PearTree

HOLLY TREE HOUSE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

REVISION DATE – 23/6/26

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Caring For Children

1. **A statement of the range of needs of the children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care.**

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

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

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

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

Further details can be read in our Pear Tree literature such as "In Search of Utopia" "The Recovery and Intervention Plan" and "A Therapeutic Approach to Helping Children & Young People Recover from Trauma & Abuse" documents. These can all be found at - https://peartreeprojects.co.uk/

Mission Statement

To provide the highest quality of care, the most appropriate resources, delivered with professionalism.

Aims

' To provide the highest quality care to enable children to overcome the difficulties and traumas of the past. Thereby providing a firm foundation from which they can grow through adolescence into adulthood as successful human beings, able to function in, and contribute, to society'
Ref: D. Bartlett 1991

- To stop the cycle of abuse continuing
- Avoid all kinds of offending behaviour
- Look after themselves - keeping safe from harm
- Maintain positive relationships
- To be engaged in meaningful daytime activities, i.e. education, training, voluntary work
- Free of services, i.e. not relying on social services
- To be employed and become a taxpayer, contributing to society
- To become a good parent themselves

David Bartlett, Managing Director (2010)

Objectives

' To provide a safe, sympathetic and stimulating environment, together with a complex care programme appropriate to the needs of each individual child, delivered by suitable carers committed to re-parenting the children in our care'
Ref: D. Bartlett 1991

- To stop abuse of any kind
- To allow children/young people time to recover
- To allow children to be children and enjoy the remainder of their childhood
- To create a supportive learning environment
- To provide skills and increase general knowledge

David Bartlett, Managing Director (2010)

In addition, the above, where possible the home will strive to achieve the following, to aid the children transition from our care / home into the local community at around 18 years of age –

- To have a bank account in their own name
- Where possible, have a valid passport in place upon their discharge around 18 years of age
- Where possible and in line with risk assessments, have access to a provisional driving license, and driving lessons as an essential life skill

- Where possible, be supported to have a planned discharge from the home that meets their individual needs
- If applicable, have areas of risk / concerns / exploitation shared with the appropriate agencies to look to aid post 18 development and safety
- Looking to obtain the correct careers advice and support
- When applicable, be supported to apply for/obtain the correct benefit entitlement, i.e. Housing Benefit or Universal Credit etc.
- Have a plan to continue to support the children post placement to ensure that relationships do not simply end upon discharge from the home around 18 years of age.
- To have developed safe & age-appropriate use of the varying forms of digital technology.
- Overall, in placement, identify children's individual vulnerabilities, risks and areas of development, to upskill them, to lessen risks both to / from them as adults.

2. Details of the children's homes ethos, and the outcomes that the children's home seeks to achieve and its approach to achieving them.

Holly Tree House provides a therapeutic approach based on the following values:

- Environment - The home is designed to be a 'high' quality, positive and functioning environment staffed by experienced and competent carers. The layout and furnishings are in keeping with being, as much as possible, like a 'normal' home, with the emphasis on being un-institutional and helping young people reach a normal developmental pathway, living in and functioning within the community.
- Values - The staff running the home promote high expectations of presentation, behaviour, respect and attitude to others. Along with educational achievements and ambitions for the future.
- Activities - Young people are to be involved in a lifestyle that continually encourages engagement in a wide variety of activities of a social and leisure, educational and therapeutic basis.
- Assessment - Young people's progression is continually assessed and changes in arrangements are made to meet their ongoing needs.
- Education – To work closely with children's individual educational settings to identify areas / gaps in knowledge, and supplement / support education to enhance children's learning. This will be specifically evidenced through AQA Awards & Big Initiative courses.

As highlighted in the *Statement on Needs, Mission Statement and Objectives* sections above, we will care for children, *for whom it is either confirmed or suspected to have been survivors of sexual abuse and who may subsequently have developed sexualised behaviour to varying degrees because of that abuse.* With this in mind, where appropriate to do so, we will develop either / or a "Recovery Plan" or "Relapse Prevention Plan", in line with the child's needs or behaviours. This will contribute to the overall education and focus upon the outcomes identified for each child.

3. The arrangement for enabling children to enjoy and achieve, including how the children's home promotes their participation in cultural, recreational and sporting activities.

All children and young people are encouraged to experience a wide range of activities to explore aptitude and ability. This will include many that take young people out of their comfort zone. Activities and shared experiences with the care team aid the relationship building process, which we focus upon within the home. These activities/experiences may include the following, which are not exhaustive:

- Outdoor activities - Walking, camping, bike riding, den building, bushcraft, brambling, climbing, and fishing.
- Farm activities - Horse riding, caring for animals, working on the farm, planting trees, maintenance tasks and gardening.
- Sports - Football, badminton, running, surfing, rugby, table tennis, squash, bowls, cricket & footgolf. Participation in such sports can often lead to children joining local sports clubs, which build relationships and time in the community for our children in a structured setting. Social development and mastery of a skill are aims within this area.
- Social and leisure - Using local resources, going out for meals, going to theatre, cinema.
- Holidays - Visiting our holiday homes whenever possible, this is however risk assessed to do so safely.
- Education and cultural visits - Museums, guitar lessons (Music), art galleries, national trust properties and landmarks.

4. The arrangements for supporting the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of children accommodated in the children's home.

At Pear Tree we have a robust admission policy that ensures we have all the elements in place to ensure that any young person gets the best care possible from us, and their religious beliefs are given the utmost respect.

Nearly all the young people referred to our service have very little understanding, knowledge or exposure to a religion of any kind and, as many, also have poor school attendance, this has been missed within education also.

For young people residing at Pear Tree, importance is placed upon providing basic education of all faiths, with Christian beliefs and key events explained and celebrated, e.g., Christmas, Easter which all young people at Pear Tree are encouraged to experience attending either a local church/school carol concert or Durham Cathedral.

In addition to this, all young people attend Remembrance Sunday Service, by way of exposure to religious observance and to stimulate thought and discussion regarding events in history and current affairs. Key dates of other faiths are included in our year planner, which all young people receive and are encouraged to recognise and celebrate.

At Holly Tree House, we also use our "Meals of the World" evenings, to educate the children of different cultures, through food initially, but supported with facts, quizzes, information and games, that enhance these evenings and develop children's understanding of cultural

events from across the world.

5. The arrangements for promoting contact between children and their family and friends.

For any child, living away from home can be difficult under the best of circumstances. It is Pear Tree's policy, whenever possible, to continue to promote family time, when this is safe to do so, but also agreed with the child and the wider care team.
Members of staff should be reminded of their role in this process and be involved in providing children with options open to them in terms of telephone calls, arranging meetings, writing, emails, Facetime calls, sending cards, etc.
The only time this situation should not be encouraged is if there are specific concerns raised by:

- The Local Authority Social Worker,
- Any form of psychological or psychiatric assessment,
- The Court, or
- When information from the child gives strong indication to the fact that family contact undermines their sense of stability or security.
- The child states that they do not wish to see family members.

We should then, therefore, be seen to represent the child's views to the agencies concerned without either passing judgment or having preconceived ideas about the information that is presented to us. Actual arrangements for meeting parents and other family members are different for each child and made with the guidance of the local authority.

As a home we understand the importance of maintaining positive family links, but also actively work to develop positive family time for our children, when appropriate to do so. We work hard to build relationships as a care team with family members, to ensure that we have good links to family, share information (when appropriate to do so) and ensure that family feel part of the child's life.

6. A description of children's home's approach to consulting children about the quality of their care.

As Holly Tree House is a small setting, with a settled staff team in place, we continue to focus on the importance of positive relationships for all in the home. The running of the home is regularly reassessed based on feedback, positive or negative, from the children we are looking after. Whilst this is often sought through informal discussion and close working relationships with children, Holly Tree House also holds regular house meetings, where issues such as this can be opened for discussion and where appropriate, acted upon. The Registered Manager for Holly Tree House also has an "Open Door Policy" which the children can be helped to understand to share their thoughts/worries/concerns directly with him.

Holly Tree House also uses a "You Said – We Did" system, to record information regarding concerns or minor grumbles that a child shares, that can be reflected upon in consultation with the children, and an explanation documented of how this has been addressed for or with the child.

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

A six-monthly questionnaire is sent out by the Managing Director with a stamped addressed envelope. The replies are listened to and acted upon when necessary.

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

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

7. A description of the children's home's policy and approach in relation to –

a) anti-discriminatory practice in respect of children and their families; and
b) children's rights

Pear Tree Projects and Holly Tree House do not tolerate discriminatory practice under any circumstances and always look to respect the rights of children, young people and adults in whatever capacity. Please see Guidance and Good Practice for full details of policies in this area.

8. A description of the accommodation offered by the children's home including –

a) how accommodation has been adapted to the needs of children cared for by the children's home;
b) the age range, number and sex of children for whom it is intended that accommodation is to be provided;
c) the type of accommodation, including sleeping accommodation.

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

The children / young people are considered for placement to Holly Tree House on the basis of:
a) Level of abuse experience (or suspected)
b) The difficulties the child experiences because of the known or suspected abuse, as well as emotional behaviour and mental health difficulties.
c) Risk assessments and care plans are considered appropriate and suitable.
d) An Impact Risk Assessment being completed prior to admission to the home, that

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

Under no circumstances do children ever share bedrooms.

The home is a Victorian property with 5 bedrooms, family bathroom, and a downstairs toilet. There is a kitchen, dining room and living room. Downstairs there is a cellar, which is adaptable, but can be used as a hobby or fitness room etc. The home is decorated and furnished to a very high standard, it is intentionally made to be as much a normal family home as possible, with as little overt reference to the fact that it provides residential care. Outside there is a courtyard to the side/rear which offers a peaceful, private and secluded setting for children to use as they desire. Often children can simply "chill out" here, using phones, reading or enjoying fresh air.

The home has a "Ring Doorbell" in place which captures images. Consents have been collected from children and social workers. There is also a Specific Risk Assessment in place for this which highlight that this is not in place for monitoring, supervision or recording of children, but this simply aids the security of the property, staff vehicles, and can aid in some safeguarding circumstances, as children can have high levels of independence, and times for them entering or leaving the home may be required in an emergency situation.

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

Situated on the edge of the North Pennines, Holly Tree House is a Victorian house located west of the town centre of Bishop Auckland, approximately 13 miles Southwest of the City of Durham and Newcastle-Upon-Tyne is approximately 35 miles away.
There are good transport links with the A689 trunk road giving direct access to the A1, there is also a Train Station which gives access to Darlington main Station, opening links to all major cities such as Newcastle, Edinburgh, York and London to name but a few.

The home is just a short walk from the beautiful grounds of Auckland Castle, the country residence of the Prince Bishops for Centuries and still the official home of the Bishop of Durham.

Surrounding the Castle are 800 acres of the Bishop's Deer Park, a picturesque setting for walking and picnics on summer days. The historic town centre has a thriving art and cultural offering, with the Town Hall home to an excellent library, Cinema, Theatre and Arts complex.

There are a variety of youth / sports clubs in Bishop Auckland including the 2nd Bishop Auckland Scout Group, Dance and Drama Schools, various sports clubs and a Leisure Centre which includes a swimming pool, gym and regular exercise classes.

Within walking distance of the house are Primary and Secondary School mainly boasting Good on Ofsted reports. Bishop Auckland College is a mile from the house and delivers a wide range of courses and has close connection that support the requirements of Pear Tree.

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

10. Details of the children's home's policies for safeguarding children, preventing bullying and the missing child policy.

Pear Tree Projects and Holly Tree House do not accept or tolerate bullying of any kind and always take steps to – a) prevent bullying from occurring & b) deal with issues that may lead to, or regretfully resulted in, bullying taking place.

The ethos and culture of the home is continually managed and monitored to ensure unambiguous messages are made that bullying is unacceptable and only respect, consideration and care for others is.
Safeguarding and/or Bullying concerns are raised or discussed in every staff meeting and in every individual supervision completed within the home.
More details can also be found in the homes' Bullying Risk Assessment, which is reviewed on a regular basis.

Pear Tree has detailed and comprehensive policies to deal with disclosures of abuse and to ensure bullying does not take place. These policies are robustly enforced, and Pear Tree ensures that at every event it liaises with the Local Authority, either the home Authority from where the young person has come from or the host Authority in the area in which the home resides and recommendations acted upon.

Ofsted are also notified of any safeguarding incidents through Regulation 40 notifications.

If a child protection issue is identified this is always brought to the attention of the Registered Manager (Steven Bradwell), Designated Safeguard Lead (Gary Ramsbottom) and Head of Service (David Bartlett). If the issue includes these individuals, the staff are instructed to notify the child's Social Worker and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board directly. In every event the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the Local Authorities Social Worker are to be notified.

Should a missing-from-home incident occur, we will look to understand this behaviour, identify triggers and develop children's abilities to reduce this behaviour in time. We also endeavor to educate our young people in terms of the risks that they present during such occasions and risk assessments are carefully considered when young people are identified as maybe being vulnerable to others, or they represent risks which may affect others. In the event that young people are missing from home, a detailed procedure is in place which members of staff follow to ensure that all relevant people are notified of their absence and, where necessary, the Police are advised to look out and return, whenever possible. This runs in line with the Philomena Protocol in place and is used by Durham Police.
Upon return from a missing from home incident the young person is always visited by somebody

independent of the staff team, to try and ascertain the reasons why they were missing from home. A safe and well check will also be carried out, this is undertaken by the Police, being requested by the home. If a young person continues to go missing frequently it may result in a possible review of placement due to the impact on the home and the other young people who reside there.

To access the home's child protection policies please contact Steven Bradwell, Registered Manager 01388 608220 or Pear Tree Head Office 01388 776799.

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

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

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

Of course, this range of children presents varying needs and degrees of risk, and it must be noted from the beginning that we can offer places in a number of different homes.
This understanding of risk and suitable homes is carried out in the referral/consultation process with the child and their social worker/family. This is not a matching process but is completed to understand the correct home that will best meet the needs of that child, at that time. The Impact Risk Assessment completed will also measure the predicted impact upon the children already resident within the chosen setting to ensure that their placements are not adversely affected by any new admissions to the home.

Emergency admissions.

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

12. The arrangements for dealing with complaints.

Pear Tree Projects operates a very clear Complaints Procedure where young people, other agencies and members of the public are encouraged to make complaints, where appropriate, which can be dealt with either formally or informally. In every event it is the homes and organisation's policy to record these complaints and to take action when required.

Staff are to encourage young people to have a voice, share feelings through positive relationships being in place or make complaints, when there is good reason, and help them to record their feelings, concerns or anxieties. When necessary, an investigation will be carried out and recorded with the findings and outcome explained to those concerned. Pear Tree takes all complaints seriously and endeavors to provide a robust system to ensure that complaints are dealt with effectively and actions taken where necessary, but also in the correct time scales.

In the first instance the Registered Manager, Steven Bradwell or the Managing Director, David Bartlett, may take steps to try to resolve the complaint at an early stage.

If the person is the manager of the home and is the subject of the complaint the issue should be referred to a colleague of the same management level or higher.

If you wish to make a complaint regarding the Head of Service, this should be referred to Ofsted and LADO.

The address for Ofsted is:
Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

Telephone No: 0300 123 1231

Details for the LADO can be provided upon request from Pear Tree Projects Head office.

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

Pear Tree Projects full complaints policy, if applicable, can be requested from Pear Tree Projects head office: Contact details - Head office: 01388 776799
info@peartreeprojects.co.uk

Children's Behaviour

13. A description of the children's home's approach to the surveillance and monitoring of the children accommodated there.

Holly Tree House can care for children who display sexualised behaviour, either in person or online, or present a risk to other children.
To safeguard the children within the home, a specific risk assessment for the use of a movement sensor on the landing between the children's bedrooms and/or a door alarm is carried out. It is explained to children at the point of admission that:

- It is there to reassure children that no one will be able to enter their bedrooms without a member of staff being made aware.
- As some of our children have been victims of malicious allegations, they cannot be accused of entering another child's room without a member of staff being made aware of this fact.
- The measures taken are by no means there to inhibit any child's movement. Children may come and go freely to use the toilet etc. and be encouraged not to feel inhibited by the sensor. The sensor should only be used as per the specific risk assessment for this.
- That the sensors used at Holly Tree House are designed to have the minimum impact upon the child, with this alerting a unit that will be near the staff member and not sounding on the landing area.
- Alarms/Monitoring equipment can be added or removed when higher/lower levels of risk are assessed, or from specific incidents within the home.

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

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

We are also observing a trend of children displaying sexualised beliefs/behaviours online, leading to risks in person being increased from a distorted view of relationships, sex, and socially acceptable behaviour. We understand the need for Digital Safety to be paramount as children can be exposed to age-inappropriate material from an early age, and as such need re-educating from this exposure, whilst also understanding the negative impact that this can have upon themselves. This is a complex area and one which the home does not underestimate as to its relevance today.
We look to develop the skills of the staff team within the home, to look to understand trends in risk, use networking to receive updates from professionals in relation to Digital Safety and aid the children's knowledge in the hope that better decision making can be achieved from this work.
Carefully managed risk is also in place for all decisions in relation to internet access or device use. Decisions are made in relation to expansion of use in line with age, cognitive ability, trust, resilience, and an overview of risk assessments in place. Often the home will look to installing some Parental Monitoring software to children's devices, to aid the

understanding of the use of the internet, limiting screen time, or using a device in general, to provide scaffolding support for the child, which can be reduced over time.
It is the aim of the home to “normalise” internet/mobile phone use before adulthood, to in turn aid children to leave our home, displaying socially acceptable behaviour online, and not posing a risk to others/themselves.

14. Details of the children’s home’s approach to behaviour support, including information about –

a) The children’s home’s approach to the use of restraint with respect to children accommodated there.
b) How people working in the children’s home are trained in the use of restraint and how their competence is assessed.

Holly Tree House staff members understand that 95% of the “Team Teach” approach is about avoiding the need for physical intervention, and how many other strategies can/should be used before this is decided upon. These are detailed within the individual children Health Care Plans, through the “6 Stages of a Crisis” information, that highlights how children work through these stages prior to the need for physical intervention.

Whilst the organisation has high expectations in terms of behaviour and expects staff to implement boundaries, control and physical restraint of young people is only used as a last resort. All staff within the home have been trained in the 'TEAM TEACH' system of holding young people when necessary. On all occasions, it is expected that staff will use the minimum amount of force necessary and only when necessary. Team Teach training is refreshed every year.
Following every restraint, a review of the incident takes place by the Registered Manager and Managing Director, or by an independent senior staff member from the Pear Tree Projects organisation.

To access the home's behaviour management policies please contact Steven Bradwell, Registered Manager 01388 608220 or Pear Tree Head Office 01388 776799.

Contact Details

15. The name and work address of-

a) the registered provider (including details of the company owning the children’s home);
b) if nominated, the responsible individual.
c) if applicable; the registered manager.

The home is run by Pear Tree Projects Ltd under the guidance of David Bartlett, Managing Director, Toy Top Farm, Houghton Bank Heighington, Darlington, DL2 2UQ, and the House Manager Steven Bradwell, 20 Clarence Street, Bishop Auckland. DL14 7RA.

Education

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

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

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

N/A - Please see 18.

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

On admission, in liaison with other agencies, assessments of a young person's educational needs take place, this also includes and is dependent on the young person's individual risk assessment, in some cases their current school provision. If they can attend a mainstream school or college, a suitable place is sought in liaison with the Virtual School and the wider care team network.

If a young person's risk assessment considers them unable to attend a mainstream education provision, then an admission into Pear Tree School is the preferred option from that point, as we can offer a fuller, holistic approach to the child.
Holly Tree House will work hard to develop links or working relationships with schools that the children attend, to aid with the education and behaviour of each child, developing strategies as/when needed with schools.
Young people above school age, who can't attend independent work or training, are provided with on-going education and training as part of the Pear Tree School Curriculum.
In September 2005 our school was registered, and the overall Ofsted Award was 'Outstanding' since then the school has maintained this award. In September 2022 the school transitioned over to The Independent School Inspectorate body. In 2023 the school received its first initial inspection and not only met all requirements but exceeded them.

In addition, within the home there is a quiet room set aside for reading, homework etc. and computer facilities are also available. There is a library of books in the living room, tailored to many different reading abilities or ages. There are also many other educational resources available to the children on the landing area of the home, that cover more "delicate" matters such as sexual health, contraception etc., that the children may want to research by themselves. The Children's Guide for Holly Tree House also provides many options and signposting for the children to access independent support or advice, should they wish to use these. QR codes have also been developed for children to have ease of access to support.
As a home, Holly Tree House looks to support and celebrate education placements, to develop each child's understanding of behaviours or risks etc. We use a targeted approach to "gaps" in knowledge for each child, using AQA Awards or Big Initiative courses for example, to demonstrate work and enhance a child's knowledge, which in turn can aid to reduce risks.

Health

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

a) details of the qualifications and clinical supervision of the staff involved.
b) information about –
i) how the children's home measures the effectiveness of its approach; and
ii) the evidence referred to by the children's home to demonstrate the effectiveness of its approach, and how this information can be accessed.

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

- All children, within the first month of admission are registered with the local G.P, which is Bishopgate Medical Centre, Bishop Auckland, 01388 603983
- Their eyes are tested by the optician's Vision Express, Tindale Crescent Retail Park, Bishop Auckland, DL14 9TE Tel: 01388 609276.
- Children are registered with the following dentists – Southend Dental Practice, 12 Southend Ave, Darlington, DL3 7HL - Tel - 01325 380367 & West Auckland Dental Practice, 26 Front St, West Auckland, Bishop Auckland, DL14 9HW – Tel - 01388 833899. We are like the public, with registration at a dentist a challenge currently.
- All children have a care plan agreed with their local authority and work is undertaken to comply with and enhance this.
- Regular check-ups are always maintained.

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

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

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

Staffing Matters

20. Details of the experience and qualifications of the staff working at the children's home, including any staff commissioned to provide education and health care.

Training –

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

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

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

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

Advanced Safeguarding Children Level 2 Online Safety and Harms
Prevent Duty
Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness and Criminal Exploitation Awareness HSE Emergency First Aid at Work
QCF Level 3 diploma for residential childcare/Children, young people and families practitioner (residential) Level 4
QCF Unit - Administration of Medication Control & Administration of Medication or Opus Safe Handling of Medicines Foundation Level 2 Course for Children's Services
Food Hygiene Level 2
Health & Safety - Including Manual Handling for Employees Fire Safety Awareness
Team Teach
Information Governance (GDPR)

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

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

David Bartlett
Position: Managing Director / Responsible Individual
The introduction gives an outline of Pear Tree's history; the Managing Director is David Bartlett.
In 1986, David Bartlett, like many other young people, through circumstances, was forced to make his own way in the world, and as such, with the help of the Princes Trust, and Enterprise Allowance Scheme, became self employed as a professional painter and sculpture. Although only 20 years of age, this occupation brought him to the attention of a number of establishments and David began teaching as a lecturer within Darlington Arts centre, Bishop Auckland Technical College, and then later, for Further Education in Cleveland, which also included St Luke's Psychiatric Hospital in Middlesbrough, and the regional secure Unit. Although unqualified, David became a full time lecturer in Art 3-D Design at Bishop Auckland Technical College in 1988, and later as a result of successful workshops operated by Northern Arts, was recruited by Aycliffe Young People's Centre, where he was to spend 2 ½ years within the secure unit. In 1989 – 1990 he completed his first year Certificate of Education.
Although teaching began to provide a regular income, David also continued to run a successful business and in 1989 he purchased a number of properties that were later to be used by the organisation to become known as Pear Tree. During his time at Aycliffe Young People's Centre, it became abundantly clear that there were many young people for whom it was felt institutional settings were not the most positive and productive. The staff room was full of ideas from teachers who had been involved for years, wishing that they could start their own organisation. It was of a direct result of these experiences and working with a number of children in particular, at Aycliffe Young People's Centre, that the idea of developing a school on a farm where therapeutic activities coupled with sensitive caring environment could be most productive. This idea was floated by David and taken up by a number of people with contacts within the Local Social Services Department.
Subsequently, the first Summer schemes were started in the summer of 1990 as described within the introduction, and in the spring of 1991, at the age of 24, David left Aycliffe Young People's centre to work full time on developing the organisation, that would become known as Pear Tree and has been 'on duty' ever since.

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

Steven Bradwell –
Position – Registered Manager
Date of Employment: 07.09.09

Management Qualifications -
NVQ – Level 4 – Leadership & Management for Care Services
BTEC – Level 5 – Diploma for Leadership & Management for Residential Childcare

I feel that the previous work experience that I gained in every position prior to commencing

employment with Pear Tree gave me skills that I use every day. Before 2009 I had spent over 10 years working within manufacturing, at various levels from shop floor to senior management. I learnt many skills within these roles that I find myself using now, teamwork, problem solving, managing time, managing or organising people, budgeting and prioritising my workload to name a few. These are skills that I feel I excel in and have been learnt through my roles in manufacturing but have been significantly enhanced when I have been exposed to a new way of thinking, working for Pear Tree with a huge emphasis on Values and providing the correct Therapeutic Environment for our children to flourish. Also, from 2007-2015 I volunteered with children's sports coaching, developing football and cricket skills within my local community. This gave me the insight that I required into the skills needed to successfully communicate and coach young people. Working with children became a passion for me before I began employment at Pear Tree, and my passion was only enhanced when I began to understand the organisation.

Bringing the above experience to the organisation I quickly developed a niche role as an RSCW, then SRSCW and then Duty Manager within the staff team. I learnt so much in my early years with Pear Tree, thriving on helping some challenging children, when predominantly based at another Pear Tree home, which taught me many of the skills which I use to this day, such as understanding the importance of listening, PACE, learning triggers and developing care plans to aid each child personally.

I worked through the organisation's levels from 2009 until 2020, when I was so thrilled to be offered the role of Registered Manager here at Holly House, as this was always my goal, from early on in my time with Pear Tree, and having worked for a short spell here as RSCW, I felt that I understood the home. I am also relatively local to the home, and I can convey my local knowledge also for the benefit of the children and staff team, using my connections in the community to also identify outlets for the children, particularly in sports or leisure activities. What I have also developed is my understanding of risk, and the need to manage this carefully, with risk needed in our plan for the children that we care for, as without this we can easily take too many precautions to the detriment of the children's development.

The support that I also receive from Pear Tree is continuing to provide me with the confidence to develop my systems further within the home, and I am so pleased at how this has been noted in Reg 44 and Ofsted inspections, as I continue to grow my knowledge base and develop the home to provide the best possible care and support for each child.

ANTHONY THOMPSON
POSITION: Senior RSCW/Outdoor Ed Instructor
Date of Employment: 19.6.12

I have worked within Pear Tree for over 12 years now, my longest job I can honestly say it does not seem like a job at times, having worked in factories and then in the mining industry, to then be out walking in Weardale with an outdoor instructor sharing his knowledge of the environment around us, trees and plants educating the children but me also, I love it, or going biking all over the county including in North Yorkshire, with amazing scenery, regular visits to the holiday homes in beautiful locations with lots of different young people, having the opportunity to make so many memories to last a lifetime, with so many great memories and wonderful experiences I know I have been lucky.

But I know a lot of thought and hard work has gone into making Pear Tree special and I have enjoyed working with lots of good managers, teachers and instructors who have helped me and supported me along the way and including all the great staff willing to help when needed.

I have been working within Holly house for a while and feel very settled and happy to provide care and support and life skills to all the young people who come to us for our specialist support. I enjoy helping all the young people who require our support and seeing them grow, mature, and move on when they are adults to employment or further education is wonderful to see.

I have gained lots of new skills and knowledge within my role and continue to learn and develop through regular training and guidance from management. I support the home with its Health and Safety and ensure it is safe for all the young people to live in. I have been a key worker learning all the skills that the role requires, building relationships with the young people you look after is important and within Holly house, we see it as a small family home, which helps the young people feel settled and cared for which makes them feel included and settled and have ownership of their home.

MELITZA HAZARD
Position: SRSCW
Date of employment: 12.7.2021

After leaving secondary school in 2008 I knew my education hadn't finished there, I aspired to go to university and study education. After completing my A Levels, I attended Hull University where I completed an 'Educational Studies with English Studies' degree. Gaining my degree, I realized my passion was to be in the education sector and understand more about the education of different underdeveloped countries. I spent some time in Sri Lanka where I helped build wells and houses for very poor villages, I also did some work in the village school and realized that education wasn't as black and white as university made it seem. This spurred my passion, as I came back to England and applied for Northumbria University to complete my PGCE and gain QTS.

After gaining my teaching qualification I worked in 4 different schools in and around North Yorkshire. I primarily worked with children aged 3-11, as my specialty was working with children with SEN. I had children who needed specialized curriculum and provision in my class. I worked with children from a plethora of backgrounds including children in care, refugees and asylum seekers and children who were from poor socio-economic backgrounds. I worked with each child's family, when appropriate, recognizing that they are the child's first and most enduring carers and that my role as a partner and helper in developing their child as they grow. This helped me develop a new passion for helping young people outside of the education system, I realized that the education system could only help families and children so much and for me, it wasn't enough. That's when I decided a change of career was for me, I wanted to look for a job that allowed me to utilize my skills and help me develop new ones.

When I saw a job advertised for Pear Tree Projects and after seeing the amazing work that Pear Tree do, I was determined to join the team. I couldn't resist the opportunity to become part of the company and was luckily offered a job, I started at Holly house in July 2021, and within my time here I have now become a Key Worker and completed my Level 3 in

Residential Care. I have learnt so much about the company and the therapeutic approach it holds for all young people. I am amazed at the work Pear Tree as a company achieves and the drastic impact it has on the young people who are cared for by the team. I have learnt a lot in my role as a Residential Social Care Worker, and I am pleased to be working with the most amazing team of people. I hope to impact further on the resilience and integrity of young people through the ethos of Pear Tree and build positive lasting relationships with the young people I care for.

Benjamin Sackree

Position: RSCW

Date of Employment: 28.10.2024

I grew up in the South Island of New Zealand having relocated there with my mother and brothers at a young age. As such I developed a love for all things outdoors and took part in activities such as rock climbing, kayaking, mountain biking and camping. I have always played sports in my childhood mostly taken up by Judo and later developed a love for rugby. This later developed into a love of all thing's fitness related and has led to me competing nationally as a strongman athlete (pulling trucks, pressing heavy logs and lifting atlas stones to name a few events!) After relocating back to the UK to live with my Dad I finished my education and worked a variety of jobs in construction and property development whilst also joining and serving in the Army Reserve as a part time infantry solider. This time confirmed my love of all things outdoors (whilst also confirming that day to day military life was not for me!). At this point I decided to take on a new challenge and joined HMP Prison Service. This was a challenging yet enjoyable time for me, no two days were the same and I gained valuable experience of working with people from all walks of life. I especially enjoyed my time working at HMYOI Deerbolt with young lads whom I felt I could help relate to and hopefully help through their sentences as they prepared for life outside of custody.

After the COVID pandemic I decided it was time for me to leave the Prison Service and pursue a new venture. I decided to return to property development and successfully managed 5 renovations over a 2–3-year period. This helped me develop skills in project management, team leading and learnt many new valuable practical skills. After finishing my last project, I decided that whilst I had enjoyed a return to construction it was not my passion and instead of taking on a new project opted to take a job at Nissan manufacturing engines whilst I figured out what career path I wished to pursue. I thought long and hard about this and realised that I felt the most rewarded when working with young people during my time at Deerbolt, mentoring and ultimately helping them. This led me to Pear Tree where I hope that my practical skills, love of teaching young people and passion for the outdoors and sports can all be utilised and I can pass useful skills onto the children in our care.

Josh Price

Position: RSCW

Date of employment: 11.6.24

During my childhood, I spent a lot of time at Pear Tree within various environments, my mother has had spent a large part of her working life at Pear Tree therefore I have gained an awful lot of knowledge from her. I also completed work experience at Toy Top Farm, and I loved working with the horses, which led to me wanting my own. These early experiences have deeply influenced who I am and my career aspirations. I earned a degree in psychology and a master's in forensic psychology, focusing on childhood experiences and abuse prevention. Currently, I am pursuing a PhD at Teesside University, researching the impact of childhood abuse on adult relationships. My goal is to train with the NHS to become a clinical psychologist, helping disadvantaged children make progress with their lives and reach their own full potential. I am passionate about helping children overcome adverse experiences to build meaningful and positive relationships in adulthood. I hope my passion for psychology will enable me to make a significant difference for the young people at Pear Tree. I love animals and enjoy spending time with them, and I hope to involve young people in these activities. Additionally, I enjoy drawing and reading and want to share these interests with children and young people. I am a social and bubbly person, eager to try new things, and I hope to develop more interests that align with those of the young people to help create positive experiences for them.

Mobile Staff Team

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

All details for members of the Mobile Staff Team can be found on the document entitled – "Details of the Mobile Staff Team", with all points from this Statement of Purpose applicable to this team also.

Bernadette Price
Position: Senior RSCW / Duty Manager.
Date of employment: 21.08.06

I have been married for thirty years, and I have three beautiful boys who are all doing well in life. I left school at 16 with no qualifications and started work the following Monday I worked for a small coil winding company (BBH Ltd). Where I worked for twelve years. I progressed from line leader to supervisor then Facilitator in charge of forty-three people. As a Facilitator I had to break down engineering jobs to enable people to understand them and able to read drawing, giving them the ability to learn the process and able to develop a high standard of work. My objective was to work with the group event to meet goals through, training, good communication and presentation skills.
I took redundancy to start a family, with my eldest son born in 1997 I then started work at Redworth Hall Hotel. I worked part-time until my second son was born in 2000. I then split my time between working and looking after my family. I was offered a job at a local restaurant firm with room to develop my skill set. As my boys got older, I wanted to broaden my horizons and started working at Brewers Fayre. I worked hard and was offered

an extra shift behind the bar serving drinks and taking food orders. This developed over time, and I then became responsible for large sums of cash, stock and above all else customer service within the restaurant working my way up to Duty Manager being supportive towards my staff team's problem-solving, routers, banking and general building duties i.e., opening and securing the building on a night shift. I developed my skill set to enjoy all aspects of the restaurant. I then started to work in the children's play area. Finding this aspect of work very rewarding nurturing children and developing their thought processes in play and seeing the progress they were making. I enjoyed this part of my job so much that I started to volunteer at the local youth centre helping children from the ages of 8 yrs. to 15 yrs., I found this very interesting and great fun in fact I enjoyed it so much, so I started to do voluntary work at my sons Primary School (Cockton Hill Juniors) as a support worker classroom assistant. I found a great deal of pleasure and a sense of accomplishment in being able to help and support children to develop and make progress I wanted to pursue a career looking after children in the care sector.
I later applied for a position at Pear Tree Projects as a support worker working with vulnerable young children with individual and complex needs. I quickly realised that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. Nurturing these children to have a better outcome and experience a wonderful childhood is key to their development. After six months I was given the opportunity within the company to become a Residential Social Care Worker, I still to this day remember my conversation with Head of Service David Bartlett who bestowed this opportunity and I thank him greatly for giving me this wonderful opportunity. Over time I became a Senior Member of staff and eventually Duty Manager looking after six houses two farms and school sites with twenty-two children and eighty staff members. I have helped develop and support a good working team across the board in different homes and settings. My main role is to safeguard children which is my top priority and staff alike to ensure all are safe and documentation is correct. I have been a Duty Manager for several years and loved the role dearly and I thank my head of service for believing in my abilities and helping me develop into the person I am today. I thoroughly enjoyed seeing all the children and being a part of their lives helping them make progress and learn to trust again which is a big part of my job. I came off the active role as Duty Manager to concentrate on
my personal development of report writing moving to Holly house working under my House Manager Steven Bradwell. Throughout this time Steven has been a huge support and continues to encourage me, I have become a keyworker and I can complete all my keyworker duties, LAC Reports, Care Plans, Daily files, Children's meetings, Meetings with Social Workers, and I have been involved in MAPPA meetings which was a huge experience and adding files onto the main computer. I feel that moving to Holly house has been the right move for me and I look forward to my personal development working alongside RHM Steven. I'm currently in my eighteenth Year working at Pear Tree and I look forward to many more years to come.

JANICE TOMLIN
Position: Home maker.
Date of Employment: 16.06.08
My journey with Pear Tree Projects commenced 15 years ago. Having worked with children previously for several years running play groups for various ages my understanding was I had gained lots of experience during this time. These children were from mostly secure and stable backgrounds. It soon became apparent that Pear Tree would be very different and that I had lots to learn. I was eager to learn to be able to support and help our young children moving forward in their lives. The aim was to teach them the skills required to progress over a period of time and

eventually to go to be functioning, competent individuals in their lives ahead. My enthusiasm and interest for the job increased as I learnt new skills and became more confident in my role.

Having learnt by others more experienced and spending time with the children, watching behavioural patterns and dealing with challenging issues that may arise. This gave me the knowledge and understanding to help support our children. Whilst enjoying different experiences outside of the homes with our young people for many years my thoughts of how important it was for our young people to have the experience of having a warm nurturing home which many had never experienced. To have their own bedroom (a space to feel safe) and have caring staff available for support this could be a time to heal. I take great pride within this role ensuring that our homes are well maintained to a high standard and a warm and welcoming to our children, staff and visitors. I'm always willing to give other staff support and positive advice when required.

Pear Tree is a very special place and one like no other. I would like to think I have made a positive contribution to the lives of these children who have not had the best start in life. My hope is that we have given them a warm secure place with lots of exciting new experiences and the tools to repair, rebuild and to move forward to become positive individuals' productive meaningful lives.

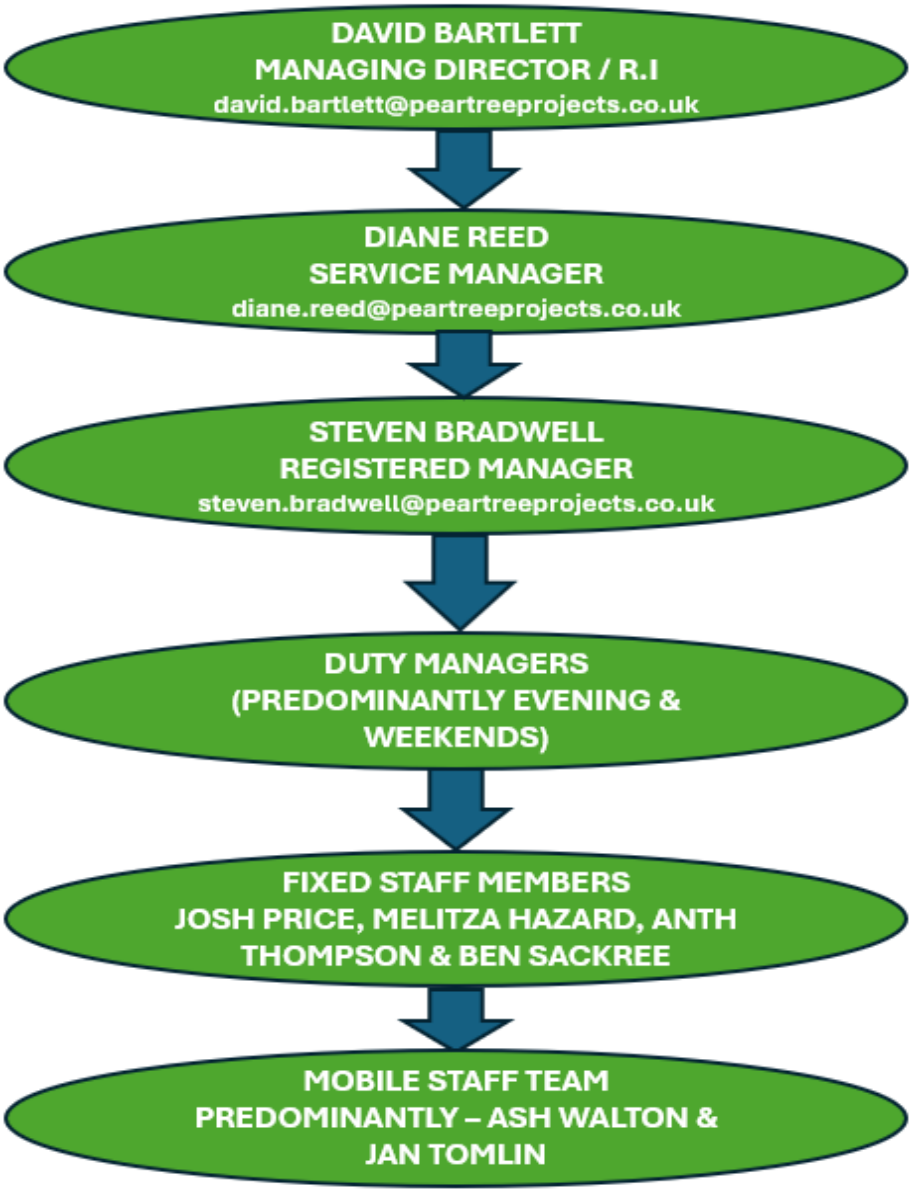
ASHLEIGH WALTON
Position: SRSCW
Date of employment: 9.1.18

I left school in 2008 after completing my GCSE's. I was working in a part time job as a waitress at a local pub and also attending college completing a uniformed services course. I did not complete the whole course as I applied for the army and began the selection process and training. I completed the process and training and was selected to start. I was very glad I had completed the process but found that the timing to leave for the army was not right and I left. After not joining the army I had a few part time jobs for a couple of years including working as a waitress/cleaner at The Carlbury Arms, volunteering work at a local racing stable yard, also working in Morrison's for four years on the kiosk department. Once I left Morrison's I started working at a local primary school as a lunchtime supervisor, while in this employment I also covered caretaker roles and supervision of a child with autism on a one to one basis in breakfast club and cleaning duties. While working at Montalbo primary school I started working a second job at Staindrop academy as a cleaner, working afternoons after school finished and also worked some mornings before school to cover shifts. Over the Christmas periods of 2013 and 2014 I worked a seasonal employment on The Polar Express at Weardale Railway as a dancing chef. I really enjoyed working on the train with the children, reading stories, dancing, serving hot chocolate and cookies and singing before they met Santa.

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

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

The Organisational Structure of Holly Tree House



Contact details for Duty Managers, fixed staff team members and members of the mobile staff team can be found within the Pear Tree Staff Structure document accessible for all Pear Tree staff members, with generic email addresses for all staff members as highlighted by the management team details above.

Pear Tree achieved its Investors in People Award in February 2002, and as such, has had to demonstrate not only to the Care Standards Commission, but also to other professionals the systems that were in place to support staff. At our review in April 2007, the assessor could find no areas to advise on, renewing our status. Subsequently in March 2010 we achieved the coveted Investors in People Gold Award.

Each member of staff has a Staff Development Programme linked to an annual PHCA (Appraisal). Details of these PHCA's can be found on Pear Tree Connect, with elements of this threading into the homes Development / Workforce Plan.
PHCA is held in line with Pear Tree policy and Children's Home regulations 2015.

Supervision is held regularly throughout the year, taking place both formally and informally. Supervision is important to ensure that staff have regular feedback, and at times discuss reflection points from practice to ensure that best practice can be identified and promoted within the home but also promote professional development for each staff member.
Supervision records are held on Pear Tree Connect, however, as part of the management oversight, the regularity of these is tracked to ensure that this is closely monitored.
Steven, as Registered Manager, has completed specific training in relation to supervision of staff members, with supervision sessions aimed at being reflective and educational.

Holly Tree House aims to have and maintain amongst the care team - high morale, high standards and motivation.

Daily handovers within the home contain structure and ensure that relevant information is passed to staff members arriving for duty. This is supplemented with fortnightly team meetings (Term times mainly) to ensure that all relevant staff are kept up to date with the children, organisation, training, and to ensure that they are as well prepared for their roles as possible. Information flow is important within the home.

Steven is under the direct supervision of David Bartlett, Managing Director and/or Gary Ramsbottom, Senior Manager. As above, this is regular, involving Managers' Meetings, informal discussion and structured reflective sessions.

Details of the Staff Development Programme and support structure are evident in Guidance and Good Practice and can be provided separately.

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

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

Appendix 1 – Corporate History

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

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

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

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

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

Community Forensic Service, earlier in the same year. In July 2004 we applied for Registration as a small independent school.

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

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

In Easter of the year 2001, Pear Tree opened its first registered home, looking after four children, bringing an end to the culmination of some 18 months planning and development work, and adding an alternative to the current portfolio homes on offer. However, the philosophy of ordinary homes in ordinary streets and the desire to give children with complex and difficult needs the opportunity to live in as normal a home environment as possible is still very much the heart and soul of what Pear Tree is trying to achieve.

On 14th October 1991, with the implementation of the Children Act 1989, Pear Tree was the first organisation to apply for Registration of a small 'un-registerable' home in the full knowledge that it would not be allowed to do so. The subsequent development of some of the most homely yet highest quality homes in the country, with a sophisticated programme of events around the care of the children who would live there, has continued to be the strategy. Indeed, whilst Pear Tree was the first to come forward with this idea, this way of working has been adopted by many local authorities, charitable and private organisations since. There would be a 10-year gap and a great deal of hard work and dedication by all those concerned, until June of the year 2001, when the Registration and Inspection Units of Darlington and Durham County Council formally registered five Pear Tree homes, the period of consolidation allowing for the smaller homes, that often looked after one or two children, to be withdrawn.

During the Registration process, it became clear that Pear Tree had grown as an organisation and required an independent base that could be used for administration purposes, away from any of the existing homes. The search then began to try to find appropriate accommodation for our office staff, at the same time acknowledging the need

to have somewhere where meetings could take place, and even better, informal gatherings. With every office viewed, it became apparent that quite a sizable place was required to cater for everyone's needs, and then in the true spirit of Pear Tree history, we took advantage of opportunities that were presented and in August 2001, Pear Tree headquarters moved to Toy Top Farm. The farm house provides a base for our administration staff, a meeting place and a focal point for the whole organisation, the rest of the farm providing numerous opportunities for activities, work experience and further training.

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

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

David Bartlett
Managing Director