhood has to be invaluable as long as it is safe to do so!

Some years ago at the start of the summer holidays, I took my children to our farm on the moors. It was a really hot July day and we walked down to the river at the bottom of the valley. I sat under a tree and promptly fell asleep. Slightly dozing I could hear them playing in the river and creating the most beautiful music. Every July since I have wanted to recreate that moment, due to the weather or circumstances it has never happened again. Now they are older, if the situation allowed the opportunity, he'd drown her!

*"Seize the moment"*

**Arts and Crafts.**  
**Graph showing assessment of elements**



Arts and Crafts is one of those activities that can be done in a classroom setting with a teacher or as an evening activity on the dining room table with a carer, often with equally impressive results. Providing the carer has a genuine interest in the subject and enjoys doing it. (As with many other activities also.)

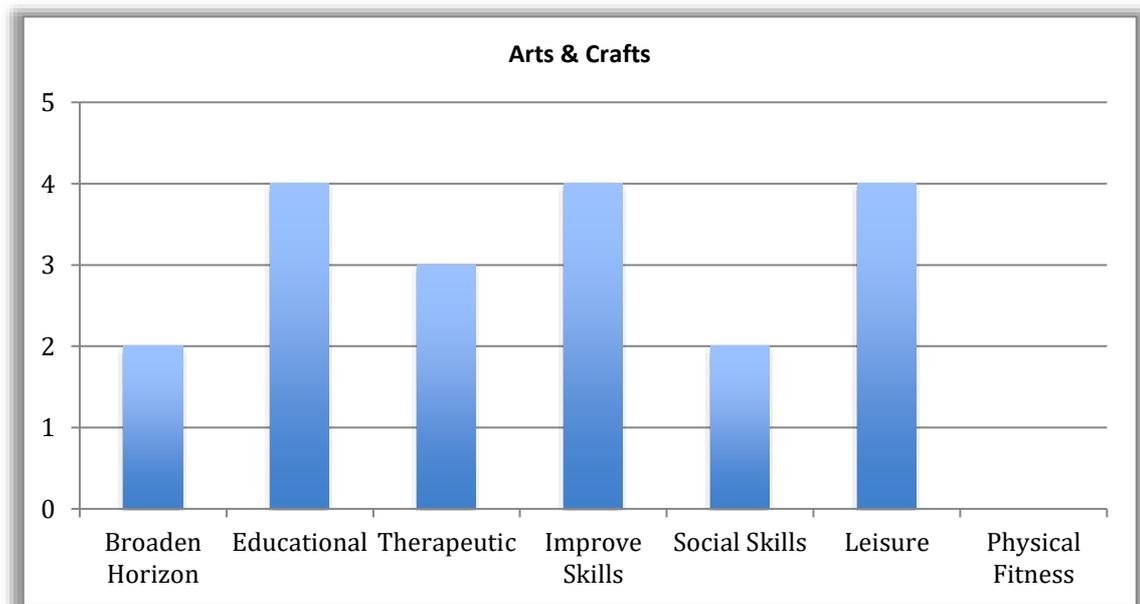
Broadening horizons is relevant as from our perspective sitting in a formal lesson having to focus on a task is in its self outside the familiar environment. As students develop skills and become inspired to learn about different techniques and materials this naturally leads to looking at other artists work over the centuries. We add to this by taking students to the National Gallery in London, which exposes them further to the world of art and the social expectations that goes with this. By doing so we are demonstrating the ease of access to such places that are available to all and can add such richness to quality of life for no cost at all. This is in itself inspiring.

From an educational perspective, as you would hope for an educational activity, all elements are relevant.

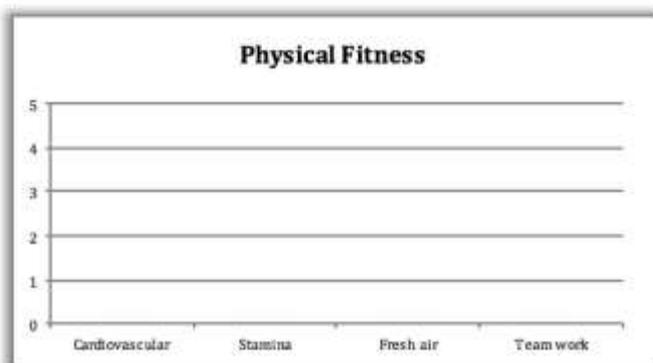
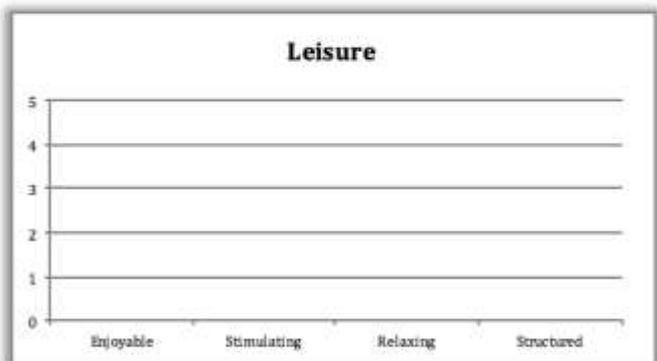
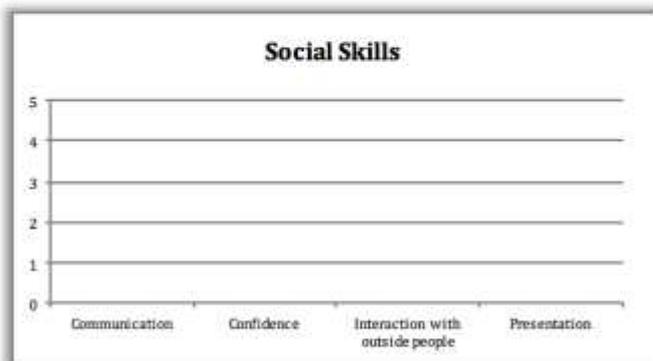
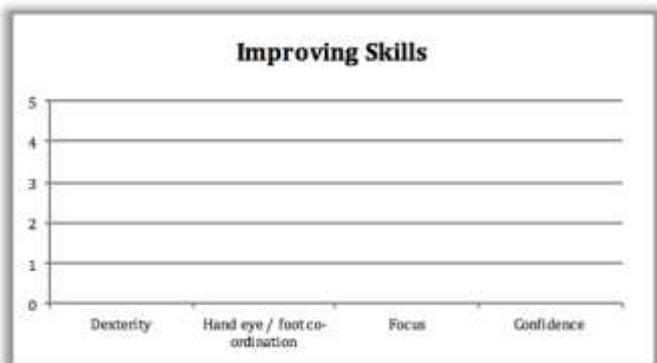
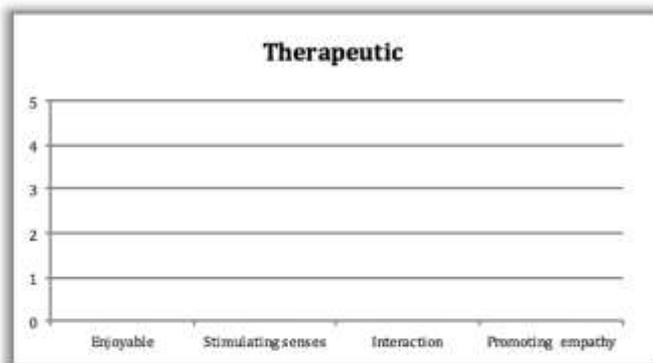
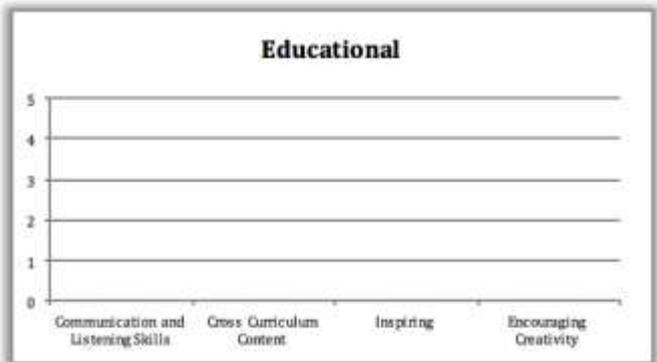
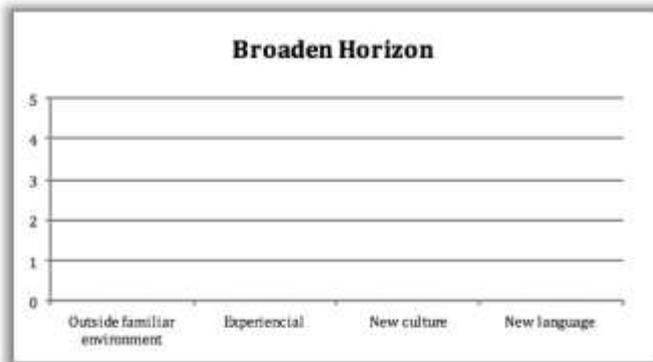
There is a therapeutic value to it and most definitely improving skills, particularly fine motor skills, or dexterity. It is at this point that I can mention a little known or talked about issue called 'Exaggerated Reward!' I will discuss this further and in more detail in the next subheading.

It isn't of course a physical activity, but it is an enjoyable, leisure activity in its own right. A number of young people over the years have used their love of Art to take up Art classes independently and therefore, the subject has helped to promote their independence.

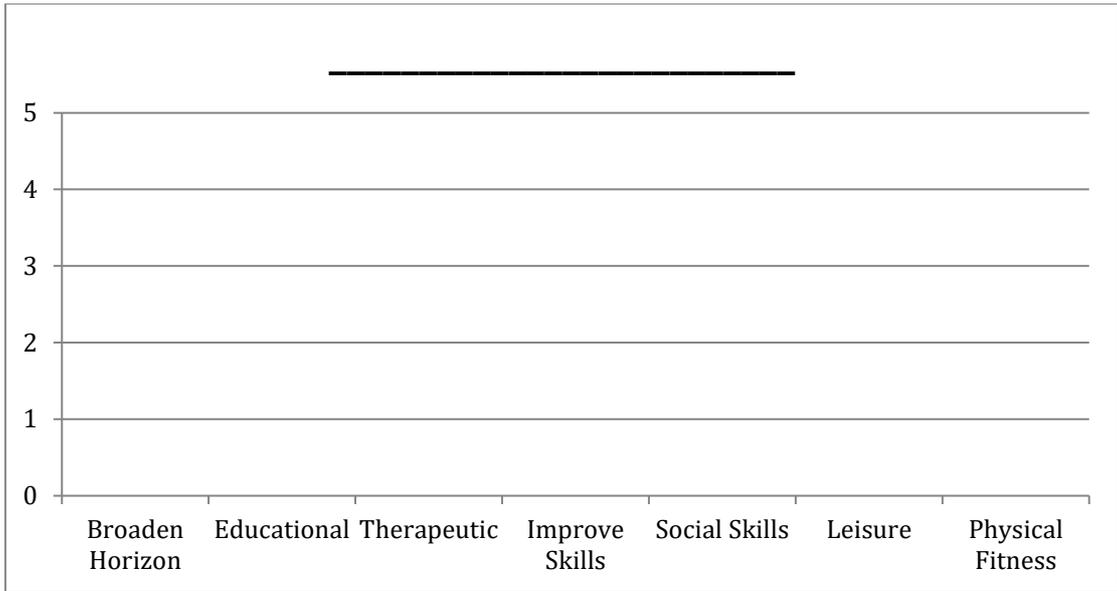
Graph showing assessment and summary of attributes



Why not use the system to measure other activities. I suggest you do it as a group discussion. It can work for any activity!



0 - 4 = 1  
 5 - 9 = 2  
 10 - 14 = 3  
 15 - 19 = 4  
 20 = 5



## Exaggerated Reward!

Desmond Morris in his wonderful book *The Naked Ape*, a book I have consistently encouraged people to read was written in the sixties and it looks at human behaviour from a zoological perspective and he describes the process called exaggerated reward.

Morris describes that amazing moment in a child's life, when they discover how to use a pencil, or a paint brush. As a result of a slight delicate move, a mark is made which appears disproportionate to the effort used. This then quickly develops to painting a line and then a process develops next as a circle.

When a circle is painted, you then find another level of thinking, as you have two areas, one inside and one outside of the circle. By adding two dots and a curve, you then have created an amazing thing, a face that smiles back at you. This is all created with very little effort.



This process, in my opinion, goes much further than that, as painting with much more sophisticated thinking leads to colour and three dimensions being developed. Pottery, clay modelling and sculpture is also a good example of exaggerated reward, as through slight use of dexterity, creations develop in front of your eyes and literally in your hands.

It's a wonderful thing, brilliant!

Business people use the same principal to make money, by adding value with little effort. Indeed, property make over shows, show you how to make the most out of what you've got with as little effort as possible.

An example of this in our organisation, is the trees planted at the Manor. Overnight, the property went from a derelict farmhouse surrounded by ex quarry land, to a Manor house with a tree lined avenue surrounded by parkland.

Desmond Morris wrote his book in the sixties, and I have often wondered what he would make of the issues of today? Indeed, one of the best examples of exaggerated reward today, is the use of digital technology in the form of mobile phones and computer games.

As a result of the smallest movements of fingers and with today's technology not necessarily with any accuracy you can fly jets, drive cars and shoot hundreds of people or be connected to hundreds of people via social media. All with the smallest of movements.

It is a fact, that the British Army now recruit young men with good computer game skills, as they are in the best position to use the modern warfare tools of the trade. Hopefully this goes with high levels of intelligence.

When I was a child, I would have done anything for the most up to date computer game. It would have given me excitement and something which all children strive for, the ability to control something and shoot people that fall down when shot, and even blow things up. From the bedroom, you can now talk to your friends and even people you don't know in another country, all with very little effort. But you have to ask yourself, if I'd spent all of my youth playing computer games, would it have prepared me for adult life?

It's not just computer games that we should consider, but also other forms of entertainment such as amusement arcades, where the process is very similar.

This leads me to consider the other side of this process, 'negative attributes!'

## Negative Attributes

Once again, this section is from a Pear Tree perspective, in that as with positive attributes, I've considered these and broken them down into seven relevant negative attributes. These are:

1. Addictive qualities
2. Negative reinforcement
3. Tap Tap reward
4. False adrenaline rush
5. High followed by a low
6. Physically detrimental
7. Time consuming with no positive outcome

### 1. Addictive qualities

Without trying to reinvent the wheel, or looking unnecessarily deeply into something, this means what it says. It is an activity/behaviour that could result in an addictive quality being promoted. Smoking, is the most obvious to demonstrate the point. Despite years of debate, it is pretty much accepted that smoking is addictive. Other things may include anything where an obsessive behaviour is promoted, where the young person no longer feels in control of their behaviour, such as drugs, alcohol or perhaps pornography.

### 2. Negative reinforcement

This is where a young person has powerfully held beliefs, but wrong beliefs, that by indulging in these activities these beliefs are reinforced. Pornography and child pornography in particular, is a good example of this. This is where illegal acts or in the case of adult porn, sexually inappropriate for the age and maturity of the young person is evident. This is not to be confused with images of the naked or semi naked body, which are accessible on every beach that young people have access to and should know how to conduct themselves accordingly.

### 3. 'Tap Tap' reward

This is the term used by a scientist studying the effects of computer games, using mice. They have found a link to addictive qualities where a number of taps are followed by a reward of positive reinforcement. In mice, it was food, in humans it is a point score or an achieved outcome i.e. shooting a target on a computer game.

### 4. False adrenaline rush.

This is where a young person receives an adrenaline rush for no real reason. Again, computer games lead you into a world of make believe, where a perceived threat is evident i.e. your competitor is going to kill you, which alerts your fight or flight hormone for no real reason, as there isn't really a threat. This subject opens up for discussion, a whole topic of adrenaline and its effects, which I shall address in the next section. A false adrenaline rush often leads to the next attribute.

5. High followed by a low.

This is self explanatory, and whilst it is in the context of considering negative attributes, it also is worth pointing out, that over the years, many incidents have taken place by young people who have just had a really good day. The only apparent explanation after the event when all is well again, is the inability to deal with an anti-climax and the need to return home and get things back to a settled state of being.

6. Physically detrimental.

This is a quality that can have a negative, physical effect on a person's well being. Alcohol or substance misuse being the obvious examples.

7. Time consuming with no positive outcome.

Whilst this may be largely open for debate, I strongly feel that we have no time to waste with these young people and anything that takes up a large amount of time with no positive outcome is a negative factor.

Again, personally, my target is to make every day count. Not just in experience, but moving myself and family forward. We are not going to be here forever, there is no time to waste, as the clock seems to tick a little faster every day.

Negative activities?

With the list above being pretty self evident, there is no need to go into depth with the negative elements, but let us just consider a few issues against our graph system and see what things look like.

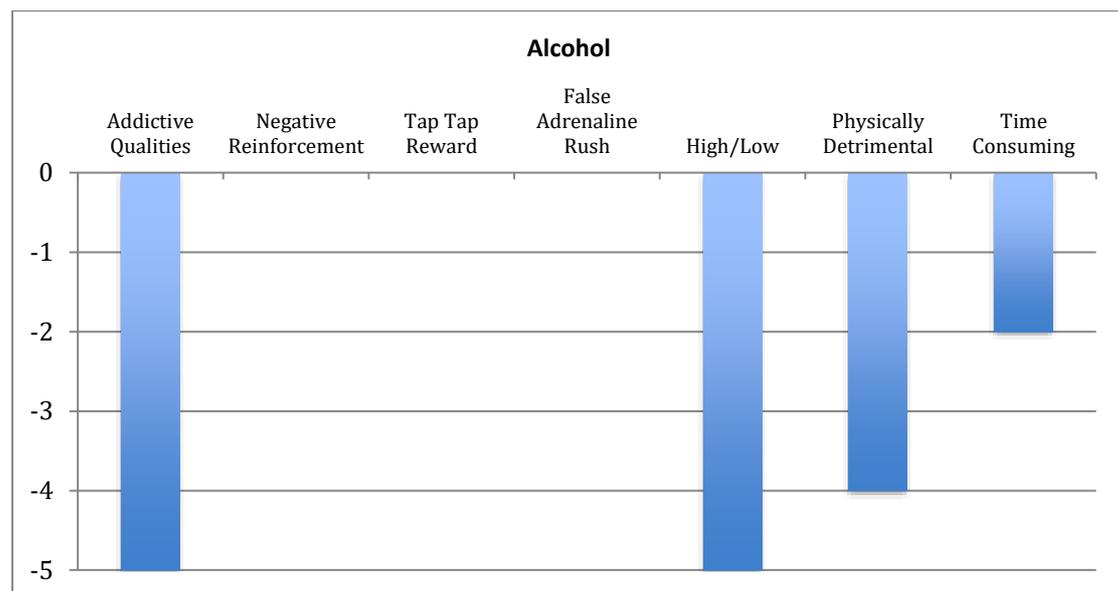
## Drink, drugs and smoking

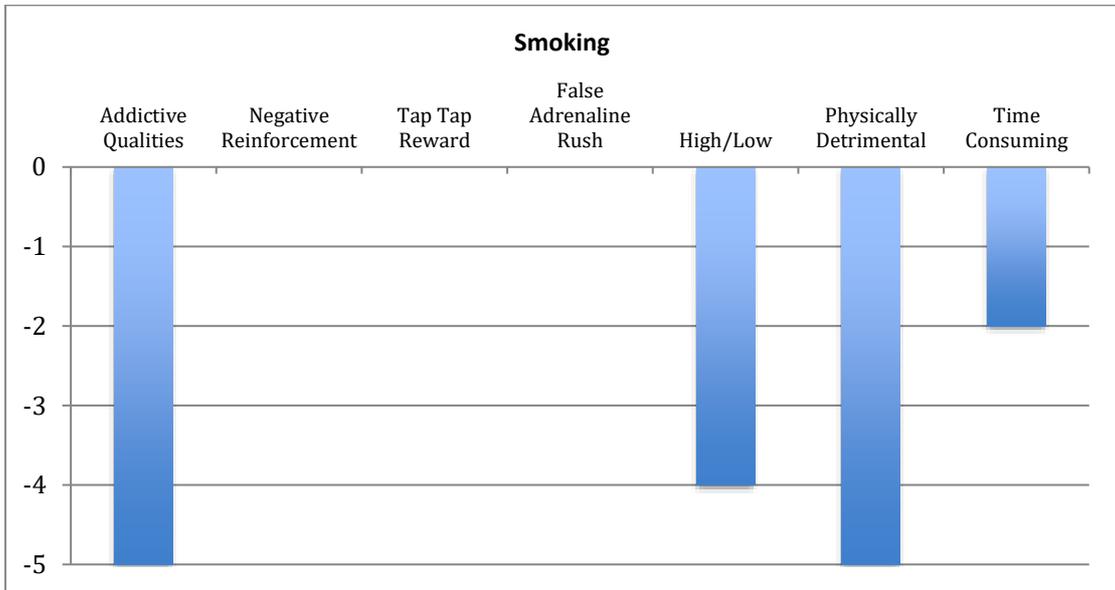
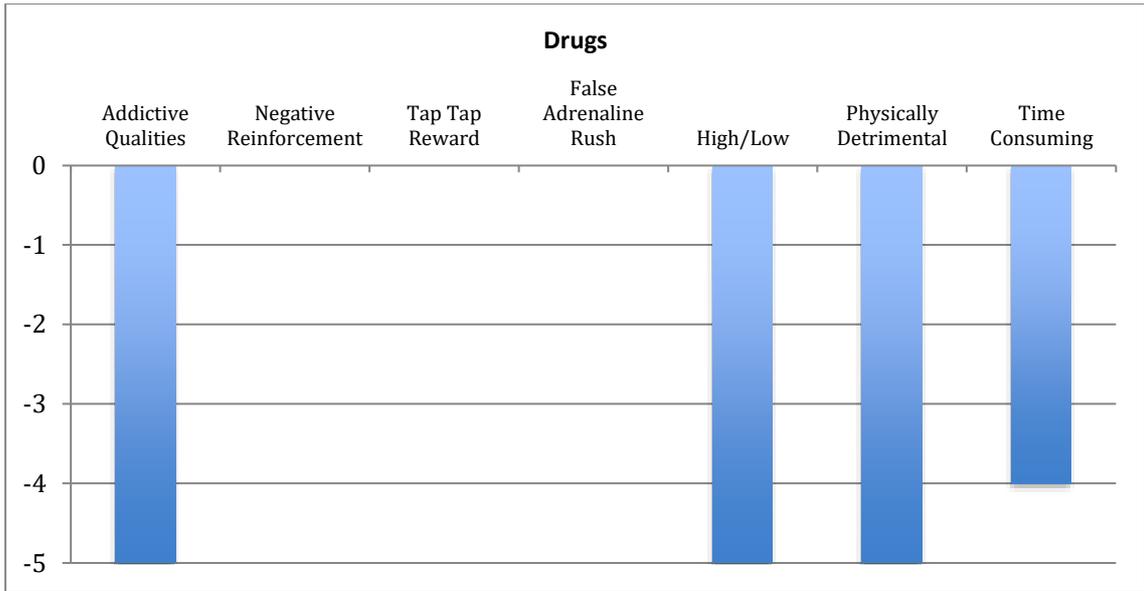
Here, it is clear to see how with the absence of boundaries, these things can quickly get out of control. Negative qualities abound as many attributes are showing high negative measurements. Young people are going to be exposed to these things and it's the ability to "just say no" as the 1980's appeal said.

Our young people previous to being looked after by ourselves, have lived in an environment where there were no boundaries, hoping that they will be able to impose internal controls at key times without support and education is unreasonable to expect. We therefore, have to give them as much information as possible, in a controlled environment, to help them to make informed decisions for themselves.

It has often impressed me how house managers, at the right time, have allowed young people often in their latter stages of their time with ourselves to have a drink with a meal when on holiday or at the Christmas party etc. This removes the taboo and the risk of them going de-mob happy when the boundaries are relaxed. Whilst most people enjoy a drink, drugs is a different matter, with a zero tolerance approach due to the addictive qualities along with the level of physically detrimental effect which it has on people.

Likewise, smoking, due to the above, coupled with restricting life opportunity elements and the fact that children with fire lighting materials can lead to tragedy of untold proportions.





## Visiting amusement arcades

One of the reasons for this document is to remove the argument that I only promote what are often referred to as 'middle class' activities and don't promote what others refer to as 'lower class' activities, both of which I believe to be utter rubbish.

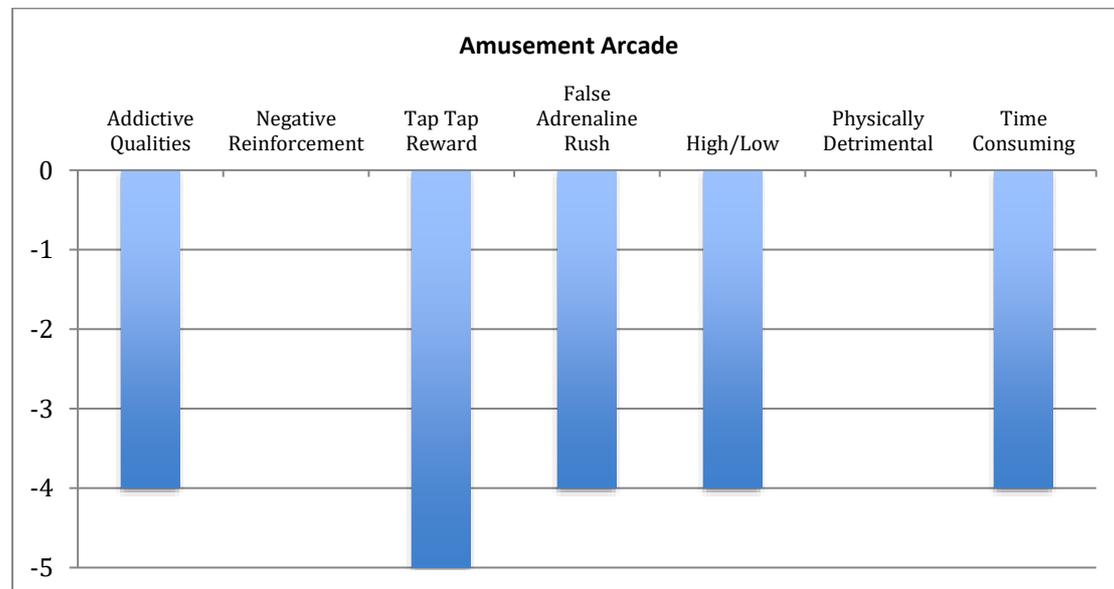
I have had an interesting life and met people from all over the world, in my experience there are only really two kinds of people, negative and dysfunctional or positive and functional.

The work above on positive activities, demonstrates how you can break activities down and value their elements individually. These activities bring something to the party, in terms of preparing young people to engage with and function in a positive adult world. There is however, a correlation between having skills, positive mental attitude and economic well being! That's just an obvious fact that people don't want to say.

Likewise, over indulging in negative activities and negative thinking can lead to social, emotional and economic difficulties. It's not rocket science is it?

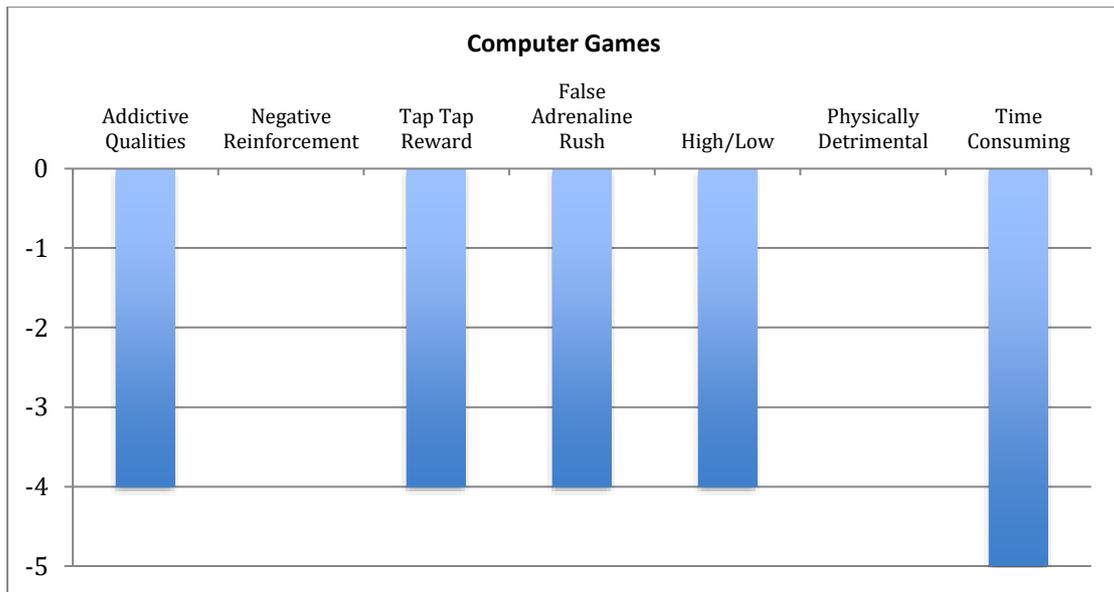
In all of my time of visiting children in care, listening to how professionals who are paid to look after and prepare young people for the next stage of their lives, allow young people to consistently have their unopposed say over activities and regularly allow them to over indulge in amusement arcades **or** similar places often with either money provided by the local authority or by ill gotten means astounds me. Looking at our graphs, it has nothing positive to bring to the party, but plenty of negatives to consider.

Whilst I am not saying never to go into these places, as there will be occasions when it is cruel to walk past without having a look and young people need to be exposed to all kinds of risks and threats in this world. You must be in a position to put immediate boundaries in place i.e. time and cost, and you must be able to impose these boundaries without question. If not, don't go in the arcades in the first place!



## Computer Games

As with visiting arcades, it has a number of attributes that need to be managed and the use of structured boundaries that can be enforced. In this case, as there is no cost, other than the purchase price, it is about time and avoiding these games taking up too much time when you could be doing something far better instead. Time management and boundaries.



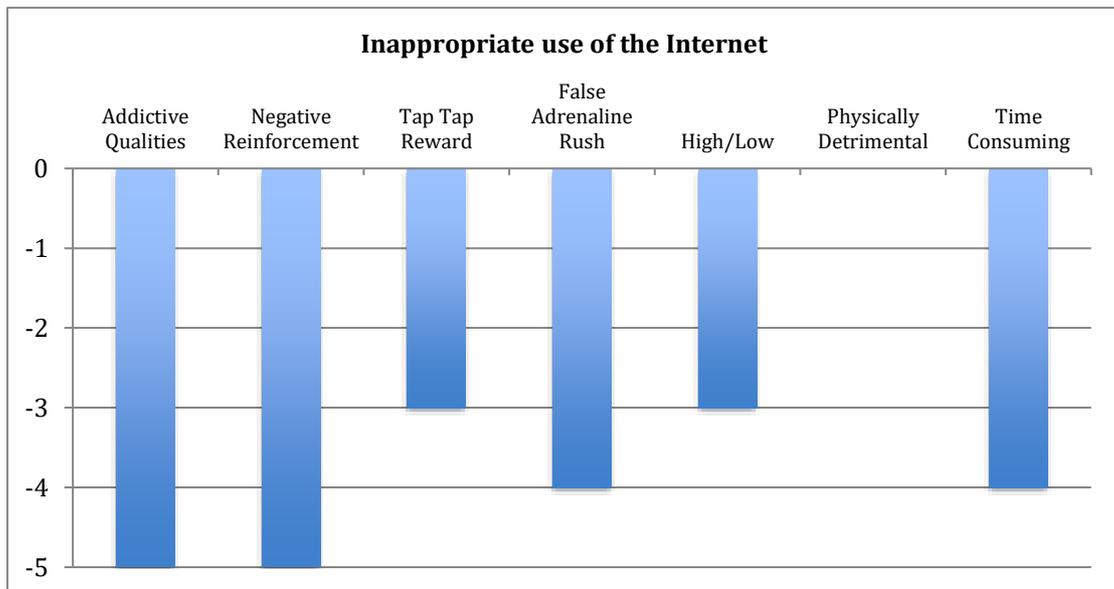
We have to then consider the effects of 'negative reinforcement'. If a damaged impressionable young person is allowed to spend significant periods of time in a virtual world killing virtual people? (In Ruby Wax's book, *A Sane New World*, she talks about how the brain can be and is moulded through environments and events, 'Neuroplasticity'). If constantly exposed to negative thoughts the brain becomes wired in that way. How often have you heard someone say "are they tuned into an issue". The conclusion has to be that we take responsibility for ensuring our damaged impressionable young minds are not over exposed to inappropriate negative reinforcement in whichever form it manifests itself.

### Inappropriate use of the Internet

This is one of the most concerning, due to the amount of information that's available and the potential sites which young people can be exposed to. We once had a young man, who's Local Authority had decided, as a point of principal, that all looked after children should have their own computer regardless of their ability or situation. He wasn't far off discharge, and due to their conditions we refused to take responsibility for it. The computer was delayed until he left our service.

Six months later, he had been arrested for downloading child pornography and was going through criminal proceedings. Helpful wasn't it!

The overriding issue here, is when dealing with young people who have been sexually abused and may pose a risk of abusing others, to be allowed access to inappropriate sites would give them visual stimulation that would reconfirm beliefs that abusive behaviour was acceptable. This stimulation may undo years of work and would be many times more powerful than ourselves telling them that all they had been brought up to believe prior to our environment was wrong.



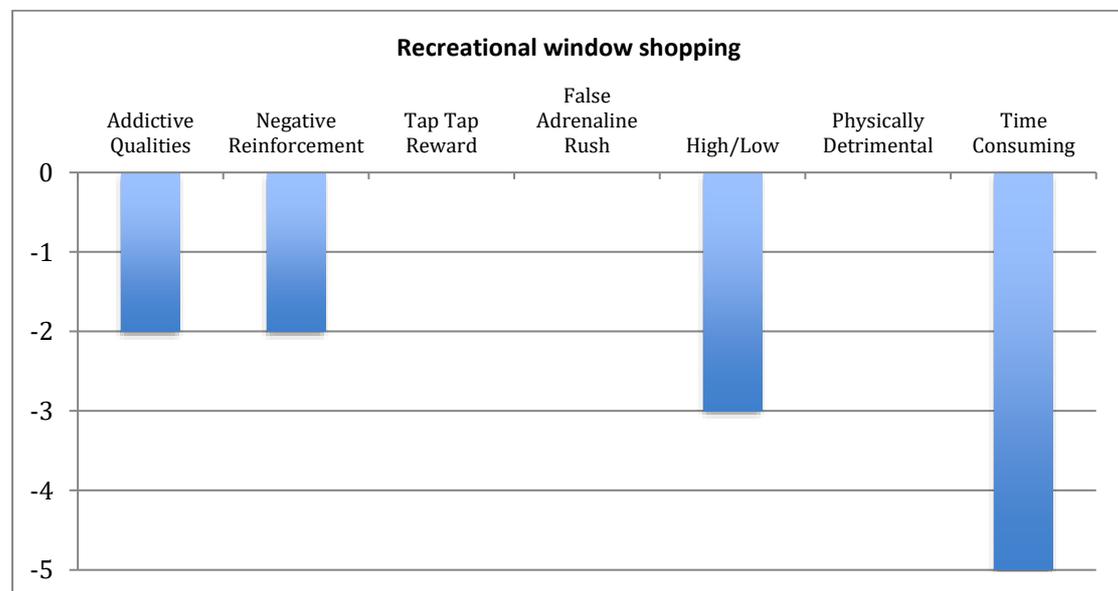
## Shopping!

Now this will get an argument going!

Taking young people to town with funds to buy items needed can be a most positive thing. It can be educational, therapeutic, improve money skills and be relationship building. However, wandering aimlessly around town with no money, looking at things which you cannot afford to buy and as a result of wasting time, not doing anything to improve your chances of economic well being in the future, doing what I would call 'recreational window shopping' brings nothing to the party and I think has negative attributes.

This is due to the fact, that for some people it can be addictive, leading to negative reinforcement, looking at all of the material items which you cannot buy because of your situation. A high followed by a low, as you leave with very little if anything, for your time, and you've used a lot of time with no positive outcome.

So why do young people in care spend so much time wandering around the shops? The answer is because they have nothing better to do - but our young people have, so let's get on with it!!



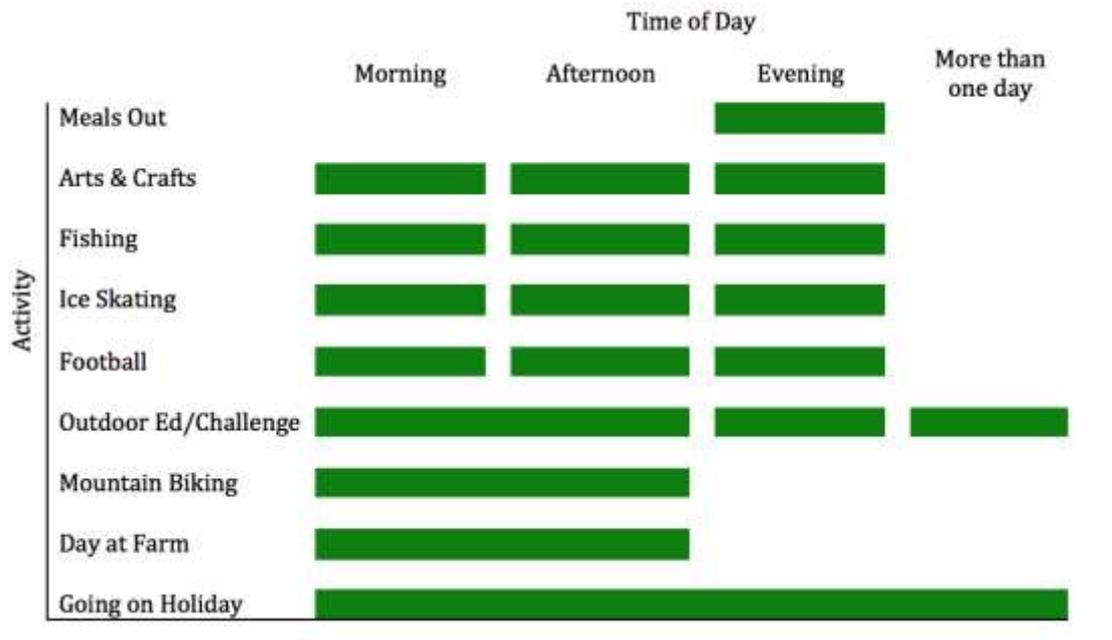
### Best use of time!

Finally, when considering activities and what to do, whether from a manager’s perspective, managing a team of people and engaging children in activities or from a member of staff’s point of view, you must take into consideration the best use of time allowed.

In my view, they would fall into the following order of value:

5. Activities that involve more than one day
4. Full day, or full evening
3. Half day/evening, with options to do something else
2. Only used half the amount of time available
1. Only a short amount of time used

A simple cost benefit analysis prior to planning the day is needed. There is no point driving for two hours, to spend a couple of hours and drive home with nothing much to show for it. Over the years I’ve seen examples of this, where less able members of staff have done this as they fell into the trap of thinking it is an easy way of killing time and managing young people’s behaviour at the same time. Wrongly they have thought the completion of a visit to a far away place would impress managers and colleagues. Unfortunately a brief conversation with the young people exposes the flawed plan. In conclusion, plan your day well.



## Stress and Adrenaline

Over the years, it has become apparent to me that one of the most overlooked issues when considering a young persons situation, health and well being, is the effect of adrenaline on the body and how it has an impact on a person's behaviour.

The number of times that I've assessed young people that have been in a state of chaos, where they have literally been shaking with anxiety. The number of times that I've sat through health reviews for children prior to admission, where they have been prescribed medication to calm them down or as a result of information from parents about their behaviour to help the parents manage that behaviour.

The fact that on occasions professionals were highly concerned that the child was a victim of sexual abuse but due to a lack of evidence, they were unable to declare it publicly. As a result, the medical practitioner being aware but not being prepared to factor these issues into the equation, chooses to put them on medication.

On numerous occasions, children and young people, shortly after their admission to Pear Tree have had their medication reduced, if not removed altogether.

This, I have no doubt, is as a result of living in a calm, structured and above all safe environment, where they're not constantly on edge wondering where the next threat is coming from.

So what is adrenaline? Lets look at a layperson's guide to adrenaline. I am not a doctor or scientist in any way, so let's just talk about what I know and the information gathered over the years coupled with some interesting facts to put it into some sort of context.

Adrenaline is the 'fight or flight' hormone, designed to help the body to deal with a threat to survival. It enables the body to undergo physical changes, to be able to deal with the threat i.e. fighting the threat off or by running away. Blood is pumped to the limbs for immediate action and senses are on high alert. The brain functions at high speed, taking in and processing all of the information that might have a bearing on the outcome.

Ask any horseman/vet and they will tell you, that horse adrenaline is beyond understanding. Jockeys harness their energy to get a performance from their rides, and they can carry on with near fatal injuries as a result of the amount of adrenaline that is pumping through their body.

Regretfully, knacker men will tell you that horses killed through trauma i.e. as a result of racing or other sport, that their muscles when skinned are physically very different as a result, they are almost white. As are bulls killed in the Spanish bull fighting ring.

Wolves will bate a deer, to enable its adrenaline to be digested by the wolf and its powerful qualities passed on through digestion, will not only have impact on the wolf itself, but wolves from other packs will be able to smell the increased adrenaline in the scat left by the first wolf, and interpret that to mean that the first wolf is more powerful than it actually is.

*Lone Wolf - Jodi Picoult. <http://www.thewolfcentre.co.uk/>*

So what has this got to do with humans? In one of my local bars there is on the wall in a frame, a newspaper cutting from the 1850's telling of the last man in Darlington to be prosecuted for slaughtering a bull without first bating it with dogs. It was considered to be a criminal waste to allow the opportunity for quality meat to go without the effect that bating has on the bulls body.

This shows evidence that our ancestors and wolves understood the effect of adrenaline, which shows that it is nothing new, just forgotten.

How many workaholics do you know that work flat out without a day off work for sickness until they go on holiday. How many Olympic athletes phone in sick? Why is the Army sickness rate less than the social work department?

If adrenaline has such profound effects on the body, it is easy to see how a child who by definition is vulnerable, in a chaotic environment with physical threats to its well being, will be negatively impacted on by the on-going experience.

Therefore, a key element in our plan, is the need to calm everything down. Many will know that I'm not a fan of pretend adrenaline, high buzz activities such as theme parks, apart from rare, special occasions, maybe once a year. Yet again, most children and young people in care, will have been to most theme parks, or similar kind of things.

The kind of activities which I promote, as I feel that they have more substance, have more long term positive effects. Young people coming into our service need a period of calm, just to get their metabolism back to a more normal level of functioning.

My observations are that the body benefits from having a level of adrenaline regularly stimulated. Indeed the questions above are answered by that fact that Adrenaline helps to keep your senses alert and this I think likely to maintain the bodies immune system. Keeps minor illnesses away and keeps the brain active. As a result of being involved in activities that stimulate adrenaline at work or play, people are usually physically fitter.

Those that don't experience healthy levels of adrenaline often become desensitized, less alert and altogether less switched on. Lack of physical activity often results in weight and health issues sometimes leading to mental health issues.

So again the issue is the right kind of excitement and not living in a state of constant anxiety and unacceptable stress that has a negative impact on the body chemistry and long-term damage.

Stress in the form of anxiety continues to be the most relevant but underestimated issue in situations with our young people today.

Dr. Bruce Perry explained that different kinds of stress have different effects on the body in that -

Unpredictable	Predictable
Severe	Moderate
Prolonged stress	Controlled
=	=
Vulnerability	Resilience.

With this in mind it is easy to see how living in an abusive environment where you don't know when you're going to be beaten or abused next can result in a child growing up with increased vulnerability leading to a further downward spiral of negative events and interactions. (Toxic Stress, Garner et al, 2012/Lieberman 2012)

Whereas a child brought up in a stable positive environment exposed to stress in the form of education, sport and activities grows stronger, building in confidence on the back of successfully dealing with the challenges he or she faces.

The other effect of adrenalin is that it causes young animals to freeze in times of stress or fear, 'like rabbits in the headlights'. Children are just complicated animals as are the grown ups who are even more complicated. Even now after thirty years I'm never worried about what the children are going to do, we know what to expect there. But the grown ups and how they may react to what the kids have done or how we have helped them is the thing to be scared of as we deal with the most unpredictable over worked, stressed out complicated animals of all 'social workers'.

Donkeys are a good example. They are slow processors and if hassled just freeze giving rise to the saying 'stubborn as a mule'. One of our children was known for being able to demonstrate good ideas while working on the farm but completely unwilling to cooperate in the class room. When I learned about the donkeys he came to mind as he would quietly get flustered and present as stubborn but it may have been as simple as the speed the question was asked. Sat in a tractor in a relaxed environment he could demonstrate a good understanding of some complex issues.

### **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Injury)**

Living in a state of constant anxiety with unacceptable levels of stress has often resulted in me considering if a child or young person was actually suffering from 'Post Traumatic Stress Disorder'.

In November 2009 an ex-army friend, still involved in helping the forces, contacted me. The number of casualties returning from Afghanistan was alarming and with the success of the medical team's ability to keep people alive, the army had to play catch up with their thinking as they admitted they had lost the skills that they previously had, in terms of helping people through rehab as it had been so long since a major operation of this kind.

I was interested in helping in any way I could and offered our experience. The response was rapid, and a couple of days later I rendezvoused with a chauffer-driven brigadier at a country house in North Yorkshire. Our meeting was to last a couple of hours of solid talking in a way I hadn't predicted.

The reason for the meeting was that in the toing and froing of information they had identified something. That I had direct experience of running homes (which they were wanting to do) and our client group possibly suffering from PTSD was not that dissimilar to their client group and what were my thoughts. Tired of doing the same old stuff, the Brigadier wanted to know what I thought they should focus their energies on?

My response was to keep people involved in trying to make some kind of contribution, the way soldiers were considered no use to the forces after a disability or injury would add to their deteriorating mental health and lead to other problems. Getting the men to help each other and still in the game was to me the obvious way forward. I explained my aspirations as to 'make them tax payers' (our children) because if they are, it means everything else will fall into place.

Many months later I was to learn from a completely separate source that 'make them tax payers' was the mantra for the British Army in respect of those in rehab.

*Post Script*

*BBC News 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013.*

*Reports of a project where ex-servicemen with disabilities join archaeologists to recover a spitfire from a bog. Whilst I will never be able to prove it, when interviewed the servicemen spoke about how given a task together, being physically active and involved in something important had helped them physically and mentally in almost the same sentences I used with the Brigadier. This is one of many expeditions involving disabled soldiers reported in the national press.*

*The Pear Tree experience may be more significant than you think.*

### **Structured activities versus entertainment?**

Throughout my career, I have promoted that staff should be thinking every day about doing activities to avoid having problems to solve in terms of poor behaviour. Other care facilities don't put as much thought into this as they do into education facilities, but the result is that they spend a lot of time putting things right as the inevitable happens and 'the devil finds work for idle hands!'

As a result of my expectations, it is often interpreted that I think children should be constantly entertained, which is not the case.

There is a time to play, a time to work and a time to rest. Balance is the all important issue. The key words from our plan are:

- PROTECT
- ENGAGE
- OCCUPY
- RELATE
- INFLUENCE

Indeed, there is plenty of evidence to say that children and young people find it easier to build relationships with people who do things and interact with them. I remember a study carried out on young offenders some years ago, and the post analysis was that those who had gone onto make something of their lives could all identify one individual who showed interest in them above and beyond the call of duty.

What I don't subscribe to is a belief that you can only have fun if it costs money.

My observations over the years are that there is a perverse culture among many young people in care, that they must have the most expensive, designer items, trainers a priority!

Where does this come from?

My view is that it is linked to such low self-esteem. Previously in society, young people could create an identity by having skills, achievements and an individual personality. In the absence of the above, the focus moves to material items that identify a young person as being part of something, i.e. a group, and the trappings of objects that identify you with that group.

It is easy to see how gang culture has developed so quickly in some parts of the country, as the absence of 'role model leadership', suitable education and training means that they have nothing to work towards. Loyalty and a cause to fight for gives young people all of the things that they normally get from education training and employment.

In this under class world you are only worth something if you wear the right gear!

As good parents, we are trying to educate our children to be prepared for the life ahead of them and functioning in the adult world. Building their self-esteem, to know better than this and to be valued for all of the right reasons is an important part of that role.

Likewise, activities are often viewed in a similar way, in that they aren't worth doing unless there is a false adrenaline rush and a cost. In their view the way is to be entertained, gratify oneself in material items and experience that you think everyone else is experiencing; that is everyone else with nothing to do and nowhere to go!

My view is simple, that as corporate parents we have a moral duty to see through the above issues and educate our young people and prepare them for the next stage of their lives; to be entirely positive, without being unrealistic as to their future opportunities.

Therefore, high value, structured activities are required. Educate young people as to the value of a good walk, knowing how to cut the grass, use the public swimming baths. Things that we've already talked about that don't cost much, because in the future they will have to pay for it themselves.

Where would they be if they didn't know how to build a life with interests other than when someone takes you out and does something for you, and pays the bill?

Since the first draft of this document I have been fortunate to assess a young person to come to us. He has been out of education for two and a half years, has no structure to his day but has been quad bike ridding at a circuit and to a number of theme parks. He has holidayed three times at the seaside. Would anyone like to bet me they took a principled avoidance of the amusement arcades?

His main daytime activity is the Xbox. As I have said earlier regarding my own aspiration as a child, he said, "I would die without my Xbox". The home is unable to offer any education, which is why he is moving to us. On arrival his education will start with some outstanding 'role model leadership' and a whole 'real world' will open up to him.

Update, 1 Year on.

This young man is taller, fitter and enjoys physical exercise. He regularly plays squash and enjoys walking and mountain biking. He has fully engaged in his education and has not been involved in any inappropriate behaviour.

Update, 3 years on.

He passed GCSE Maths in our school, started College studying Painting and Decorating and finished top of his group. He is now actively looking for an apprenticeship. In the three and a half years he was with us, his personal holistic competence went from 72% to 99%.

## The Value of Activities Conclusion

As a corporate parent, you are in a position of great importance as the rest of their lives are in your hands. The last word on the list above is 'influence'. Pear Tree is now in its 28th year and in that time we have seen so many young people come through our service as frightened, difficult and often very disturbed young people. When they leave they are without doubt very different. Whilst we can't say that every young person is back on the normal developmental pathway as if they have come from the most stable of backgrounds, many have!

Others without question have managed to reach their own full potential. This hasn't happened by accident. It happens because of the hard work and effort that goes into their experience while they are with us. It is a life changing experience. As Professor Finley Graham once said to me in the early 90s *"Judge their experience by the opportunities that these young people have had and your work by how hard you've strived to give them those experiences"*. With that in mind, I know we have consistently done our best, for 27 years and don't doubt we will continue to, for years to come.

In July 2013, with council cuts beginning to have impact on the financial stability of the company it was necessary for me to engage the duty managers to tightly manage every activity every day. As a result only high value structured activities, with the odd treat thrown in were allowed.

The feedback was that we had had one of the most positive summer holiday ever with a lot of very happy young people. Whilst we had to manage the money and the mileage, this was done without any negative impact on the young people.

## 9. Helping children learn values through activities

Earlier documents being 'The importance of Values' and 'The Value of activities' discuss as they say "what's on the tin" and make a valid case for remembering to use the language of values in everyday life at home and at school. Also the importance of using activities as learning experiences to increase knowledge, resilience and develop skills.

Both of which are of equal importance. It is no good teaching a child to have a wealth of knowledge if they have so little resilience they can't function in the working world. Likewise someone with huge resilience but unable to use this to function as a result of a lack of knowledge or skills.

In this document I encourage the reader to consider the marriage value of this way of thinking and look at the opportunity providing activities create for children to experience and learn values.

In the document 'The importance of values' I explained how we considered values and chose 5 to be our corporate values these being

- Courage
- Integrity
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Kindness.

In 'The value of activities' I put forward the idea that activities could be measured by considering what attributes were present and what elements were present within each attribute that added value and made it measurable.

Using this method it is possible to look at individual activities and consider to what degree our corporate values are present whilst undertaking these activities? How do these activities give us the opportunity to demonstrate and expose children to how we live by them and how they can experience them and then also begin to live by them? – If we can focus on being good people the right actions will follow, effortlessly – Aristotle.

Throughout my years of working in care and education I have visited many children experiencing difficulties as a result of neglect, violence and abuse including sexual abuse which are a direct result of parents perhaps for generations having poor values, limited exposure to adult role models and poor education, perpetuating poverty. As a result restricted life opportunities resulting in lives which have such a limited scope of reference.

Children placed in mainstream 'residential care with or without education' often does little to increase the child's scope of reference and an equation is played out whereby professionals often teach children about a subject in the classroom or key workers office but limited opportunity to experience and live by what is taught.

I can recall debating in the 1990s that it was regularly discussed how important it was to teach children about the importance of having good self esteem but little recognition that this in itself was not enough.

As parents and carers, teachers or instructors, we need to put strategies in place that actually raise a child's self esteem in a very pragmatic way. In short, it's no good just talking about it, we need to make it happen for real.

In a similar way teaching children the language of values in isolation may increase their cognitive understanding of values. However, unless they can experience these first hand by having this

demonstrated by adult role models and put in situations where they experience what it is like to live by them and have them established and embedded as a new normal, we may be hitting the target but missing the point.

“Your character is developed through habituation. If you do a virtuous thing over and over again, eventually it will become part of your character”, Aristotle.

Using the same structure I established to measure the value of an activity to a child’s development, we can also measure the opportunity an activity gives to demonstrate and encourage a child to develop an understanding of values and experience living with them by exposure to the need and opportunity.

If we again consider our corporate values as an attribute of an activity and think about what elements make up this value for it to become an attribute of an activity.

For example, to demonstrate

Courage- this must include the following- Demonstrate resilience, out of their comfort zone, being challenged and it will be clear there will be negative consequences if unsuccessful.

Integrity- trustworthy, honesty, expect reliability, to know right from wrong.

Respect- consideration of others, humility, positive interaction with others, the need to set a positive example.

Responsibility- reliable, make decisions, act independently, ability to meet targets or expectations.

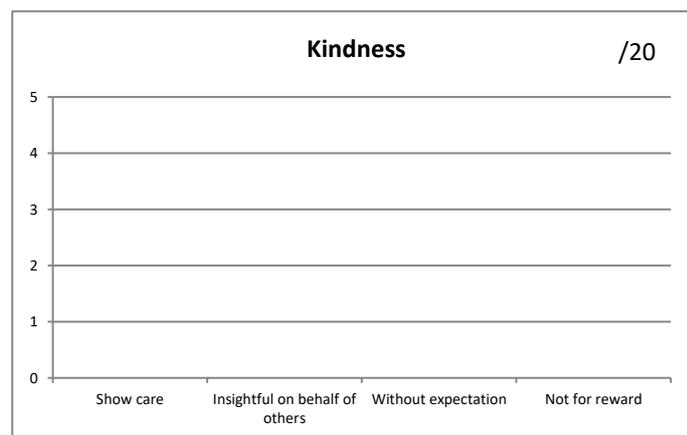
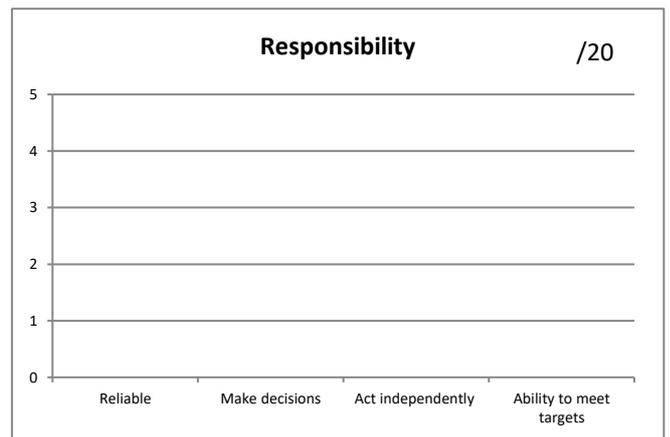
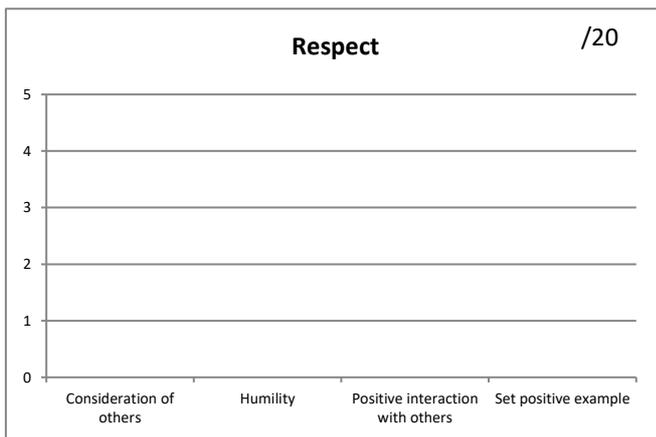
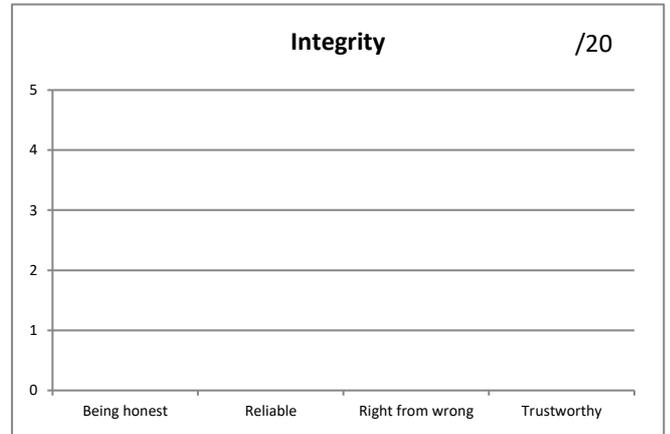
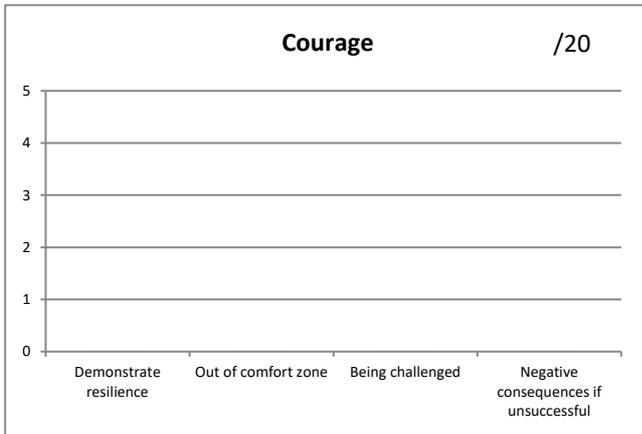
Kindness- show care for others or animals, insightful for others, without expectations, not for immediate reward.

The formula above demonstrates a very straight forward thinking process.

1/ Decide on your organisations values.

2/ Consider very carefully what elements must be present to make up/define a value.

3/ Put this thinking in a framework to measure the very extensive activities we undertake against this formula we have determined.



By adding the values together you arrive at a total, which to conclude the value of the attributes, fits into a range as follows.

$$\begin{array}{r} 0 - 4 = 1 \\ 5 - 9 = 2 \\ 10 - 14 = 3 \\ 15 - 19 = 4 \\ 20 = 5 \end{array}$$

It must be remembered we are not assessing the level of learning a child has experienced as a result of completing an activity but the 'potential' an activity has to expose a child to these learning opportunities. It is the activities that are being assessed as part of understanding the quality of our work and to appreciate what we should value.

In terms of assessing a child's progress with learning and improving their values, our other systems which consider this over time, a worthwhile period of time and not just the time of a particular activity, give greater depth to consider.

The following are an assessment of many of the activities we provide and it is clear from the onset not all are a given to be present. As I started to consider this subject I was genuinely of the view that our activities would all be of similar significance in terms of giving us the opportunity to help children learn values. This is clearly not the case and whilst we can make an argument that for example whilst undertaking a game of football we may have a situation that develops which allows the adult role model leaders to demonstrate kindness, this is not part of the assessment. Good leaders will always demonstrate good values as good leaders do. The point of this exercise is to consider what is on the agenda of the activity to be demonstrated. In the case of football, being kind may not be a stipulated requirement, but good sportsmanship should be.

Therefore I am of the view that we need to be proportionate in our evaluation. We must not get stuck in the thinking that activities are only worthwhile if they give us the opportunity to teach all values. We must recognise that if an activity gives us the opportunity to demonstrate and help a child learn one value that this is hugely significant in itself. The following gives us much to consider.

If we start with the example above 'A structured game of football'. Here we can see the following.

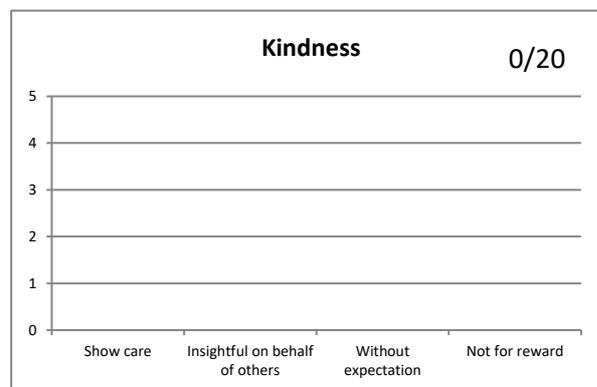
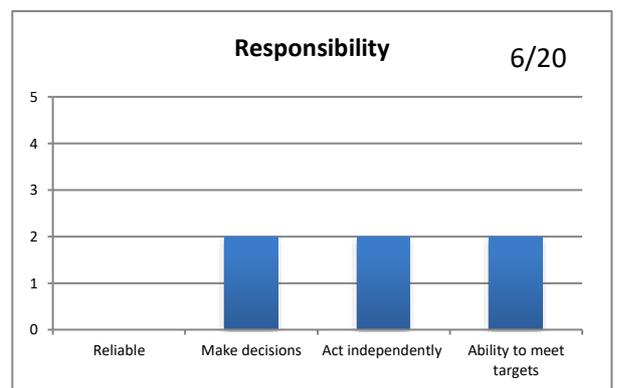
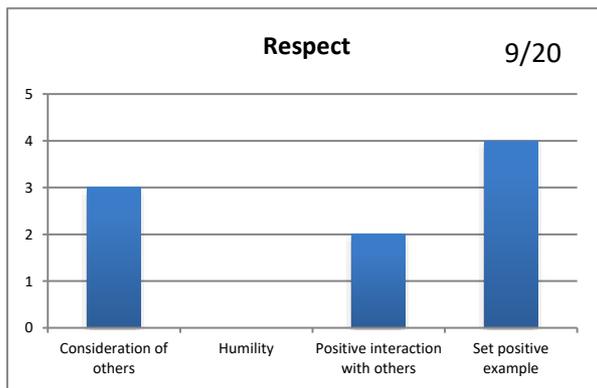
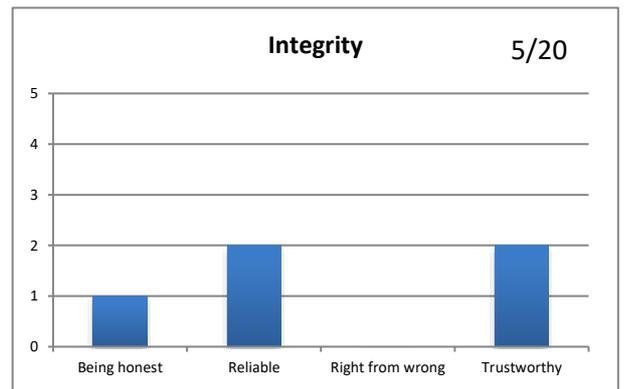
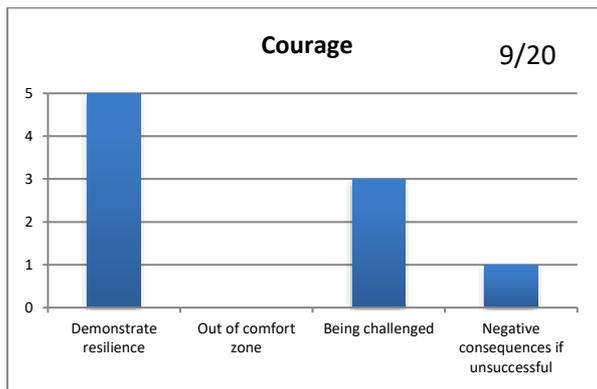
Courage - The game of football does require a high level of resilience however most children have had a game of football with or without structure so it is not out of their comfort zone. Negative consequences are restricted to a slight degree of ridicule if you miss a goal or flunk a pass but that should be the limit. Being challenged is present in a moderate way also.

Integrity - Remembering that this assessment is not about how it may be delivered which is variable depending on who's leading the game but what's on the agenda, therefore being honest isn't relevant, being reliable to your team mates is, knowing right from wrong not really a prerequisite, being trustworthy in the same way that reliable is helpful to live up to team mates expectations.

Respect - Consideration of others is present but limited to not wanting to let your team mates down and trying to predict their next move. Humility is not a prerequisite. It is hoped there is positive interaction with others but this is dependent on helping your team to win. In a similar way setting a good example may be present but not a requirement.

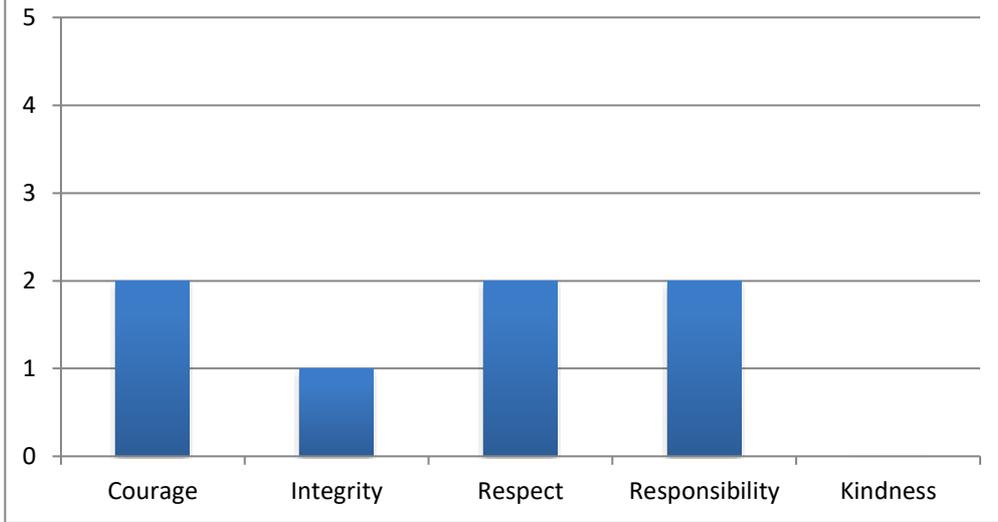
Responsibility - Is evident as successful team mates will need to be reliable and trustworthy in completing the moves, kicks and passes but restricted to this level. The need to act independently is limited to small decisions on the football pitch and ability to meet targets is at a micro level such as getting the ball, passing or scoring.

Kindness - May be presented by individuals at anytime due to good leadership and opportunity but it's not on the agenda. What's on the agenda is to play well and win.



# An organised game of football

7/25



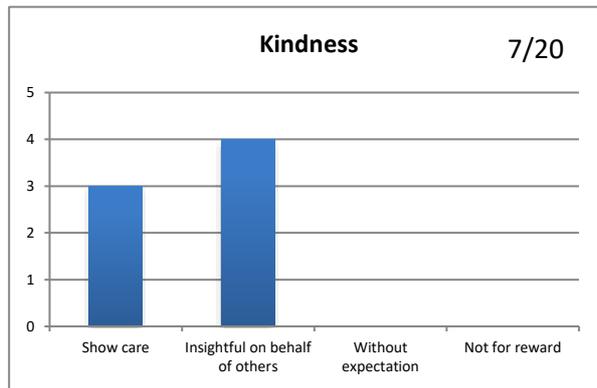
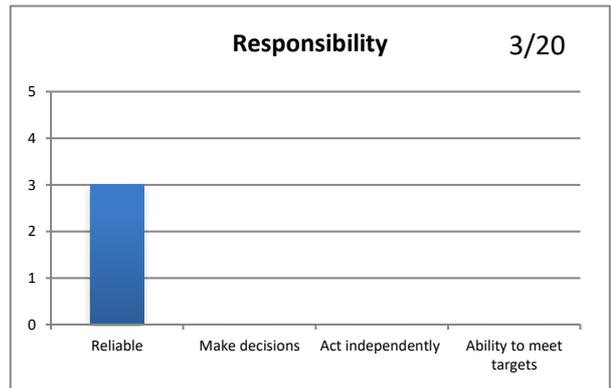
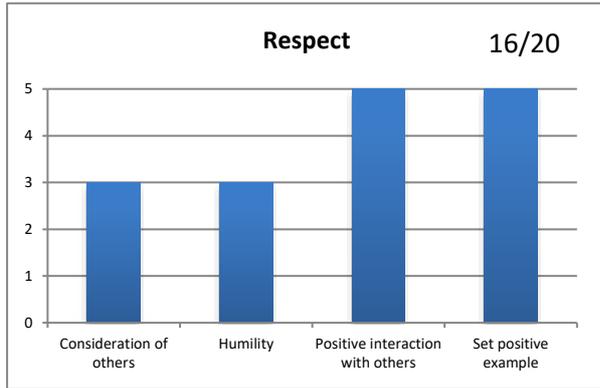
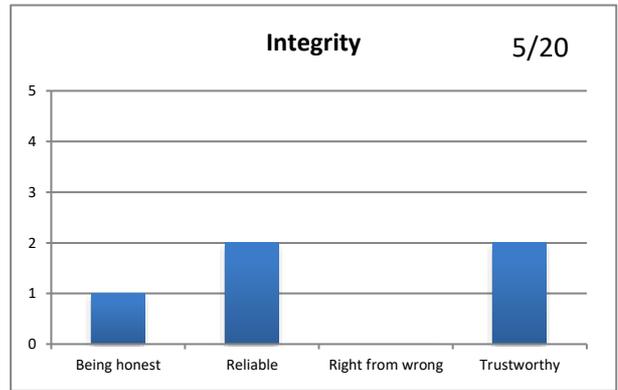
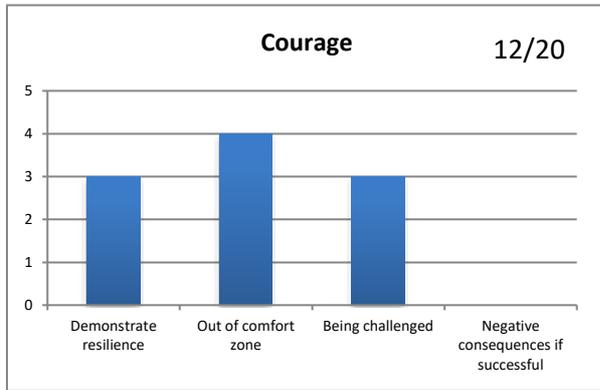
## **School Sports Day**

This is the day the whole school comes together for a most worthwhile experience during the summer term and is full of positive interactions. It is our own mini Olympics and one where a variety of different sports are played out over the course of the day with a home cooked picnic lunch in the middle.

The fact that athletic sport is the focus means there is a degree of resilience required. We are taking children out of their comfort zone by being all together at the same time, something that only happens a few times a year. They are being challenged with this experience which means courage is relevant.

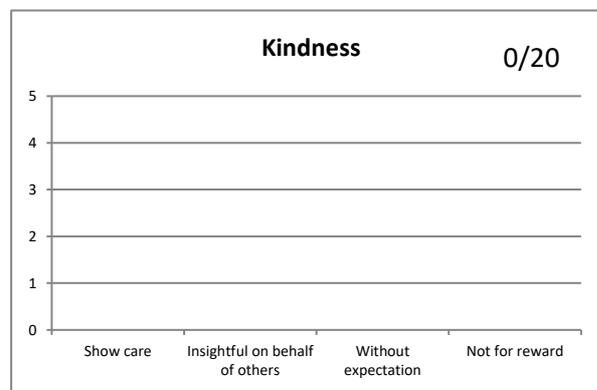
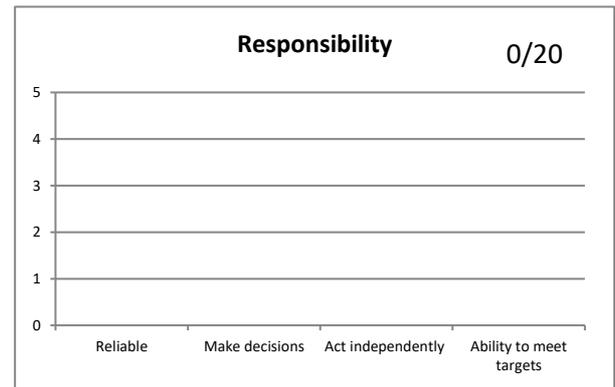
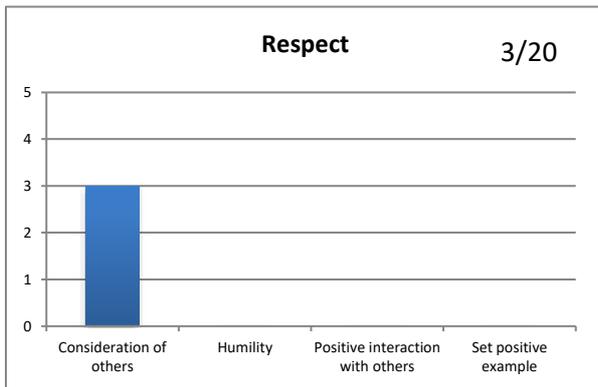
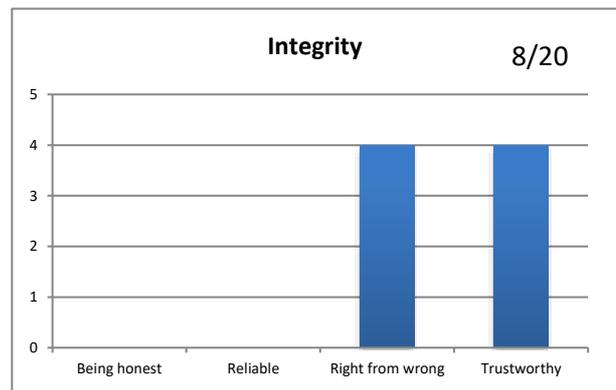
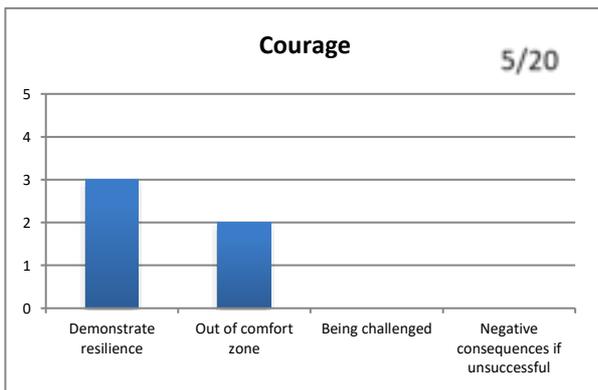
There are elements of needing to be honest and reliable and trustworthy to team mates in team sports so integrity is evident but not in a big way.

Respect is clearly evident as there is a lot of positive encouragement and humility promoting good sportsmanship and how to lose with dignity. As said, positive interactions with others and setting a good example. Responsibility and Kindness less so.



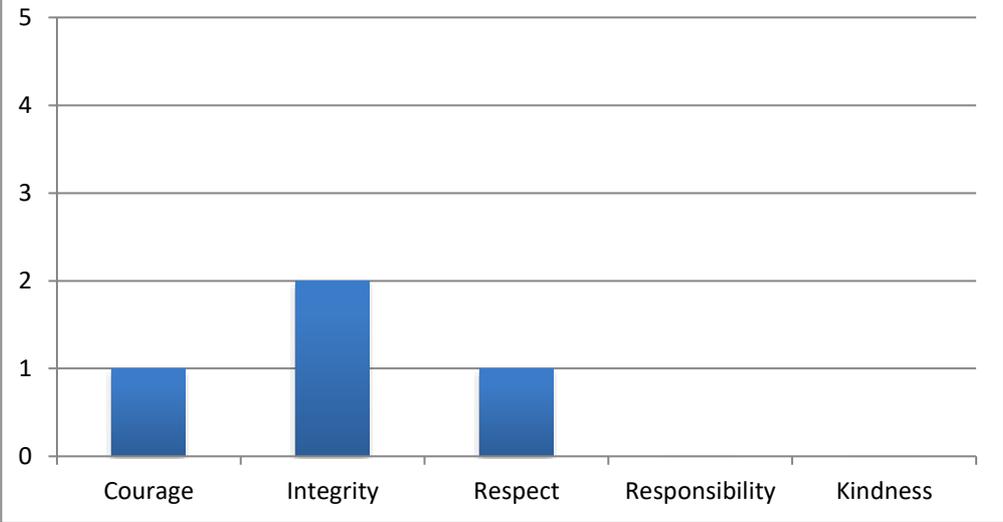
## 'Fishing'

Whilst it may be thought that fishing is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate good values, respect for the countryside and all that goes with it. When you measure it against our frame work it simply doesn't register in the way I had expected. It is still a high value activity for all the reasons I have set out earlier and one I would promote as its ability to calm children is amazing but it's not about teaching and learning values.



# Fishing

4/25



## **Visiting London to see The Household Cavalry Barracks and the Nelson Mandela Exhibition.**

These visits are highly valued and bring much in terms of inspiring children to want to but in to their education. In terms of promoting and teaching about our corporate values,

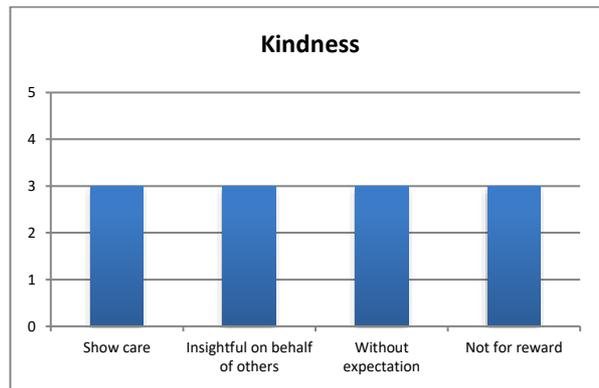
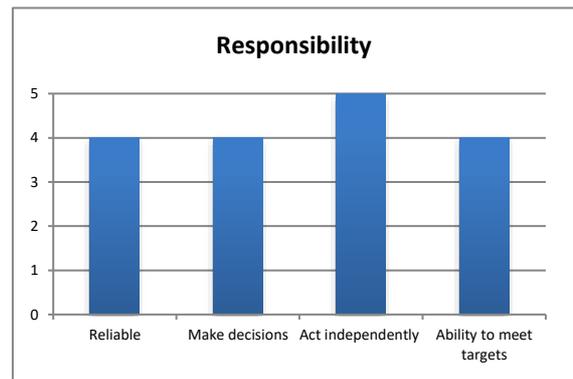
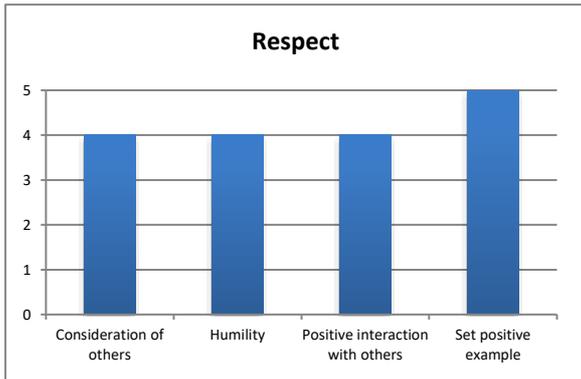
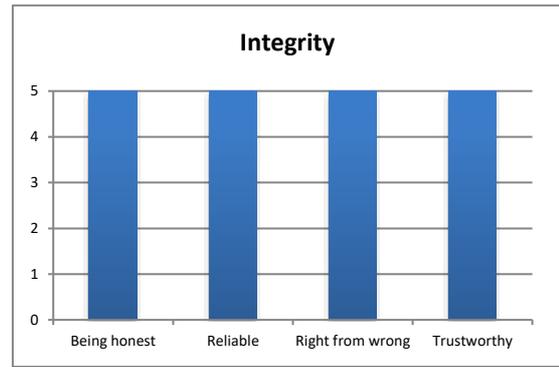
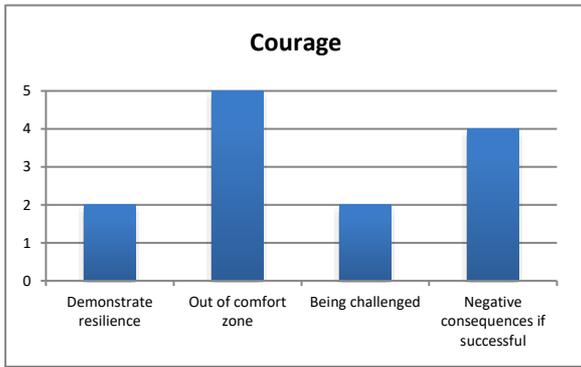
Courage is relevant as it is at best a long hard day requiring good resilience. It is very much out of their comfort zone. Whilst there could be negative consequences if they missed the train or got lost these are minimised but still very evident as we make our way through London. Both these trips were definitely challenging in terms of its overall experience being asked questions and needing to demonstrate knowledge.

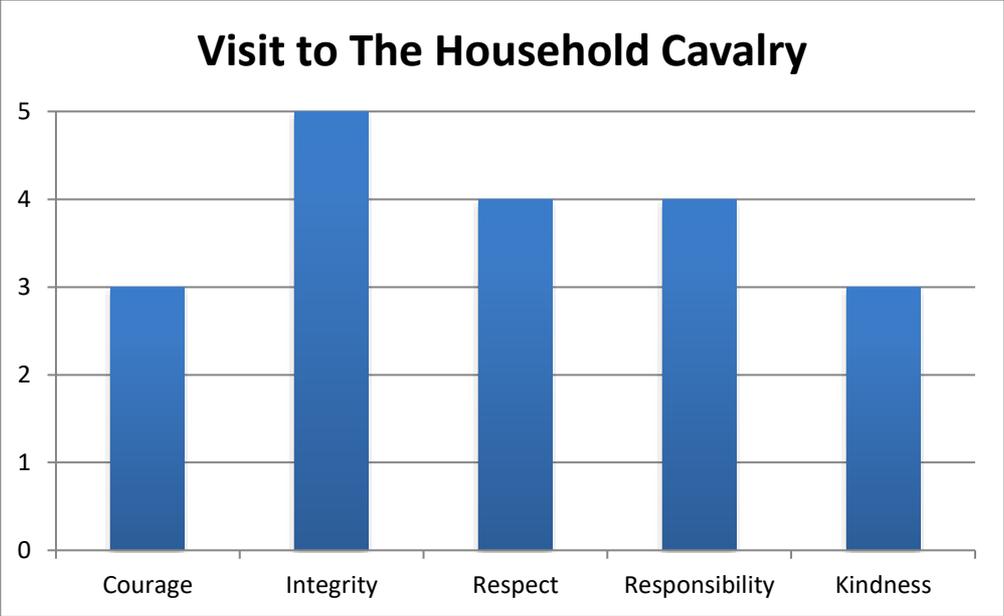
The opportunity to go in the first place is only on the back of meeting a suitability risk assessment and therefore relevant to Integrity.

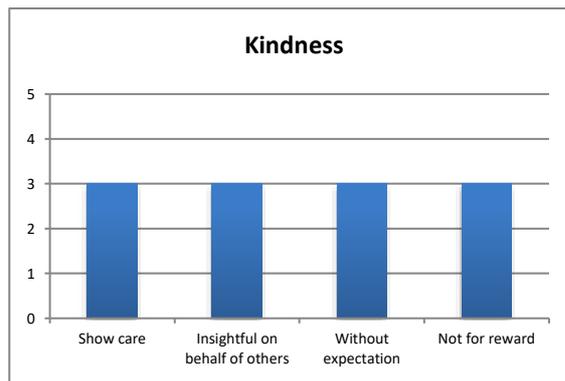
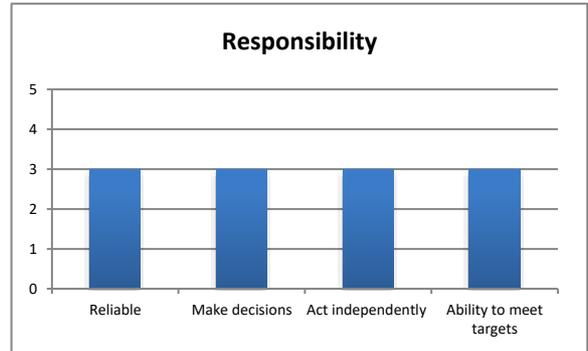
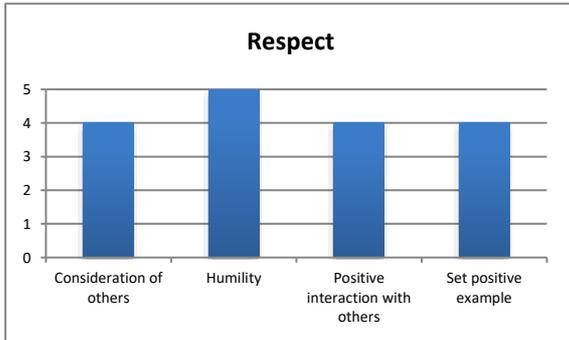
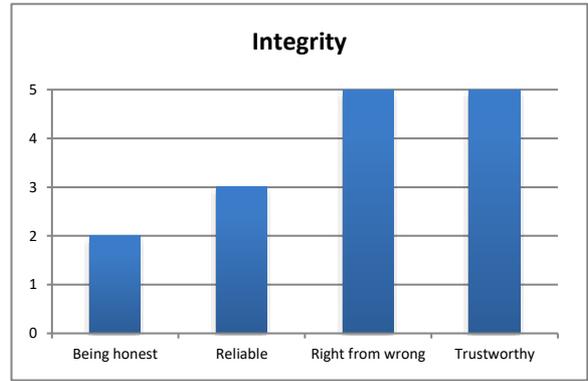
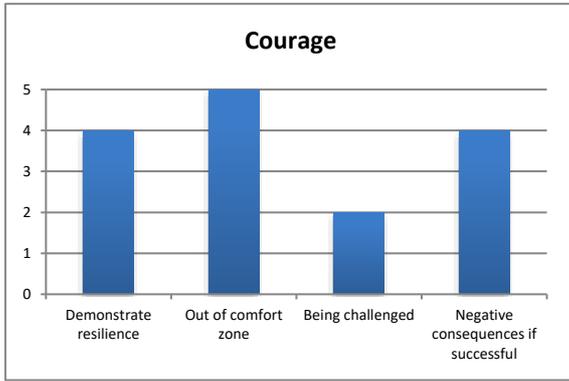
Undertaking an experience like this as part of a group is only successful if there is plenty of consideration for others. Looking at the life of world leader like a Nelson Mandela is humbling requiring humility. With plenty of positive interactions with others. The visit to the Household Cavalry was a unique experience or a selected couple who both found they were setting an example to others.

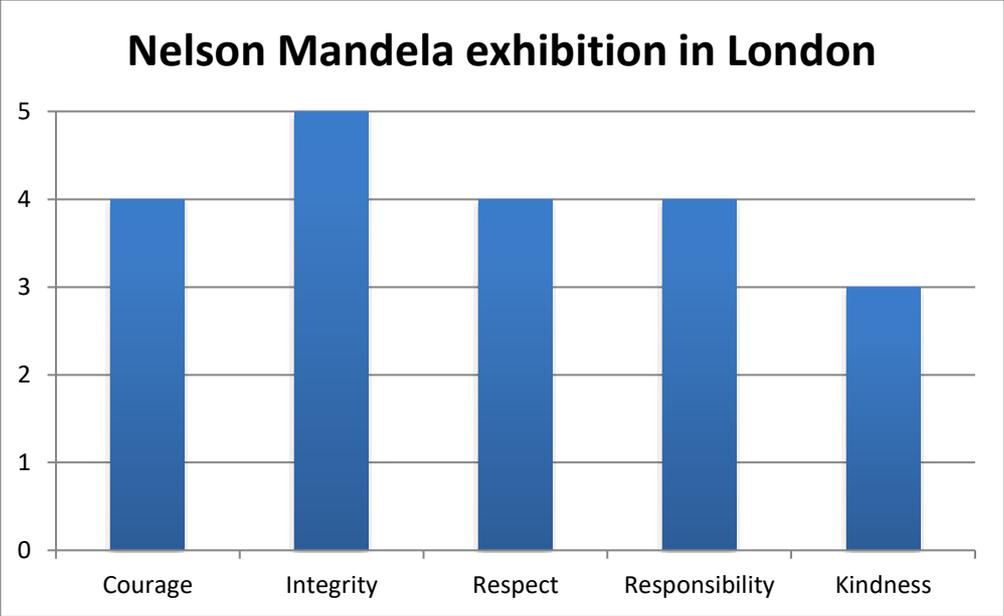
In a similar way Responsibility features as the need to be reliable, make decisions and act independently whilst within a group were experienced throughout the day and getting to the right place at the right time is about meeting targets.

Kindness is also relevant but again less so.









### **‘Driving a tractor independently.’**

This activity is not open to every student as they must meet the criteria for our suitability risk assessment prior to learning to drive. For those that are involved it can be extremely rewarding and a significant boost to confidence. This will have followed being successful with small machinery including lawn mowers and the most popular golf buggy which demonstrates the importance of incremental learning.

In terms of being assessed against our Values assessment criteria.

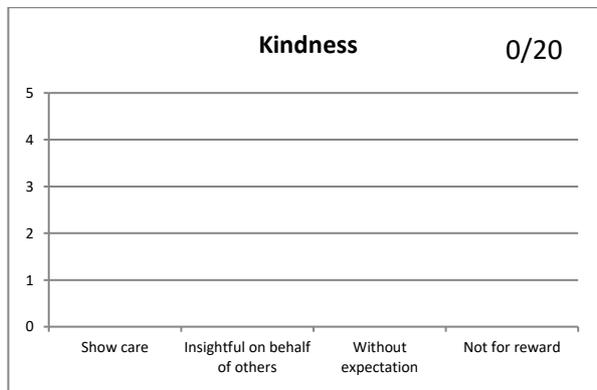
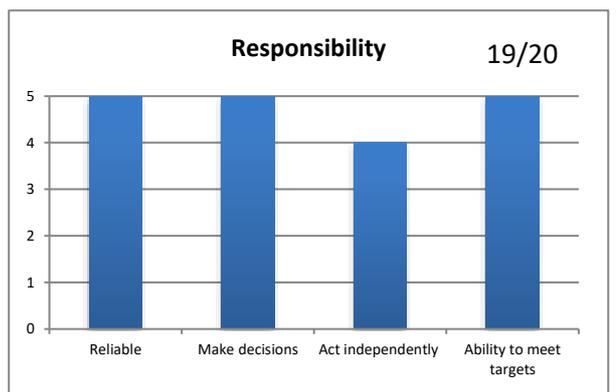
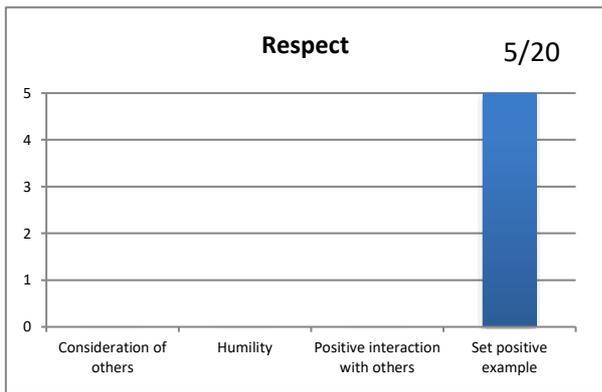
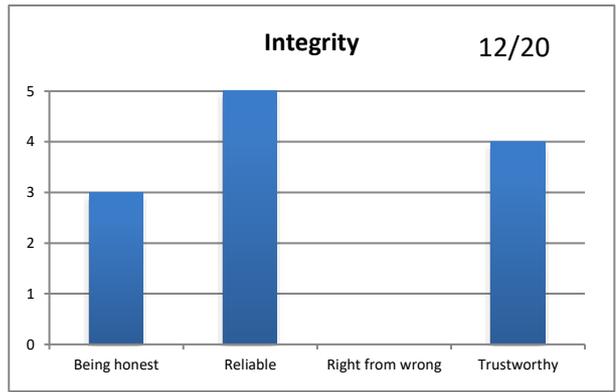
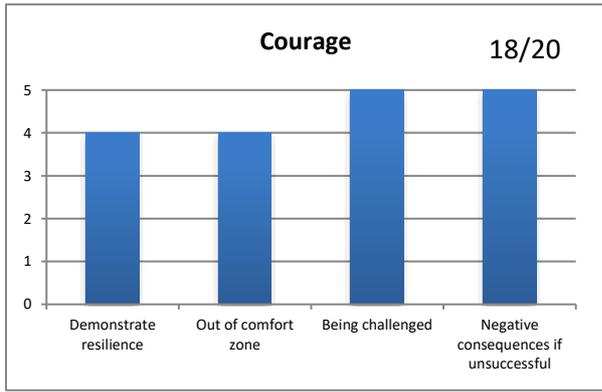
Courage - tractors are not for the faint hearted. Undertaking tasks with machinery involves being bounced around and sometimes for long periods of time. Therefore a reasonably high level of resilience is required. At the time of writing one of our top students who at the age of just nearly 16 years old is in his second year of rolling and harrowing, the spring work required to maintain pasture land. Grass land that is to be grazed by live-stock. He is one of the only students in the country to be given the responsibility of taking a machine worth many thousands of pounds and the power of a 120 horses in the field independently with a 2 way radio to keep in contact with an instructor. The surprise was when he phoned in to ask for the day off because he was tired. Had I had the opportunity to do as he has at that age, wild horses wouldn't have kept me away. We still need to work on resilience.

It is definitely a task that takes students out of their comfort zone. It is going to challenge them beyond anything they have experienced at this point in their development and let's be clear, there could be significant and serious consequences if they fail to remember what they have been trained to do. Crashing any vehicle is serious, hitting gates going from field to field could be expensive, avoiding livestock a definite requirement and health and safety paramount importance from start to finish. Therefore there is a high degree of courage.

Only after a child has developed a high level of trust and met the criteria for learning to drive a tractor are they allowed to do so. Only if that is successful are they allowed to build up a skill base and then having met the criteria and standard are they allowed to drive independently. None of the above would happen without an understanding that they are going to be honest. They are going to discuss what they have learned and say what they didn't understand and be honest about their ability and confidence to do the task in hand. They must also be reliable and have demonstrated this over time. Whilst there may not be decisions to make which rely on the ability to know right from wrong, stopping for animals to get out of the way and looking out for other wildlife is a factor that requires the driver to think of others and be trustworthy. Therefore integrity is definitely on the agenda.

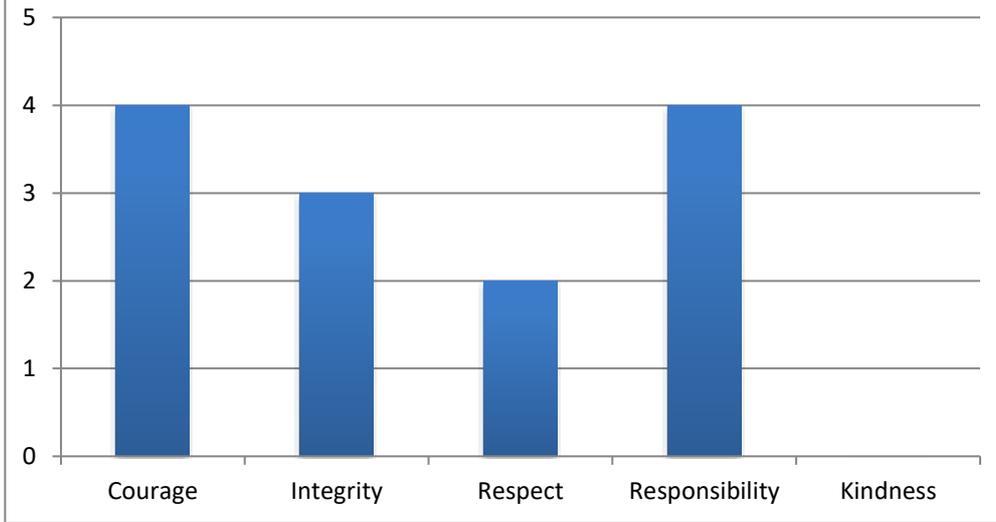
During the course of this task they have to have continued to demonstrate reliability and make decisions. To stop, go on, get help on the radio, seek advice over the radio, act independently and get the job done. So the ability to meet targets is the ultimate test of competence. We are not going to burn fuel driving about the countryside unless it's doing the task required. So responsibility is high on the agenda.

This activity which has huge significance to those that undertake it and those that need the task completed is a good example of one that doesn't demonstrate all values but is important for the ones it does as respect is low and kindness is not on the agenda, it is an activity very high in courage, integrity and responsibility.



# Tractor work independently

13/25



## **Working on the Farms and Gardens.**

This activity is a key part of the Pear Tree School curriculum and takes the form of Rural Science. It is also an activity undertaken on weekends and holidays outside of school time as animals can't be neglected and plants often need watering.

Most of the children that are referred to our service are from urban backgrounds and being on a farm at their stage of experience and development definitely requires a degree of resilience. Noises and apparently 'smells' are very different. It is definitely out of their comfort zone and they are going to be challenged in a variety of ways that they won't have experienced in any setting.

The basic essence of working on a farm particularly with animals is that of nurturing. Ensuring correct feeding, clean water, and warmth in the form of bedding and shelter ( basic requirements for all of us ) are the end result of most activities. Whether it is moving bales of hay, or helping to make hay in the fields, the end result is that this is going to be fed to animals. We spend much of the summer working to ensure we have the produce available to keep animals happy and healthy over the winter. Therefore failure to do so has serious negative consequences, directly on the day if failed to provide an animal with its correct food or clean water, or indirectly if we don't make sufficient produce.

Likewise, plants also require nurturing in the form of correct watering and sufficient sunlight if they are to grow successfully. Failure to get it right could result in many hours of work lost as the plant isn't going to complain or object, it just dies.

Therefore, the criteria for courage is very much met.

Being honest about whether you have done as required and requested above is very much an important point and one with immediate consequences to animals and plants if you haven't.

Being reliable when moving about the farm. Closing gates to keep animals safe in the correct fields. Weeding to protect the plants you are nurturing and to ensure animals are looked after and plants are watered is a prerequisite. Knowing that failure to do so is going to have negative consequences is part of the day and at the forefront of people's mind. Being trustworthy to ensure this is done is a key part.

Therefore Integrity is an important value that is on the agenda.

Consideration of others, plants, animals or work colleagues is very important. Humility less so but still required to have positive interactions with others and set positive examples. One of our most able students who had done it all including driving machinery independently was stopped from attending as his arrogance was plentiful and no sign of humility resulting in concerns about his ability to remain safe as he had no consideration for others as his skills increased.

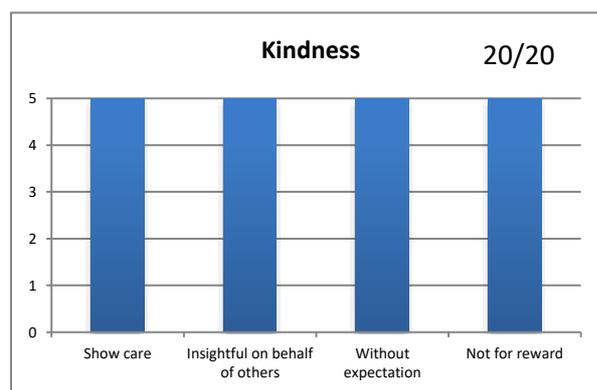
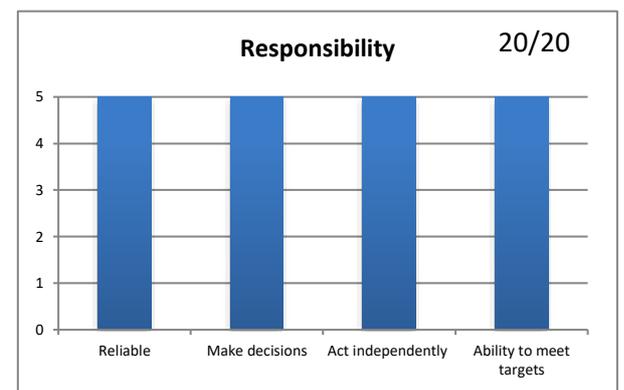
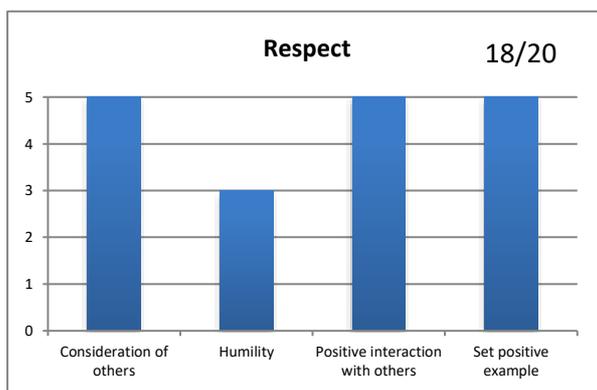
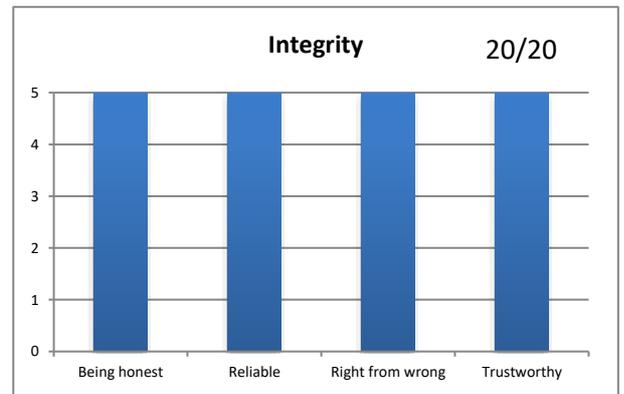
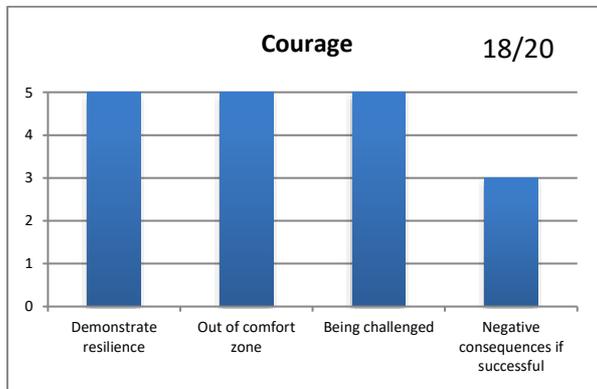
So 'Respect' for nature, plants, animals and work colleagues is a prerequisite.

As said, being reliable is hugely important. The more able to contribute and trustworthy, the more opportunity to make decisions and act independently with the safe environment of the farm where help, support and supervision are just around the corner if it goes wrong. The ability to meet targets, water the plants, feed the pigs, dogs, lambs etc is a real target that must be done. Therefore responsibility is a value that is very much on the agenda.

Nurturing, requires that you show care for others, plants or animals. It requires you to be insightful. To know when the dog needs feeding and the plants look dry due to the hot weather. It requires you to get on without expectation in return or for reward.

Only after a sustained and competent contribution developed over time may a student be offered an incentive allowance (pay book) to reward and motivate and only for weekends and holiday time, never for school time. This also then gives us the opportunity to help that student learn to keep financial records and budget their own money.

Kindness is definitely on the agenda.



## Working on the farm and gardens 23/25



### **Horse riding and working on the yard.**

Much of what has been said above in respect of farm work also applies to working on the yard. Feeding dogs and horses is very much what it's all about, along with mucking out which is part of bedding and shelter. Washing horses and seeing to their physical and veterinary needs whether routine or as a result of injury is part of everyday life.

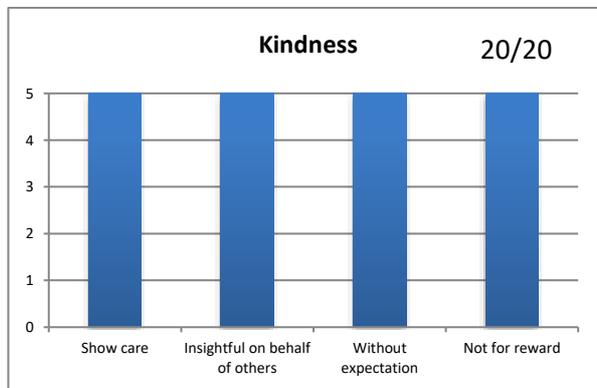
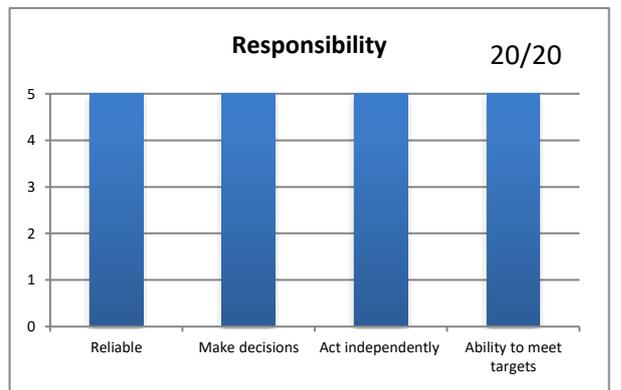
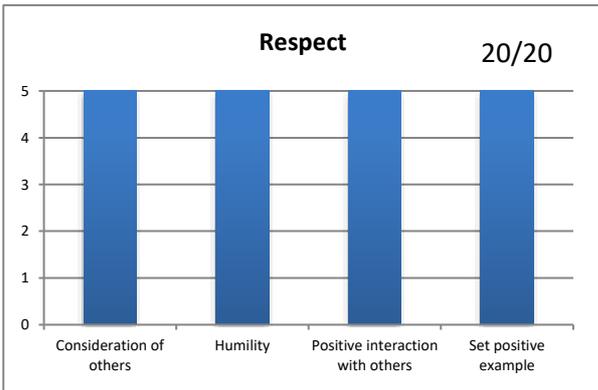
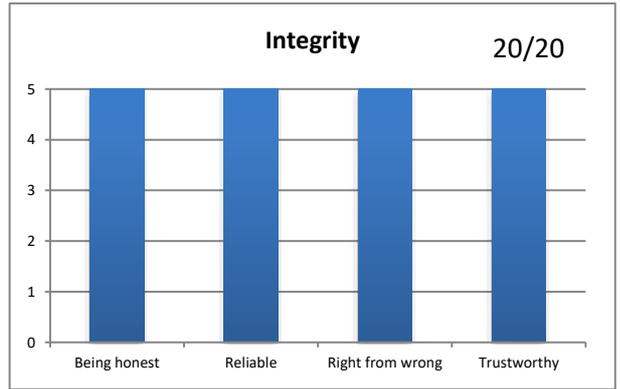
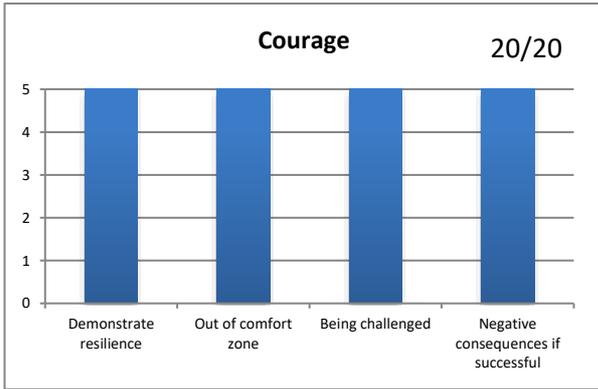
In terms of horse riding, if you've never done this before, just getting on and off is a major effort and achievement. When skill set improves and with greater confidence you will be bounced around and be banged up and down even on a good day. They will definitely be taken out of their comfort zone and be challenged in many ways. Let's be clear in terms of negative consequences if unsuccessful, falling off is never fun and can be painful if not dangerous. Therefore courage is most definitely on the agenda.

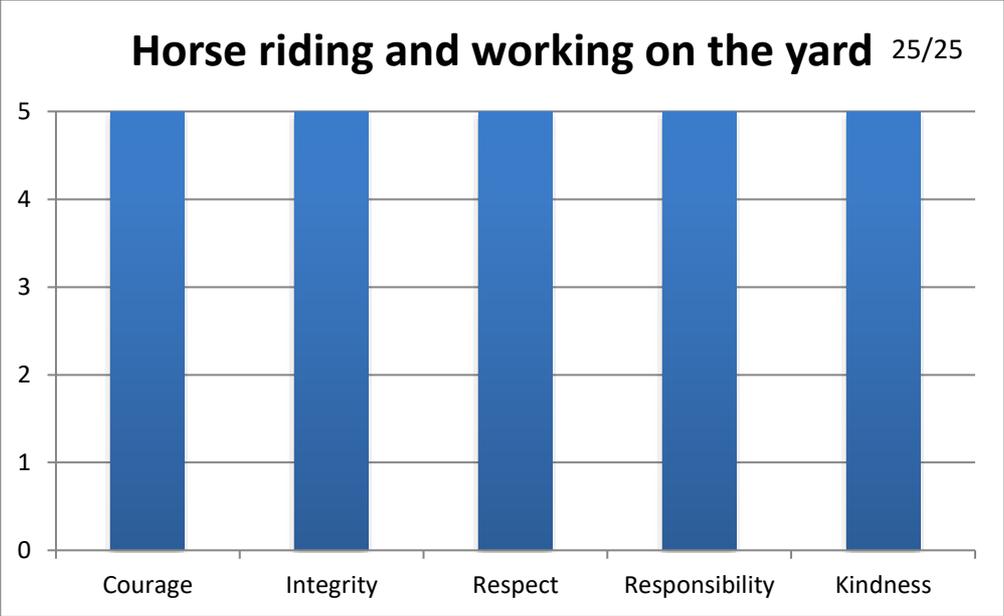
Integrity is hugely important for all of the reasons mentioned above for working on the farm.

Respect is more significant due to humility and is required working with horses as unlike plants, sheep and even dogs they don't accept your mistakes, body gestures and attitudes are highly relevant to achieving the right outcome safely.

Responsibility is relevant again for all the reasons mentioned above as is kindness.

These are key elements and part of the daily agenda. These two activities sampled demonstrate so much in terms of why they are important to the day to day life of our organisation, whether it be school time or holidays. It demonstrates why there is a definite correlation between undertaking these activities and not undertaking them and duration of placement and standard of outcome. It quite simply gives us the opportunity to bombard our students with ways they can learn values and experience them in real life. Have them demonstrated by competent role models and live with them over a sustained period of time in a way which allows them to become embedded as a new normal.





So what about some of the other activities that are regularly found in mainstream residential care (with or without education). How do they measure up against our now identified framework.

## Playing computer games, Xbox or PlayStation and visiting amusement

**arcades** as we have considered in our previous document, they simply don't get off the ground. There is nothing to measure. I don't dispute they are good fun and there is some evidence that high level computer skill sets developed can be used in a variety of employment. However for children with abusive backgrounds or learning difficulties it does nothing to help their recovery or development. Slot machines and penny shove actually promote greed which is of course a vice.

Most computer games give the player a huge sense of control and often that sense of exaggerated reward I talked about in earlier documents. It is no surprise that for children who have been significantly disempowered having a sense of control is very important. So these aren't things to be avoided but recognised as to their limitations and if no balance is offered the dangers these present to damaged and impressionable minds.

As a farmer and landowner functioning within a rural community I was involved with an example which gives me much to think about as to its relevance here. September 2018 saw a young man who decided to ignore all boundaries and drive his car across numerous fields of newly sown corn, damaging crops before they've started to grow. With the unchallenged success of this his modus operandi changed to driving in fields with sheep to see how many he could knock over and kill, as if to score points.

Where does this kind of thinking come from? Well it doesn't take much to realise the connection to many computer games which are of course pure fantasy. The damage death and destruction in this case was very real.

The bridge between fantasy and reality is often fragile. As I experienced first hand one year when we took a group of children to Disney Land Paris. To mix real life and worthwhile education during this holiday I also took them to see Notre Dame Cathedral. One of our children was hysterical as the Hunchback was nowhere to be found.

Thankfully due to sensible gun laws we don't see the kind of school shootings far to regularly experienced in the USA which also mirror the fantasy world of computer games.

Balance, moderation and the avoidance of a preoccupation with violence are really important to remember. Within a therapeutic approach the need to bombard a child with alternative experiences which help them learn skills and values and importantly heal is very apparent.

### **Inappropriate use of the internet.**

If we think about the use of the internet and the consequences for the children in our care in a digital world where there are no boundaries we can actually see how this quickly turns into a negative. Everyday news reports of people misusing social media or developing false identities online to steal and commit fraud are very evident. In these cases we can see our framework being used in a negative pattern as all the elements are relevant but the opposite has been evident. Whilst there are examples of the internet being used everyday in a positive life changing way ( our own connect system is a good example) when it is used negatively there is a definite absence of integrity as being honest, reliable, knowing and doing right from wrong, being trustworthy are not present.

Likewise respect, showing consideration for others and humility, having positive interactions and setting a positive example are not evident but the opposite they have not! Responsibility and kindness are simply not on the agenda. Indeed what is so often evident against our corporate values are the opposite ends of the spectrum in these areas. Indeed these examples of the misuse of social media don't display courage; they are often cowardly and/or reckless. They do not show integrity but often hypocritical and deceitful, these are attributes needed to take on false identity and to mislead others. Self adornment isn't being respectful but it is excessive flattery. Images of self harm, neglectful of others needs to say the least. These aren't the actions of someone kind but someone deceitful to buy favours or use bribery. These are not the actions of responsibility but irresponsibility. In the digital world of little if no boundaries, those who struggle to regulate their behaviour find it hard not to be absorbed by the negative attraction. Children, young people and adults who don't like boundaries, find the digital world open to abuse with very little chance of repercussions.

If we are to think about measuring negative behaviour what better tool than our values assessment. Here we can see that the behaviour I've described above fits very much into this format. A worthwhile exercise is to take a situation and consider it against this to see what behaviour is evident and where it fits on this system.

<b>Deficit Vices</b>		<b>The Golden Mean Values</b>						<b>Excess Vices</b>	
Hypocritical		Integrity						Deceitful	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Selfish		Kind						Buys favour/Bribery	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Cowardly		Courageous						Reckless	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Neglectful		Respectful						Excessive flattery	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Irresponsible		Responsible						Worries	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Sad		Happy						Gullible	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Negligent		Nurturing						Overindulging	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Passive		Assertive						Aggressive	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Dishonest		Honest						Inconsiderate	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Hateful		Friendly						Clingy, Needy	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Insensitive		Empathetic						Overly Sympathetic	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Impatient		Patient						Hesitant	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Critical		Grateful						Overly familiar	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Naïve		Trustworthy						Negligent	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	
Inconsistent		Consistent						Lack of creativity	
5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	

In the above assessment tool you can see that being well balanced in the middle is the ideal and a target to aspire to or achieve. What Aristotle called "The Golden Mean". At either side is the polar opposite of the value we are promoting and a judgment is required to determine where the child we are considering fits on to this scale. These elements of positive in the middle of two negative elements or vices is self explanatory and gives us much to consider if the value of values are lost they are filled by not a vacuum but the vice. Using and being aware of this kind of information and the use of the language of values is so important in terms of being able to articulate a strength or a weakness and by doing so we share a common language and understanding.

## Conclusion

The above demonstrates the value of working with nature and nurturing. That means stables, farms and gardens are ideally placed to provide the opportunity for children and young people to learn values and have them reinforced as a regular part of everyday life. It is hoped that these values, once established, become relevant for all aspects of life and improve relationships with people. Indeed it is through these experiences that we hope children learn how to care for others, the art of nurturing and by doing so be able to nurture their own children in later life. This in itself is very much meeting our long term aims.

Whilst we benefit from a resource rich environment where these activities are on tap as it were, in a mainstream setting I hope this works demonstrates the importance of a small garden or green house along with school pets, small animals and perhaps even chickens. City farms are often available but also remember everywhere is eventually surrounded by farms and small farmers are ideally placed to help and often would love to if asked. Nurturing relationships with neighbours can be very advantageous.

In the same way, I hope this encourages professionals to value the significance of allowing horse riding lessons and I hope more importantly the added extra value of spending more time helping and working on stable yards. Stable yards, livery stables and riding schools can be found throughout the country and relationships should be encouraged.

What is also worth remembering is that both the agricultural and equine industries are short staffed and employment opportunities are very real. So as I demonstrated in my previous document, along with learning values (which are a prerequisite for most employers) they are also learning skills that could lead to future employment.

To draw this document to a close, whilst I acknowledge that this has resulted in an increased awareness of the value of the above, I must remind myself that the motivation behind this document was to identify the fact that the opportunity to learn values are embedded into many activities and it is possible to assess what activities promote which values. I must also reinforce the comments made earlier that should an activity promote one or more values, this is significant in itself and therefore the importance and significance of other activities must not be overlooked.

As an unapologetic, non academic, self educated person in my fifties who has just managed to join the dots together, I find it hard to believe this is new thinking. In fact it isn't, my most quoted advocate is Aristotle who has been quoted by others for centuries. Therefore, my obvious conclusion is why isn't the importance of teaching values in detail more prevalent in all schools? As populations grow and society evolves the need for everyone to treat each other with respect and dignity has never been more important.

One of the most rewarding experiences of my career was when I observed an older girl ( who had had the most difficult of childhoods prior to living in our homes ) saw that a younger child was getting into difficulties, moved up to her in a none threatening way and counselled her. In doing so it was clearly evident that the older girl was modelling the behaviour of the staff team who had looked after her. Undertaking the kind of activities mentioned above that promote the opportunity to experience

values is such an advantage but the most important lesson comes from role model leaders who may demonstrate these values in every day living situations consistently over a long period of time.

This leaves me to end by repeating Aristotle's fine words, "If we can focus on being good people, the right actions will follow, effortlessly".

## 10. Equine Assisted Therapy

"There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man".  
(Winston Churchill)

The above is a term that I use very sparingly and have a great deal of respect for. I do, however, feel that a lot of places take advantage of it and use it as a selling point, to try to cover areas of which they have very little understanding.

I know of a special school that has a member of staff who went on an 'Equine Assisted Therapy' training programme and then, having found an old pony, deliver it in their school as part of their curriculum. This member of staff had no previous horsemanship experience. Likewise, there are so called 'professional horse whisperers' who are now entering our line of work, claiming to have wonderful new techniques that can help people and therefore it is worth thinking about.

I, on the other hand have been riding since I was 8 years old and on the edges of the professional horse world all my working life and whatever I have done with horses, albeit in an amateur capacity, I have always tried to do it as professionally as possible.

But what is equine assisted therapy?

In my opinion, it means nothing more than the title says; using a horse to assist in a therapeutic activity. By definition means something that is going to help or heal. In our situation it's going to help young people overcome the traumas of their past lives and experience of abuse and we hope, help them to heal emotionally whilst at the same time learn some practical skills which may be transferrable to other parts of life. You may well ask, 'Why horses?'

It is worth mentioning the benefit a young person can get from simply taking a dog for a walk and learning how to get along with others by befriending one of our sheepdogs. Anyone who knows dogs will also know you can abuse them, shout at them, kick and swear and they will always want to come back for a fuss. Some of the qualities that our young people present for which we want to teach them better. Horses, on the other hand, never lie, neither do they take prisoners. You swear and shout at a horse, threaten it in anyway and it will neither forgive nor forget. Horses are very susceptible to the slightest indication of body gesture and mood. The horse world in itself has brought me into contact with some very experienced and well respected individuals. An Olympic Medal winner once told me, she made it common practice never to ride a horse when she was in a bad mood. If it's good enough for her it's good enough for everyone else. They feel it and usually, they let you know they've felt it.

So one of the rules we have at Pear Tree that most of the children will be able to explain, and have done so to an Ofsted Inspector, is that we have to remain calm in the stable yard at all times. We teach the young people who are involved with the horse, (which is most of them as it's an important part of the curriculum), how to approach a horse, how to handle it and how to look after it. The riding is something completely different.

Riding is a great sport, it's great to improve young people's self-esteem and help them build their confidence. But, I've always maintained that anything to do with horses is 80% looking after and 20% fun. Unlike a quad bike which you quite simply switch on, get an adrenalin rush and then switch off again – horses are hard work. They take dedication and commitment and only when you offer these things and you've given your best, do you get something like the best from them. If you cut corners, they know and they make you pay for it.

In so much of childcare, we see social workers buying one-off adrenalin thrills for young people. This is something I have always been averse to, I always think it's never worth it and actually its counter productive. We are trying to calm these kids down and allow them the chance to heal, not over-excite them and then switch them back off again – like the quad bike.

If a young person can learn the importance of their body gesture and their communication skills in approaching a very sensitive creature correctly and getting the best from it in return then we hope they've got to have some chance of being able to transfer those skills into how they deal with human beings and other parts of life.

So what do young people get out of working with the horses?

To consider that, let's just take a look at what's on offer and how we go about it. To do that, it's important that you understand and know the stable yard routine, which is as follows!

At 8am the horses are fed and given haylage.

Those outside are brought in. Those needing to be turned out, are turned out and once they've had their breakfast, we get the first batch of horses onto the walker at about 9.30 – 9.45. This is followed by an hour to an hour and a half mucking out, which takes us to 10.30 – 11am.

The horses go on the horse walker, which is, as I describe, a giant hamster wheel and does pretty much, exactly the same thing. It exercises them by making them walk under what we term a 'controlled exercise', round in circles.

Important facts to realise here are, a) you've got to put them on correctly and with care, b) they've got to be taken off correctly, with care and c) they've got to do an equal amount of time, both ways. If you were to put them onto the walker and only let them go one way round, you'd find that one half of your horse had a lot of muscle and the other didn't – great for going round in circles but if you want to go in a straight line, not much help. So, at half time, which is usually twenty minutes to half an hour we then turn them round, to go the other way.

While they're being exercised under the controlled conditions of the horse walker, we can then get some mucking out done.

At 10, 10.15, 10.30, the horses come off the walker and after a brief break, we'll try and get the first lot out, exercising. In some cases, the second lot may be going on the walker and other things happening.

The riding lessons usually take place in the outdoor arena and those kids who are able to reach a competent level will be able to do everything that the yard has to offer, including going out exercising. In some cases some of the young people who have been through our system, who have then gone on to working with horses professionally, have gone on to exercise all of the different types of horses that are here.

2.30 – 3.00 we then skip out again for the last time – that means, mucking out once more but usually much smaller volumes of muck and only in the stables where horses have been in during the day.

At 3.30 we look to give them haylage again, for the last time and feed again - and bring the horses in from the field trying to be finished in the stable yard by 4 to 4.30. Whilst stable staff and young people are finished at that time, it's not the end for the horses as they are always subject to a night time check, either by myself or the stable staff and in some cases, an evening feed given, usually about 9 – 10 o'clock at night. As I said previously - hard work and dedication and not just from myself - this will be found in all aspects of the equine world and not just by horse owners but more often than not, by grooms and stable staff all of whom are absolutely committed to the care and welfare of the horses in their charge.

*There is also that wonderful story that I like to tell every member of staff and social worker who crosses the door, of the young boy who came to us at 11 years old, who went through our school system which included learning how to put horses on and off the walker; dealing with young horses from foals upwards.*

*He was to go to Northern Racing College at Doncaster where he had an absolutely marvellous three months. Upon graduating, I was able to get him into one of the racing stables that we already had horses placed with – horses that had been born and bred on our yard and one in particular, named Ursus, was in fact one of the foals that this young man had learned to look after and was very much brought up with, during his school career. There is a photograph that I proudly display in my office of the pair of them, walking into the Winner's Enclosure at Newcastle Race Course on a Northumberland Plate Race Meeting weekend.*

*Stories like this one are not just from Disney, but can happen again and again if you're brave enough to let them.*

It would be wrong of me to over-claim the importance of the horses in the work we have undertaken with children with disrupted childhoods but likewise it would be wrong not to mention it at all. Our children have been very lucky to have had access to the many horses and farms utilised by Pear Tree however in the early nineties, long before our first farm, it was watching Monty Roberts that gave me an understanding of how to ignore negative behaviour as oppose to overlooking it and to translate that process into a method of working to avoid conflict and physical restraint in difficult circumstances. We called this positive ignoring.

Good horsemanship is built into everyday practice by instructors, staff and the children resulting in a calm environment. Recently I was lucky enough to spend several hours with Monty (horse sense for people [www.montyroberts.com](http://www.montyroberts.com)) and discuss his work not just with horses but its relevance to working with people. He very clearly articulated the difficulty survivors of abuse have with trust, like a barrier that cannot be broken.

In the process of working with horses, having a horse demonstrate it trusts you results in a profound emotional response. This can happen every day in the stable yard. However, if this process is undertaken during a join-up session the effect is compounded many times in its intensity and impact. Join-up is when a person takes a horse through a process of pushing it away usually in a round pen to a point where the horse feels stress of the situation and wants to change what's happening and indicates its responsiveness to accepting the person as leader. (Sound familiar?) With the right responses from the person it will lock-on and follow the person and bond with that person as its leader. As well as being an intelligent and sound method of training horses this work is also being used very successfully with wounded soldiers and soldiers suffering Post Traumatic Stress Injury. Once again they find working with horses emotional moving in a way that brings them great benefit.

In respect of dealing with children with disrupted childhoods, during join-up or just through regular contact with horses, the barrier to trust that has been restricting their future relationship progress is broken, leading to an increased responsiveness that we are seeking to use in other areas of life in care and education.

## **11. Positive ignoring**

### **Positive immediate consequences**

### **Negative immediate consequences**

### **(PICNIC)**

From its infancy as our service developed and grew we had many dilemmas to face and overcome. Managing disruptive or challenging behaviour is an issue that we have become accustomed to facing every day if necessary but in the constant hope that it won't be present. However, when you set your stall out to look after children with problems you have to accept this is an area where you need to develop skills to be able to deal with whatever comes your way. The challenge for myself was not only to develop my own skills but that of my team. Watching children successfully drag you into their world of dysfunctional behaviour and for staff to just observe and tolerate for myself was never an option. Surely we were getting paid to do something about it and help them. Our reactions at these times were what was going to be relevant to what happened next and to what the child learned as a result of their behaviour and the subsequent consequences.

This challenge was also hampered by my belief that if children deserved the chance to live in as normal an environment as possible, resulting in our model of small ordinary homes in ordinary streets (as opposed to larger institutional type properties) the down-side was where to accommodate everyone. In the early days the financial model from which everything grew was to have three children in a home with one member of staff. This meant a four bedrooms property as a minimum. If we were to have more staff where would they sleep? So to keep it to an ordinary house in ordinary streets it meant having just one member of staff 24/7 with support from other people at different times. This was a contrast to the larger establishments that by their nature and for the benefits of the staff regardless of the impact on the child, there are always plenty of grown ups around to support the other grown ups.

The next challenge was that not all of my team were physically robust enough to deal with 'whatever came their way' and some children would of course know this and take advantage.

In the many challenges these kids present, as I said above, their reaction is dependent on the right responses of the proposed leader, I say proposed as at the start of any relationship that is how it is as the leader is tested through incidents and situations. One Harvard psychologist Amy Cuddy in her book 'Presence' recently announced that when first meeting someone there are only two important questions to ask 1) Can I trust you? 2) Are you competent? The most important is number 1 as she makes clear and a similar observation to Ruby Wax that in caveman days it was no good accepting someone who is competent at hunting if they were going to murder you in your sleep. It is these two questions unknowingly we had embedded into our recruitment procedures. Can we trust them with our children and then if we can, can they cope with the required tasks? It is indeed this assessment that the children also make on each and every member of staff with an already perverse view on how to trust and an ever elaborate way of testing out your competence.

In my experience the ways children can test you out and your competence are often difficult to work through. Without doubt one of the most unrecognised factors at the time even though we all know to look out for it is anxiety. It is the main reason children often present difficult and challenging behaviour. It can be anxiety that leads to running away, self harm, aggression, violence, criminal damage and others as this anxiety leads to further frustration. Being able to 'press the right buttons' at these times is so important. One thing is for sure, if you press the wrong buttons things will only get worse before they might get better. In the event that situations get worse ultimately the only course of action open to you which will control the situation, their behaviour and demonstrate that you're still in control and are competent to deal with them is to get hold of them.

(If you are not able to deal with them how can you deal with their situation? As a side note one of my observations over the years is that children grow in confidence if they see you are able to stand up to them and their parents. The result is less anxiety).

Physical restraint for their safety and often others? In our then newly-established model what if the member of staff couldn't use restraint effectively? The result was a need to find other strategies that avoided the use of restraint and to increase the skills of my team accordingly. As I say 'put other tools in their tool box.'

The competence of restraint techniques or lack of them was not the only motivation. Having to restrain children and young people is not my favourite part of the day. My experience in larger institutions where the behaviour of those accommodated was so challenging and dangerous that the use of restraint was an expected everyday occurrence and the frequency was such that the need to develop other strategies was less, as you were by nature of the job, less dependent on them. Moving from large institution to a small house in the community where the frequency of this kind of behaviour and subsequent action was much less, gave scope to look at other options. In addition to this it was becoming very obvious that other factors had to be considered. During these difficult times as we were having to restrain children for their safety and others it was apparent that many of them were getting positive reinforcement from the process as negative as it may be. The process goes like this -

Child behaves in a way that warrants physical restraint, (the law is risking harm to themselves, others or property.)

Child is restrained in as supportive as possible way.

During restraint the child who is often unfamiliar with close physical contact feels comfort and confidence from those around. (In some cases can become sexually aroused, light touch increases heart rate, deep pressure touch, as found in restraint, reduces heart rate)

Child reaches a point where energies are expelled and they want to change the situation and begin a positive dialog with those involved in restraint.

The restraint is finished and in debrief the child offloads all that is worrying him or her, begins to cry and is then comforted by those in control who have been involved in the restraint. The result is the children feel much better about themselves. They also have, if successful, increased confidence in those caring for them, that they can manage them and their situation. Therefore, acceptance of the leader and security in recognising their position in the pecking order. Order is restored until next time anxiety leads to him or her needing to test once again. When the child feels they need the close physical contact and reassurance due to all the issues described above they simply behave in the way they know will result in restraint.

To the rational mind this may seem ridiculous but remember we aren't dealing with rational minds, we are dealing with damaged emotional responses. The consequences are that children can develop a dependency on physical restraint and become reliant on this as a way of regulating, managing their behaviour and it can get out of hand. (Once again I know this from the number of children I see during referral assessments that have developed this dependency.)

Self-harm is another issue that is similar in make up. This behaviour on its own can lead to the need for physical restraint with all that goes with it as stated above. There is also another level of negative behaviour receiving what are perceived to be positive responses leading to in some sad cases increased incidents of self harm.

At the beginning of this document I tried to outline the vulnerability of children and their need for emotional warmth and love. For many this is not present in their lives and they have understandably the need to seek adult attention. Attention needing behaviour has to be accepted as what it is and the best way to help a child overcome those feelings is to give them attention in a positive way as often as possible for the smallest of positive behaviour. Inappropriate attention seeking behaviour is also what it says, inappropriate! This, if responded to positively, will often, if not always, result in that inappropriate behaviour being promoted.

Children who start with superficial scratches on their wrists, if responded to with great concern and anxiety and intense interest, quickly learn that this is a good way of keeping people's attention on them and feeling the gratification that goes with this. As the novelty wears off and those around become more acceptant, the only successful way of re engaging people's attention is to make the cuts increasingly deeper and nastier.

## **Examples of how children can receive positive reinforcement for negative behaviour**

On one of my many assessments of young people who we are asked to look after, I saw a fifteen year old girl who was so difficult to manage no one was prepared to take her on. She had been placed in a static caravan on a pleasant holiday park mainly occupied by elderly pensioners using it as a rural retreat escaping mainstream society. They suddenly found their neighbour to be a girl who had also learnt to avoid mainstream society by aggressive violent behaviour, foul language and risk taking behaviour. The result was she was on a semi permanent holiday and had been afforded two residential social workers to follow and observe her 24/7. This had got to the point that when ever she wanted to go back into town for a night out she would simply walk with her bodyguards behind her. They were not allowed to stop her, as they had been instructed they didn't have the grounds to, but were to follow her wherever she went without intervention. The girl had become the leader and the staff employed to look after her, her entourage. A good example of the management being removed from the situation and all involved only looking to tolerate whatever until the end of the shift with the focus on procedures and protocols, not childhood development. The obvious enough to anyone watching result was that she was empowered by her minders to continue with her behaviour.

This young girl had years of positive reinforcement for negative behaviour by the people being paid to look after her and had no intention of doing anything any differently. Why would she, to her the strategies she had deployed were highly successful and beyond the point of no return. She was literally lost to the system, because the system lost sight of why it was there.

This strategy is called disruption. It is actively promoted by the Police as a way of getting in the way of the behaviour of potential offenders. These offenders will avoid entering into illegal activities due to the fact they are being followed. They are certain to face the consequences of the law as there are professional witnesses watching them. Another example of the efforts Police, Social Services and Youth Offending teams will go to and pay for to keep people out of the courts or the justice system. Again, in my view this thinking is unsustainable and in many cases more likely to encourage further negative behaviour. Once again, I am brought back to thinking there must be some way of risk assessing the damage done to childhood development in this situation if they are in fact responsive to positive and negative reinforcement for positive and negative behaviour.

The response of those looking after her should have been to warn her of the consequences of her risk taking behaviour and advise her that as she was an intelligent young woman she was responsible for her own behaviour and no one would be running after her. That if she engaged in a positive way the staff would provide her with positive experiences in return, whatever they could be. The local authority should accept they will do what they can to help but not to promote negative behaviour. The rest is up to her. Be prepared to turn and walk away, by doing so as said at the beginning of this document you increase the chances of the subject coming after you wanting to re-engage, this time on your terms.

How many professionals are aware of themselves having to provide an intense amount of attention at time of crisis, but then don't have the opportunity to visit when things have been going well or show positive praise (attending a child's sports day or school presentation would be a good example).

### **Secure Accommodation**

It has, for a long time been my belief that positive ignoring can be very helpful to those that are, at the time, responsive to adult direction. There will however always be those that aren't or are far to distressed for that to work, at the time. Likewise it has also been a long held belief that if we are to intervene then we should robustly, firmly and always successfully. Half-hearted measures to tick the supposed right box in an attempt to cover ourselves, to use another animal analogy, is more like poking a bear with a stick, it just makes things worse.

There are times when you have to get hold of children and regain control because when control is lost (to someone who has demonstrated they can't deal with it) things are only going to get worse. Likewise there are times when you have to consider secure accommodation. (This is a placement in a secure unit for care and welfare reasons not as a punishment.)

Sir Martin Narey's independent review of Children's Residential Care ( July 2016 ) questions the lack of use of secure facilities to the point where one has closed due to poor demand. At the same time commissioners in social services departments struggle to find solutions for unmanageable children often at unsustainable expense in the ways described above, with poor outcomes. He, as I have done, identifies an almost principled objection to the use of secure accommodation by social workers even though their alternatives often don't help the child's development. In my experience it is like you have recommended something that is harmful. This can only be as a result of poor understanding or inappropriate preconceived ideas about the service they offer.

I started working with children in one of the then largest secure units in the country and whilst the environment inspired me to develop my own service in contrast to that of security and locked doors, it would be wrong to underestimate their role as part of an overall package of care, education and experience. We have, on a number of occasions, helped children by providing a placement following time in secure accommodation. Those children had their behaviour contained, themselves stabilised and then the opportunity to confront issues in a safe environment and some intense work completed, before moving on to ourselves where their success continued.

Another example of the significance of the reaction of role models and leaders is from our own experience. We had the pleasure of looking after a little 7 year old girl in one of our residential homes in the late nineties. This little girl had learning difficulties as a result of extreme neglect, the kind that results in emaciated children needing to drink water from the toilet to survive. She had been placed in the foster care of an elderly couple. Her behaviour as a result of anxiety was so extreme the couple used to take turns locking themselves in the garden shed where 'they' felt safe for brief periods of respite.

In our care she settled quickly and lived a positive life for nearly ten years. Once we reached that time where we had our first discussion regarding life after Pear Tree and moving on after her 18th birthday anxiety quickly began to erode her stability and sense of security. One day for no apparent reason she ran off from the home, wandered around the Local Town Centre and then having been located by the police she was returned to the home. The WPC that brought her back was very sympathetic and kind giving the girl her card and explaining if she ever had any problems she could call her.

The natural result from this was the girl thought she had a special friend who was also a police officer. She called her the following day and subsequent days regarding small issues that needless to say didn't warrant police involvement and she was told this. The next course of action to get the required attention and her involvement was to run away again. On this occasion causing slightly more concern. Having been located by the police and presenting as an immature vulnerable child once again the police were very nice and kind this time taking her for a drive in their car around town before returning her to the home and on this occasion she was allowed to have the blue lights flashing as they drove up the drive. Really kind!

The consequence to this was her persistent absconding to engage the police. The initial officer was stopped from having any contact and the police late in the day tried to avoid dealing with her. The genie was out of the bottle and her determination to engage the police in the way she had learnt was successful resulted in doing increasingly more dramatic behaviour. This consequently resulted in the police having no choice but to on one occasion arrest her and put her in the police cells where she was subsequently engaged by a lot of police officers and accommodation in a police cell. At the time I knew very little of the symptoms of autism or the presence of an autistic spectrum and therefore was naive to the possibilities that A) this could be relevant B) that one of the symptoms is the need or reassurance felt by being in a small confined space. This increased intensity opened up new motivations and the result was she became increasingly determined to get her self arrested.

The police were increasingly not wanting to engage her and the local mental health services were clear that there were no mental health issues. The ball was in her court and she played it well, walking into the police station car park throwing stones at the police cars, night after night. I was confronted with the chief inspector and a social worker team manager saying "What do we do now?" Only a dramatic change of location would break the newly established patterns of behaviour and ten years of our work slipped through our fingers without literally a by-or-leave. This was an extreme example but one from which much can be learnt.

Another account is that of one of our young girls who was indeed very challenging. On one occasion she set fire to her bedroom curtains. This was by no means a first offence and this incident was quite rightly reported to the Police. She was referred to the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and attended sessions at their offices. At Christmas she was given presents from the YOT that had been donated by 'The Giving Tree' a local Christmas charity that had donated the gifts to the YOT in the belief that they were in a position to give them to young people in need. Whilst it is true that our young person was a resident in a children's home, the fact is, it costs significant amounts of money to look after children in any residential home and therefore their material needs can and should be well met!

Our young person herself was able to articulate the difficulty with this. She returned with the gifts and expressed "I've done wrong, damaged the home and risked the lives of everyone in it, yet now as a result of attending the place I've been sent to, to be punished I have more presents than any of the other children here." She quite rightly returned them the following morning and her actions (along with my own expressions of disbelief) resulted in a local policy change within the Youth Offending Service.

#### MISPERS – Missing Persons

The issue of young people in care going missing continues to be a subject of great concern, not only as an indicator of other significant issues with the young people themselves but due to the drain on resources that results from this. Whilst the general public believe we can sleep safely at night due to the security that our Police service offers, the fact is a significant amount of time is taken up chasing after these young people by an already stretched Police service. I am led to believe that one night in our nearest town there were only three officers on duty throughout the town and two of them were dealing with one of our young girls whose sole motivation for going missing was to receive attention by the Police. This is the hard thing to understand that for many of the young people in residential care any attention is received as positive even if it is made clear it is not intended to be.

Policy also needs to be carefully monitored as recently I found my Managers were more concerned with following Police instruction and perceived Ofsted expectations when young people go missing than they were of following my instructions. Managers perception was that when a child left the building unauthorised they had to be followed as quickly as possible to ascertain their whereabouts prior to reporting them missing. The result was that staff who were engaging positively with children who were responding positively had to stop what they were doing and leave the building to respond to the child behaving negatively.

As a consequence there is no better way to teach the other children than to get a dose of intense attention and control the time and energy of the staff on duty and even sabotage the time of your fellow children, run away. If you are in that mind set the benefits are significant.

The reaction from other professionals was also interesting, one therapist stating 'I'm not interested in the other children, just the one I'm working with.' Similarly many police officers would chastise our staff for 'letting them out' and not catching and returning them ourselves, something we are certainly not allowed to do. Intensity from regulators regarding the law around 'the deprivation of liberty' in ensuring we are not falsely detaining young people clashes with expectations around containing problems and preventing the risk to themselves and others when young people present risks. Whilst I totally respect the frustrations of resource drained police officers, on occasions I wished they had been prepared to chastise the child that runs away in the same way that with ease they felt able to chastise our staff for meeting professional expectations.

In this case there was a flaw in the arrangements. It was a concern to me that if a child was reported missing the moment they left the building we had inadvertently allowed a situation where the child was under house arrest. Clearly something that cannot be allowed to happen. If there was a delay in that process and the child was determined to have gone missing after a period of time then the 'searching the area' could be undertaken in a managed controlled way, possibly by others not even in the building reducing if not removing the impact on the other children. The impact on the other children must be given proper consideration as to avoid inadvertently training them to behave negatively and professionals should respect that and avoid short term short sighted thinking.

Within a Pear Tree context having children express their concern or frustration with their situation by running away is something we can expect from time to time and must manage like any other difficulty, with negative consequences for negative behaviour and positive rewards whenever possible often for the smallest success. In this way progress can be made and must be, to tolerate without managing is not acceptable. I found it laughable to be told that other nearby homes had been given awards for reducing their MISPERs from significant number when our statistics had failed to notify their radar and they weren't aware of our existence. This information was made available to me when I was asked for advice on this very subject. It is again unsustainable and inconceivable that the local Police become an extension to the residential care service and are used as taxi's to bring children home from a night out often called by the very children they are looking for. Other countries would find this use of a Police force embarrassing.

If we were to adopt a behaviourist approach, repeat offenders should be given training on the dangers followed by three chances. If considered to be rational and streetwise and not emotionally distressed, something which can easily be risk assessed, they should not be searched for again for a reviewed period of time. The risks they may subsequently encounter, entirely their responsibility. Back to values, rights and responsibilities and a need to join the dots in our thinking around what we can realistically do to help people who don't want help and enjoy the whole process of going missing. In many cases the feeling of vulnerability created by not being looked for may very well impact on the behaviour, remove the element of fun and encourage more self reliance and reflection.

This of course would require a huge shift in thinking, legislation and practices and must not be done unilaterally.

However, it must be recognised that much of what is now policy and procedure has a significant impact on young people, literally training them to be dysfunctional. The system seems to work like this in terms of Police involvement.

1. First contact; be warm, polite and friendly, try to discourage behaviour.
2. Subsequent contacts as above, however the result is the young people either enjoy, feel rewarded or simply abuse the approach.
3. Only when we get to crisis point do officers become firm, authoritative and take action.

A behavioural approach would reverse this and if contact is made for negative behaviour - The most authoritative response, not your new best friend - that is kept for follow up contact on the back of good behaviour. I say this as I only wish for our Police force to be respected by all, not abused as a public service, open to be abused, as is the perception by dysfunctional young people and the Police themselves.

Remember Monty – If all of learning is 1-10 – The most important is 1-3. Therefore, don't underestimate the significance of first encounters and experiences – like imprinting how you first learn something is so important. It is my belief that the 'Your new best friend' approach to dysfunctional behaviour is training young people to continue to be dysfunctional.

## **Self harming behaviour**

The course of action anyone dealing with incidents of self harm like scratching or cutting would be not to draw any attention to this behaviour whatsoever at the time and deal with the wounds in a calm manner if possible just giving the first aid equipment to the child to administer themselves. Only when engaged positively at another time should the issues of why the child behaves the way they do be explored and this is often best done by someone removed from the situation like an independent counsellor.

Likewise, those children who develop a dependency on restraint as with the above need regular consistent reassurance and positive praise for the smallest of successes during times where restraint isn't required. When it is, in my view it should be used as a last resort and as such avoid cosy soft supportive holds and only use restraint as robustly as necessary with minimal bodily contact and little if any verbal interaction, until the need for restraint has lapsed. It is important to do this as clinically as possible and keep your heart rate down or at least under control (the child will eventually synchronise their heart rate with yours) so as not to exasperate the situation. This is not the fight the young person often strives for as with their earlier experiences. Maintain interaction with colleagues and continue talking about the day as if the restraint is not happening. When over the debrief should be structured and formal with no warm fussy responses on offer. These can be offered later at a different time when life is back to normal and the child or young person is engaging appropriately. It is so important to break that dependency as quickly as possible so as not to give reinforcement to those that are already imprinted with violent responses and compound their difficulties. Helping children and young people learn alternative coping strategies has to be the medium to long term plan as you work through the dramas created.

In the need to develop new skills I encouraged my team to whenever possible ignore poor behaviour or inappropriate attention seeking behaviour as established good practice encourages us to do. The problem was that from the child's point of view they were either feeling they needed to escalate their attention seeking or that their poor behaviour had been overlooked and that either no one cares enough to deal with them or they have got away with it.

In 1996 I saw a BBC QED documentary about Monty Roberts the horse whisperer and his explanation of the join up process connected with me and gave me an understanding as to how we could use this natural process to our advantage.

Jumping ahead to November 2014 at a conference held at the Hardwick Hall Hotel by internationally renowned psychologist Dr. Bruce Perry. He stated after discussing the remarkable success of one of his children as a result of the impact of one man who put his achievements down to the fact he had worked with horses, Dr. Perry's conclusion was 'don't underestimate these horse whisperer's they've got so much to offer'.

It is only on the back of this kind of acknowledgment that I feel confident in being able to discuss openly. With me at this conference were my key players within our organisation, unusually I was sat with my back to them. They commented that all they could see after years of tip toeing around the subject was my shoulders going up and down as I sniggered away to myself with a warm sense of achievement.

### **Join-up and its relevance to dealing with difficult situations.**

If you are at all interested in the Join-up process please read Monty's own books which give a much better account than I can, however for the sake of background context it may be useful to know the following now. As a young boy, Monty from California spent time in the mountains following the wild Mustang Horses. He observed that the Stallions, despite what you may think as the heard leaders weren't the heard leaders at all, they were off doing their own thing. The heard leaders were the matriarchal old mares, they were ones in charge. (Of course they were. They always are!). When the adolescent young horses were strutting their stuff being oppositional and thinking they were more able than they were (sound familiar) the mare would push them to the outer edge of the heard where they were and felt vulnerable. They would trot around in circles and only when they had demonstrated they would conform and pose less of a problem would she allow them back into the heard. Throughout the mare would ignore them unless actively pushing them away.

Monty used the body gestures and the communication he observed to develop a way of working with horses to increase their value to avoid going for slaughter. A noble cause with only good intention. The effect was that these non violent methods he learned and developed have been demonstrated to be highly successful around the world. As a horseman myself I learned the value of adopting these principals when handling our young horses as their first experiences of training.

The parallels when dealing with horses and children are far more than pure coincidence. In the previous chapter there are examples in the join-up process and their similarities of what happens to children/ young people during restraint. They are uncannily similar. Likewise, I opened this document with an account which the reader would be lead to believe was about a difficult teenager and was in fact about a horse. We are natural beings in a natural world the common theme here is anxiety, vulnerability and response to reactions of leaders.

The positive ignoring strategy inspired by this understanding is like all good ideas, simple in its make up. When faced with challenging or difficult behaviour, to give a cold shoulder, to make it clear you are ignoring their behaviour therefore rejecting their behaviour until they stop and re-engage with you in a positive way. It is harnessing that feeling that is created when one side states they want to leave the interaction. It is something quite powerful and likely you will have experienced yourself, possibly from both sides. Imagine a young couple in a disagreement, one says "I think we should call it a day with our relationship". The other then experiences those feelings and the need to get their partner to engage with them again and is immediately more flexible in their position. Or when negotiating a price for a new car, the salesman says "Sorry I can't go that low, I have other customers that want to buy it". And walks away. All of a sudden you want the car more than ever because you don't want someone else to have your new car and you then are left with the choice, walk away or re-engage on their terms.

The important point is being able to continue your resolve when being tested until you have a genuine positive response when the child is responsive to role model leadership and at that point you must receive and respond positively yourself. Some children don't know how to do this or what the alternative looks like and therefore it is sometimes necessary initially to set out what that positive behaviour would be. This process has been embedded in our staff with immediate positive impact on many children.

Knowing when to turn and walk away and equally importantly when to re-engage has helped me as a businessman, head of service, carer, parent and husband. (definitely as a husband, you need to recognise when you're going around in circles and need to respond positively to your house manager / matriarchal mare / leader!) These aren't mystical discoveries, they are well known to anyone who is involved in negotiations of any kind.

In May 2016, my wife Andrea and I had the honour of spending several hours talking to Monty Roberts, about his life, his work with horses and people with a small group of 16 invited guests. At 81 years of age he spends his life traveling the world promoting non-violent methods, only going home 50 days a year. During a private conversation he explained that one of the South American countries had over three thousand police shootings a year. As a result of adopting his methods last year this had dropped to zero. Need I say more?

At the end of our meeting Andrea spoke, publicly thanking Monty for the influence he has had on myself over the years. Until that day she hadn't appreciated its significance, only as the discussions went on for several hours did the impact become obvious. She stated that she could see the effect on our own children who are both competent horse people in their own right and the faces of the many children we look after who come to us distressed and then begin to enjoy life. The impact our stables have on all of this as a wonderful calm place that is respected and commented on by all who visit. This had a visible emotional impact on Monty who indicated his gratitude for such a moving acknowledgment.

A remarkable man of the rarest kind!

### **Picnic.**

In November 2017, I was fortunate enough to be invited to meet Monty Roberts once more. Christine Sketchley, a local Educational Psychologist who we have had the pleasure of working with, on my recommendation went to visit Flag is up Ranch for herself during a family holiday to California. To her amazement, Monty was home and demonstrated the kind of hospitality to strangers that rock up uninvited that is so rare and unique.

Christine and her family were given a private tour of the ranch, watched him hand feed his herd of wild deer and work with a horse he was training. During the conversation, she explained her connection to ourselves and his influence. Monty stated that Her Majesty the Queen is always asking if he could demonstrate how his work is helping people. The result was through email, I suggested he had copies of this document and could if he so wished give a copy to Her Majesty. As a result, I met with Monty prior to one of his demonstrations to hand over a couple of copies. He was as always interested in ourselves and sat with us for a while. During his demonstration, he discussed a simple yet so overlooked concept to train horses and talked about how his 50+ foster children had also benefitted from this approach and his concept, which he and his American Psychologist describe as "every child needs a picnic!"

Positive immediate consequences, Negative immediate consequences. With the key word being immediate.

This is not punishment, sanctions or end of term prizes, this is the immediate reaction to positive or negative behaviour. The warm smile accompanied by hand on shoulder and a "well done that was good" or by contrast the look of or verbal displeasure or both when negative behaviour is presented. This, such a simple concept, really defines everything I have tried to explain and all that has been lost in this clinical institutional world. It is my belief that as a society, we are regularly giving the wrong messages and countless children are literally being trained to be dysfunctional.

If a child is reported missing from care on return by procedure they are subject to a welfare check by the police to ensure their missing episode isn't due to abuse within the home. They then may be subject to a visit by an independent visitor to make sure everyone else is doing their job right.

Most likely. also a visit by their own Social Worker. Each and every time for running away. Each interaction designed to be positive.

How many times does anyone visit them for being good? When children are settled and well, we often struggle to get Social Workers to maintain their statutory six weekly visits and very unlikely to attend a prize giving. This is not unrecognised but due to procedures the reality. We plan to reward negative behaviour and ignore by our absence positive behaviour, just being good behaviour. If there is any message from this document to apply to all aspects of general life, it is remember to be human, natural reactions are important and be wide eyed and expressive. Don't just as Dr Neil Hawkes says, treat children like you're buying a train ticket.

## 11. Pulling the plan together

Looking at our model you can see how important the home environment is to anchor everything else to. This is significant as a foundation upon which values and activities can be built, resulting in a clear context from which all issues can be assessed



Environment
  Values
  Activities
  Assessment

### **Working towards a normal developmental pathway.**

Part of achieving a normal developmental pathway is to learn skills and become employable. Professor Finley Graham was one of the people who had significant influence over my development in the early years of Pear Tree. One of his comments was "make them tax payers, as when you do that everything else fits into place, money to pay the rent, friends and social networks."

This is something we have done many times with young people leaving our service either with jobs or the skills to get them. Developing a work ethic which can be demonstrated to whatever level of competence a young person has, is an area that I think we excel at.

To our great frustration it has been a regular factor that during the discharge process advisors instruct our young people not to get a job as it will impact on their benefits. Particularly if a housing association is providing accommodation and they rely on the housing benefit to cover their rent as they don't trust the young person to be honest enough to hand over the cash. This significantly undermines years of work the tax payer has paid for in one go. If we are serious about helping people we must aim high, have ambitions and aspirations for our young people and be forever optimistic for their future. Therefore there is a need to continue to support through this process with systems that are joined up and have integrity, without allowing short term thinking to erode our work and their future. What are they thinking?

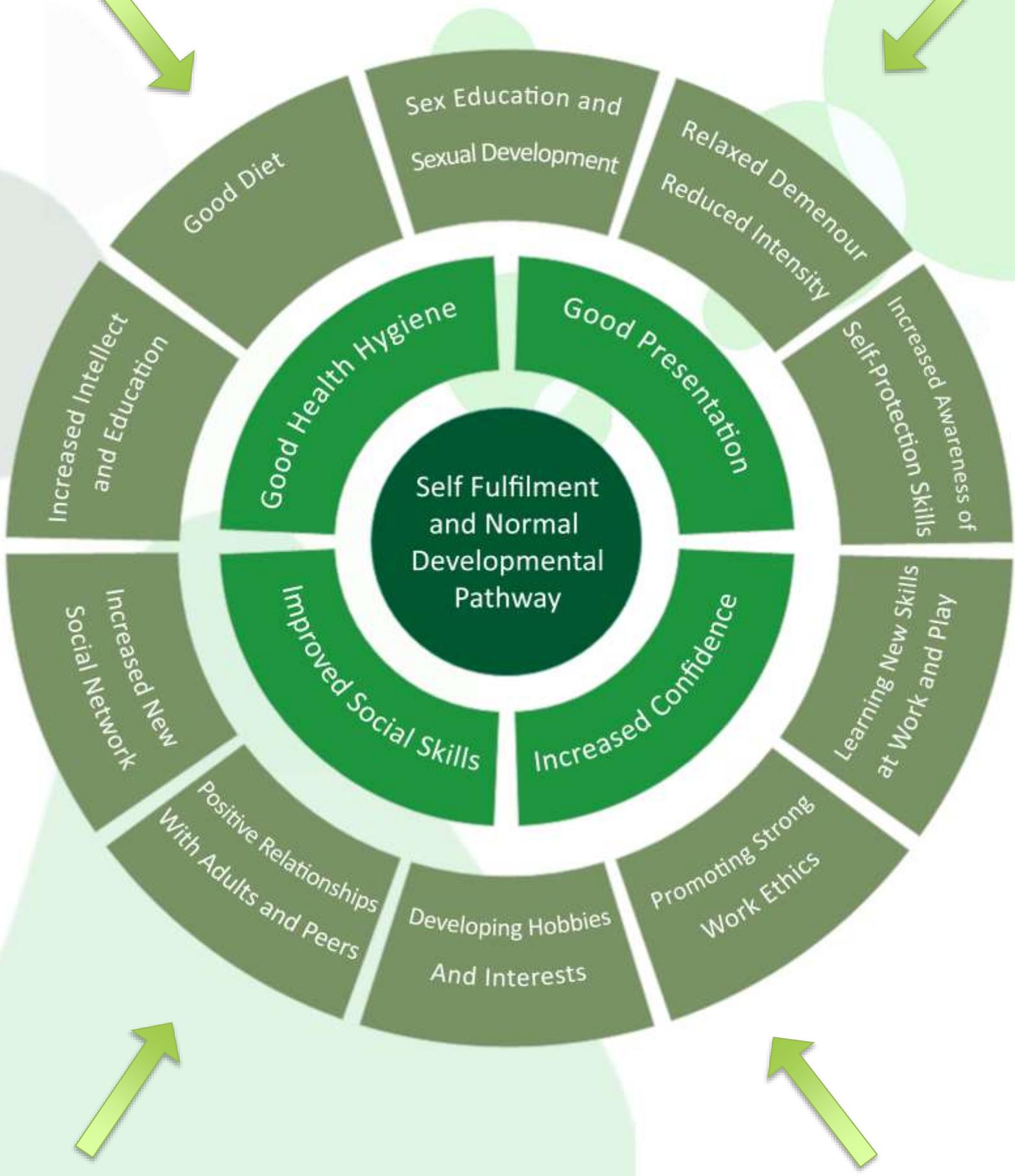
At the time of writing the nation is in debate prior to the EU referendum. During the many presentations trying to influence a decision, it has become apparent as to the dependency this country has on an immigrant work force because there aren't the people wanting work from the UK. As a businessman I am in contact with a large number of industries we rely on to support our business. From agriculture, mechanics, plumbers, electricians the list could go on. Throughout there is a common theme, where are the young people coming from to be trained to continue with these trades?

At the same time paid professionals systematically encourage our young people not to get a job because of its impact on administrative procedures! The growing numbers of people who become dependent on benefits often for many generations is in my view unacceptable. The number of young people who come to our service who have come from families where no-one has worked, who then go on to break that trend and become employable is testament to the social problems that develop as a result of long term unemployment and the fact that this situation can be helped to improve. To write off these young people and simply look else where for our work force while thousands of professionals who make up health and social care depend on people to look after in a symbiotic relationship, accept a limited impact of their work is surely unsustainable in the long term without disastrous consequences. We have done better therefore our industry can do better.

We have to also accept that there is a correlation between having a good education and achieving economic well being. There is also a correlation between having social skills and making achievements in education and employment. The way we learn to interact with the world around us is connected to the quality of life experienced. The more able a person is to develop different tools in their interpersonal tool box and couple this with resilience, the richer the life experience throughout the course of their life, not necessarily in terms of monetary wealth but relationships and experiences.

Therefore the solution to most social problems is to show people how to increase their personal holistic competence. With this in mind shouldn't we be making a minimum standard of competence a priority over passing tests and putting the importance of passing tests in its rightful place after a foundation of skill sets have been established first. Only on good foundations can anything of value be built.

# Model for Achieving Self Fulfilment and Normal Developmental Pathway



### 13. A marginal gains approach to assessment.

*The term 'Black Box Thinking' is a term taken from the way the aviation industry has developed a culture of analysing mistakes (and encouraging self reporting) to improve safety and performance. With this Mathew makes the case for testing, measuring and reassessing, resulting in continuously refining the product or service.*

*It is this kind of approach we have used to develop the marginal gains approach to assessment coupled with years of feedback from OFSTED inspectors who have wanted to see*

- a) what children can do as opposed to what they can't do*
- b) a measurement of progress.*

'Black Box Thinking' by Mathew Syed 'is another book that has been influential in developing our thinking. In this he describes two processes that are relevant to our work.

1. Volunteers teaching children in Africa were looking at ways to improve the children's education. They first of all provided good text books for the children to read. After some time and following testing there was no improvement. They changed the text books and the size of writing, still no improvement. Eventually the one significant factor that led to improving their education was from an unlikely source. They wormed the children! You can't concentrate and make progress with a belly full of worms. This gives a stark reminder of the importance of holistic care and the need to be aware of the whole person.

2. The impact of a process called marginal gains on the sporting world, most notably the Sky Racing Team that went from good to world beating in only a few years. This is the process of breaking down the task into small units that seem unimportant and making small pieces of progress in many areas to have a big impact on the overall success. This is now recognised in industry and the armed forces. Isn't it a shame it won't work for care and education? But it does and we've been doing it for years? Our system asks 130 key questions with a Yes or No answer. This assessment looks at all aspects of life where we can measure progress and identify areas that need further support, adding substance to the child's care plan. It is hoped that this system, supported by an academic study by Jack Kennedy (forensic psychologist) will be available for use by other agencies.

The statistics generated from the assessments made result in a positivity score taking account of a young persons 'Personal Holistic Competence' and identifying areas that require further support.

This system is currently being trialled and tested in other schools and we have also invested tens of thousands of pounds in formatting a digital system that does all the work for the assessor and uses the data to become the foundation of many statutory requirements.

It is hoped this ground breaking system will be available for purchase at a nominal price in 2018.

Studying our own statistics in the last five years we have the following results.

3.3% failed to meet our aims	23.3% partly met our aims
36.6% mainly met our aims	36.6% fully met our aims

From these results:

96.6% stayed with us for at least 1 year.

96.6% engaged in education.

83.3% of children made achievements in education.

90% made progress in their Personal Holistic Competency (i.e. a reduction of issues)

76.6% showed results that the risk to the child/young person reduced.

70% showed results that the risk from the child/young person reduced.

43.3% engaged in education, training or employment independently.

83.3% were discharged in a planned way.

40% of young people will be able to continue education, training or employment following discharge.

In terms of our marginal gains process over a five year study, the following was achieved with young people scoring the following assessment scores.

90% - 100% = 66.6%

80% - 90% = 13.3%

70% - 80% = 10%

60% - 70% = 3.3%

50% - 60% = 3.3%

Below 50% = 3.3%

## Marginal gains approach to staff performance

As this marginal gains approach has been so successful with helping our children and young people move forward, we have also adapted this process into our staff development system also. Our team is diverse with a wide range of experiences and different people bringing different skills to the table. It is important to recognise these skills but also to identify areas where more support is needed and to measure progress. Our system asks 20 key questions with supporting evidence required, resulting in a total of 74 yes or no answers.

For further details of either please contact [info@peartreeprojects.co.uk](mailto:info@peartreeprojects.co.uk)

## Conclusion

In 2011 we bought the Manor a 210 acre farm, derelict and the land recovering from quarrying. Within a 5 year period we transformed this place to a small residential home in the farm house, education buildings in barn conversions, rare breed livestock, a thousand fish in the lake and several thousand trees planted. The children were included in the process from start to on-going finish and the rewards were many. One young person to benefit was a young man who struggled with all aspects of everyday living apart from his love of the farm. He had struggled through education and college but could drive a 110 horse powered tractor with confidence.

When he reached 18 years old and had to be discharged from our service, having no family to return to we found him a flat nearby and gave him an apprenticeship as a paid employee to last for 2 years to buy him more time. During this time I joined him and our other farm staff on a chainsaw course. He struggled with the paper work but with support from us all completed the course. When it came to discussing the scores he had the highest score. The lowest was myself the MD! My excuse, I also have dyslexia and struggled at school. I was sure I put a tick in a different box and it was right at the time. The thing must have moved! With support it's amazing what can be achieved.

At 20 years old, during the week his apprenticeship finished, he left us to start a full time job and I know he has been offered others since.

*You may think after a lifetime of dealing with abuse that I have a poor view of the world in which I live. On the contrary, wherever there is darkness there is light and I see that every day in the efforts people go to help these children and subsequently the progress they make as they try to drag you into their world of inappropriate beliefs and dis-functional behaviour, we drag them kicking and screaming if necessary in to our world of hope and positive energy. Not to do so would mean we fail not only them but also society as a whole.*

To conclude I would like to repeat the words of one of the world's greatest orators Barrack Obama when he said;

"This is our first task – caring for our children, it's our first job. If we don't get that right we don't get anything right. That's how as a society, we will be judged."

David Bartlett MBE  
September 2016.

### **Recommended Reading List**

[www.mindfulnessinschools.org](http://www.mindfulnessinschools.org)

[www.bemindful.org](http://www.bemindful.org)

[www.simplypsychology.org/attachment.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/attachment.html).

[www. brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)

[www.austismresearchcentre.com](http://www.austismresearchcentre.com)

[www.valuesbasededucation.com](http://www.valuesbasededucation.com)

[www.montyroberts.com](http://www.montyroberts.com)

[www.50things.org.uk](http://www.50things.org.uk)

<http://childtrauma.org/>

Matt Ridley - Nature Via Nurture

Lone Wolf - Jodi Picoult. <http://www.thewolfcentre.co.uk/>

Dr. Neil Hakes, From My Heart : Transforming Lives Through Values

Monty Roberts - Horse sense for horse people

Bob Blaisdell- Great Speeches by Native Americans (Dover Thrift Editions)

Amy Cuddy – Presence

Robert Winston – Human Mind

Desmond Morris - The Naked Ape & The Human Zoo

Matthew Syed -Black Box Thinking

Ruby Wax – Sane New World: Taming the Mind