



**Statement of Purpose  
Oakwood House**



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#### **1. Overall aims and objectives**

Oakwood House is one of five therapeutic communities, managed by the charitable organization Childhood First. Our work is based on our Integrated Systemic Therapy (IST) model, which has evolved over 40 years. This is a holistic group-based approach founded on the twin traditions of milieu therapy and systemic psychotherapy.

Oakwood House is a specialist residential therapeutic community providing therapeutic care and treatment along with family support to psychologically traumatised young people. Oakwood specialises in the treatment of young people who present severe emotional and behavioural problems as a result of attachment difficulties usually rooted in early life trauma. We offer an integrated systemic programme of care, therapeutic work and education for up to four children and young people, aged from eleven to seventeen years old on admission with a ratio of three teams of four therapeutic care practitioners.

This staff ratio will allow us to offer our integrated systemic programme of care, therapeutic work and education to up to four young people without any impact on their care.

Placements are for 52 weeks a year with facilitation of all necessary arrangements for contact with families and significant others.

Oakwood House provides a safe environment designed for small group living and learning. The Young People require that we provide dedicated, understanding and knowledgeable Therapeutic Care staff who support young people to work through their experiences of past trauma. We meet each young person's needs through, individual and group psychotherapeutic work which enables the Young People to be supported in working through their experiences of past trauma. Over time the aim is to enable the young people to engage as members of a group who are valued both collectively and individually in order to better prepare them for future relationships. Our aim is to help the young people to develop the ability to create and sustain meaningful and trusting relationships with others; providing them with interpersonal skills which can then be transferred onto other relationships in their next placement and later in their life.

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## **2. Care Education and Treatment**

### **2.1 Ethos and philosophy**

The Childhood First document - Integrated Systemic Therapy for Traumatized Children and Young People - describes in detail the ethos and philosophy on which the care, education and treatment at Oakwood House is founded. This document is held in the home and additional information regarding our approach is available on request. Young people placed at Oakwood House have experienced severe difficulties in their relationships with others and in relationships between those around them. By attending to both these aspects the capacity to relate can be recovered and outcomes in all areas of life are then seen to improve.

Our therapeutic expertise is located in systemic and psychoanalytic thinking and practice which offers transformative insight, particularly in a group setting, to young people suffering profound emotional or mental trauma. Robust theory and organisational structures together provide the setting within which the art of healing can take place, and traumatised young people can learn the ability to make healthy attachments, process feelings and relate to others.

Our family systems-based approach allows healthy relationships to develop across the group of young people and staff. The group experience powerfully counters the dangerous sense many young people have formed that they do not matter to anyone, and that nobody matters to them.

In addition, our facilities present a warm, creative, extended family home environment. The environment is of a high quality and care is taken to ensure it represents security, wholeness and warmth at all times. The young people's participation in thinking about all aspects of living together, including the environment, is a significant part of the group work and treatment.

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### **2.2 Data protection**

In compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) Childhood First is committed to being transparent about meeting its data protection obligations and how it collects and uses the personal data of those in our care, their families and wider networks as well as our workforce. Our policies relating to data protections and records management can be accessed via the Childhood First Procedure Manual. <http://childhoodfirst.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>

### **2.3 Admissions policy and criteria**

Following a referral from a Local Authority, the Oakwood House referral panel consisting of the Director (Registered Manager), Deputy Director, Assistant Director (Statutory Compliance), Psychotherapist and, Head Teacher will consider young people who are aged eleven to seventeen years old, who have experienced inadequate early attachment and are assessed to possess sufficient intellectual capacity to be able to benefit from the treatment philosophy, regardless of their educational attainment. This forms part of the Assessment Placement Treatment Transition (APTT) Impact Assessment which is completed prior to a young person's placement within the home.

As part of the admissions process we provide the social worker with our 'Pre-Admission Information Request' list outlining documentation we require prior to admission. Alongside documentation essential to meet statutory requirements, we also request relevant court reports, a detailed social and educational history and a chronology of previous placements (including an assessment of their success and/or failure).

We invite the young person's social worker and other involved professionals to visit Oakwood House and discuss the young person with the panel. Following this process, if it is agreed that Oakwood House can meet the needs of the young person and the young person is an appropriate match for the current group of residents, an offer of placement will be made. Where appropriate, parents are invited to visit Oakwood House to meet key staff members. This visit may take place prior to the young person's move or at a later stage as



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guided by the social worker who has knowledge and understanding of the needs of the family.

Each young person who is offered a placement at Oakwood must possess sufficient intellectual capacity to enable them to respond to our therapeutic approach. Unfortunately, we cannot consider those who are significantly physically disabled due to the nature of the premises.

### **2.4 Age range, gender and numbers of young people**

Oakwood House can accommodate four children and young people of mixed gender aged from eleven to seventeen years old, all of whom are unable to live in their own family setting.

### **2.5 Any special needs of young people accommodated**

Young people who will come to Oakwood House have been severely traumatised or psychologically deprived. The young people therefore will have individual special needs relating to their life experiences and circumstances. Many of the young people will have suffered the extremes of neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Their patterns of attachment are often disordered due to interruptions in their early care. Additionally, many will be dealing with the consequences of overwhelming events from which they have been unable to recover. These early experiences have had the most serious effect on their ability to function appropriately, both with respect to their own lives and in relation to others.

### **2.6 Range of needs the home is intended to meet**

Young people who have suffered in this way often interact with their environments through extremes of fear and anxiety, or overconfidence. Some are unable to cope with the demands of almost any new challenge, however small. Others have developed a certainty that any interaction or investment will have a painful outcome. Young people who come to Oakwood House are therefore overwhelmed with feelings of worthlessness and low

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self-esteem, believing themselves to be unlovable and believing relationships with others will inevitably fail. They find it difficult to enjoy themselves, learn, make friends, or share in any group activity. They cause concern in others and, while desperate for the reassurance of an adult who will love and care for them, they are unable to trust or to invest in any emotional attachment.

The range of difficulties young people may therefore present includes: eating disorders, borderline personality disorders, school refusal, self-harm, violence towards others, ADHD, Asperger's Syndrome, oppositional defiance disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, together with a variety of attachment disorders. Young people with disabilities and special needs outside the criteria as set out above can be considered, as long as the criteria for admission is met and we feel we can appropriately meet the individual needs of the young person. Young people with a disability or special needs would need to be capable of engaging in the therapeutic process.

### **2.7 Specific therapeutic techniques used in the home**

Oakwood House offers an integrated programme of care, treatment and education based on psychodynamic and systemic principles. Our document Integrated Systemic Therapy for Traumatized Young people and Young People describes in detail the framework and range of groups and facilitators used to support this therapeutic methodology.

All aspects of the programme are regarded as part of an overall living-learning experience, from structured education and small discussion groups, through to informal trips out, buying new clothes, interacting with peers and staff, spending time with a key worker, or playing in the grounds. Each young person who comes to Oakwood House is given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities in both individual and group situations which will challenge all that they have experienced in the past. There are many ways the key elements of the "treatment process" offered by our community could be described. It is the integration of the care, treatment and education offered which constitutes the totality of what we feel is necessary for the successful development of each individual young person.

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It is through the interaction of each individual with the social and physical environment of the community that the experiential and cognitive levels of the treatment process occur. It is our belief that real psychological change can only be facilitated through addressing the early life trauma experienced and redressing the emotional and psychological imbalances that have occurred as a result of their early years. We endeavour to create a social and physical environment which will create a sense of hope from the moment a young person first arrives, something different to what they have experienced before. This provides each young person with the possibility of an experience that will challenge their conscious and unconscious assumptions about themselves and their expectations of others. It is also our aim to continuously strive to create a total environment in which each young person will have a compensatory primary experience; this may go some way to redressing the imbalance of their past experiences.

Our treatment model enables us to keep detailed records which inform individual Placement Plans outlining how each young person's needs will be met. There is a monitoring process in place to ensure plans are fit for purpose for each young person and accurately reflect their individuality as well as their ability to function within the group. Incorporated into the IST treatment model, is a comprehensive and robust assessment framework (Assessment, Planning, Treatment and Transition – APTT). In addition to this, there is ongoing monitoring, evaluation and measuring of outcomes for the young people and the service provided.

### **2.8 Individual Psychotherapy**

In order to address some of the difficulties that the young people face and to assist the healing process, Oakwood offers young people the opportunity of having individual psychotherapy sessions. The model of psychotherapy offered is psychoanalytic, with young people being seen once weekly for regular, on-going sessions. Therapy is offered for a minimum of a year, but is often longer.

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Following a period of settling in at Oakwood House and in discussion with a young person's local authority, a psychotherapy assessment is arranged consisting of three once-weekly sessions. A meeting is then convened between the young person's psychotherapist, the young person's social worker and a member of the senior management team. They discuss the assessment and whether commencing psychotherapy is in line with the young person's needs. If psychotherapy does start, regular reports are included in the young person's LAC reviews and the psychotherapist is available to discuss the young person's progress where this is necessary.

### **2.9 Evaluation of the placement**

Childhood First belongs to the CAMHS Outcome Research Consortium (CORC) Standard measures are conducted by trained staff in the form of questionnaires to assess the following areas:

- Children's Global Assessment Scale - CGAS
- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires - SDQ
- Goal-based Measure
- Experience of Service Questionnaire (CHI-ESQ)

These assessments are conducted every 6 months initially and then annually, the information collated is shared through the LAC Review process. The information can be accessed in line with data protection guidance and our internal Childhood First Data Protection Policy. In addition there is a tailor-made questionnaire cross-referenced with Ofsted's domains for evaluating outcomes for young people, to ascertain young people's opinions about the impact of the Childhood First community on them.

This work is overseen by Childhood First's Senior Clinician. Where appropriate each young person placed at Oakwood will receive a psychotherapeutic and education assessment. This shapes the work and ensures a baseline to enable us to demonstrate progress and improvement for the young person. Any concerns that arise will be investigated and further

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assessments requested e.g. Educational Psychologist assessment. The psychotherapeutic assessment and CORC data enables all the staff to be aware of the young person's state of mind and informs the placement plan, risk assessment, behaviour management plan and their interactions with each young person.

### **3. Consultation with young people about the operation of the home and the quality of their care**

In keeping with our therapeutic approach the culture of Oakwood House is established on the basis of listening to, valuing and thinking with the young people. Young people are encouraged and supported in expressing their thoughts and feelings regarding all aspects of their lives and experiences at Oakwood House and the quality of care they receive. Their views are sought and collected on an ongoing basis within the culture of day-to-day life within the community; these inform decisions in relation to their care as individuals and as a group.

Community Meetings are held twice a week (Monday and Friday) for all the young people and staff. These meetings are a central part of our therapeutic model and provide a forum to discuss with the young people plans for the forthcoming days, any visitors to the home, any concerns, etc. They provide an important forum for young people to experience being listened to by staff and peers. Young people are given the opportunity to share their opinions on any topics relating to the home or their placement in the home. These meetings also provide the opportunity to reflect on their own personal experiences and talk about these if they choose to do so, in a supportive environment, alongside receiving peer group support with areas of difficulty.

Other meetings can be called by anyone at any time to address an issue which they feel may be undermining the wellbeing of the community or any individual within it. Young people are supported to reflect on their behaviours, receiving support from staff and peers to encourage less negative ways of expressing difficult emotions. Such conversations support young people in reflecting on any difficulties experienced in their relationships with one

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another, highlighting ways in which these can be resolved.

In keeping with our treatment methodology, young people at Oakwood House are enabled to participate in all aspects of their lives, to consciously contribute to activities, groups and discussions, and as appropriate, decision-making and complaints. We actively maintain a culture of openness where all opinions are listened to, young people are valued and respected by staff and young people are helped to value and respect both others and themselves. This programme of group and individual work helps young people build on their strengths.

These systems promote and encourage open communication about all aspects of the young people's lives including everyday living together. Staff encourage, listen to and respond to both 'minor' and major complaints, they are trained and experienced in remaining alert to young people's welfare at all times. Young people are encouraged to raise concerns and make suggestions for changes and improvements. The young people at Oakwood House are young and very traumatised, it is therefore essential that staff members know when it is helpful for young people to be consulted and when it is more appropriate to make decisions in the best interests of the young people, in line with good parenting.

Each young person's right to be listened to is paramount, staff members are therefore highly skilled in responding to their individual wishes and feelings, whether these are communicated verbally or in more subtle ways. This is evidenced through the attuned relationships staff members develop with the young people. The young people (along with the young person's social worker and school) complete a CHI-ESQ (experience of service questionnaire) every six months which enables us to monitor and develop the quality of service that we provide.

Each young person is additionally engaged in the process of developing their 'My Oakwood Journey' booklet, as appropriate to their age and level of understanding. This booklet outlines the care they require throughout each day, and identifies areas where they need support from staff as well as areas where they may have made progress with reducing a

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negative behaviour or developed independence.

The young people at Oakwood house have monthly individual key worker sessions; these sessions provide quality 1:1 time which build on the Key working relationship and are organic in giving a reflective space for areas that are of current importance for the individual and any issues that may manifest on a day to day basis.

The home also has wishes and feeling book held in the study and the young people can write in this book which is regularly reviewed by the Senior Team/Deputy Director and the young people are responded to accordingly.

#### **4. The Group Environment**

Outcomes of Childhood First communities demonstrate that the wide mix of young people and larger group experience we offer presents significant opportunities to the traumatised young people who come to us; they are unlikely to find this in a smaller, less group-oriented setting. The peer group is an essential element of our treatment model and group living is what makes a placement at Oakwood House an effective a form of treatment for the young people we care for.

Young people who come to Oakwood have been damaged within their relationships with adults and through their experience and witnessing of adults' relationships with one another. The consequence of this is that the young people find themselves unable to relate to others in a healthy and productive way. The group environment offers 3 channels of repairing these relational problems, which are inextricably linked through a programme of supervision and consultancy.

Firstly, the staff team works together in a way designed to offer young people healthy experiences of adult interactions and new forms of dialogue.

Secondly, the staff are clinically supervised in relation to their management of the young people including the impact of the young people on themselves. They are encouraged

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in this forum to link their personal experiences with the impact of the work, so that they can make this material available to work on with the staff group. This enables fruitful exploration for the young people of their impact on others, both peers and staff.

Thirdly, formal and informal groups with the young people concentrate on their communications and relationships with adults and one another.

Throughout the process of psychotherapeutic change, young people are offered the opportunity to learn new skills and acquire knowledge of the world outside their own emotional spheres and immediate preoccupations. The aim is for the young people to develop, eventually becoming responsible for their own lives in a practical, as well as a psychological sense. The work undertaken at Oakwood focuses on each young person's emotional development and helping them to understand the feelings that lead to destructive and anti-social behaviour. This takes place individually with the young person through the provision of 1-1 relationships and experiences with staff, as well as through a young person's individual weekly psychotherapy sessions and community meetings.

For some young people the severity of the abuse experienced within a family environment severely impedes their capacity to function in similar settings. Many of the young people who come to Oakwood House have experienced multiple foster-placement breakdowns, which we are mindful not to repeat and demonstrate that this cycle can be broken. For a significant proportion of young people placed at Oakwood, we aim to equip them with the internal emotional resources and independence skills to enable them to move on to an appropriate setting post 18.

For all young people placed at Oakwood House we aim to achieve the following positive outcomes:

- Be safe in the present and to develop ways of relating and skills which will help ensure future safety.
- Have a positive experience of being well cared for.
- Become healthier, physically and mentally.



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- Benefit from the experience of play.
  - Experience positive relationships with reliable adults.
  - Develop the capacity for making healthy relationships.
  - Develop emotionally, educationally and socially.
  - Be able to engage in verbal communication, and that this should be developed as an alternative to acting out difficult feelings in the form of anti-social behaviour.
  - Develop internal resources (with support) to cope with everyday situations which previously may have caused high levels of stress.
  - Develop internal personal boundaries and a sense of an autonomous self.

### **5. Equality, diversity and young people's rights**

Oakwood House is committed to equality, diversity and young people's rights. Young people are treated with dignity and respect at all times. Staff members demonstrate the principles of dignity and respect for others throughout their professional relationships, offering good role models for young people in their care. Over time this enables young people to develop a positive self-view, emotional resilience and knowledge and understanding of their background. Staff members aim to mitigate and repair the effects of stereotyping and discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, age, gender or level of ability or understanding. Staff members are proactive in making sure that neither they or the young people are ever treated other than fairly.

The promotion of equality and diversity is intrinsic within the culture of the community at Oakwood House, incorporating acceptance and understanding across all protected characteristics and individual differences. Staff members actively promote a culture of openness and acceptance within the day-to-day life of the community; this includes role modelling in a parental manner, being open minded and challenging others where there may be differences in attitudes. This is consistent both in 1:1 work with the young people and within the group as a whole. Young people are encouraged to develop close relationships with staff over time where they feel safe to explore their personal beliefs, views, values and

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attitudes. These relationships also provide a forum for young people to be appropriately challenged and supported with their attitudes or behaviours where necessary.

Ensuring each young person's individual needs are met is part of the planning process prior to the young person's placement at Oakwood House, this is then reviewed in consultation with the young person and others where appropriate to ensure the young person feels safe in the knowledge that their individuality is embraced and supported.

Prior to the admission of a young person with specific needs such as ethnic, cultural or religious needs, we endeavour to ensure the resources within the home are sufficient to accommodate these needs, alongside researching local cultural groups or places of worship as appropriate should the young person wish to access these at any point. We give additional consideration to the impact of moving to the Kent countryside and support young people with adjusting to a different area, for example moving from an ethnically diverse major city. Whilst we appreciate the importance of ensuring we are adequately prepared to meet a young person's specific needs, we work to ensure that the details of their care and treatment at Oakwood House are ultimately determined by their needs as a young person foremost and in line with their individual wishes and feelings. We access support from partners where appropriate to ensure the young person's needs are met, for example if a young person or their family members did not have English as a first language we would access local translation services in consultation with the placing authority and we would expect this to be built into the overall care planning for the young person.

We regularly mark a culturally diverse range of festivals and celebrations through activity evenings linked with the experience of new foods. This ensures that all young people develop an understanding and appreciation of a diverse range of cultures alongside traditional UK celebrations.

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#### **5.1 Anti-discriminatory practice**

Every effort is made to ensure that Oakwood House is welcoming to all young people, their families and others significant in their care and wellbeing. The Director monitors the range of young people placed within the community in terms of ethnicity, gender and disability, to ensure the service provision is reaching all and not creating barriers to particular groups. Young people are offered opportunities to try out new experiences, which are not restricted by traditional gender options. Young people have the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them and staff are expected to challenge attitudes, behaviour and language that are non-inclusive and discriminatory, in a positive way.

#### **5.2 Young people's rights**

Young people are encouraged and supported to understand their rights and ways of challenging any form of discrimination. Young people are enabled to express their views about the services and if necessary to be supported by an independent person should they wish to complain.

#### **5.3 Restriction of Liberty**

By the very nature of our work at Childhood First in providing a service to psychologically traumatised children and young people we may on occasion adopt practice that could constitute a restriction of liberty (The Law Society) such as the physical restraint of children and increased monitoring and supervision that would be normal and good practice in a range of circumstances. Failure to monitor and supervise children and young people dependent on their age, understanding and vulnerability would be negligent.

The best interests of children and young people are best protected by open, transparent and honest practise therefore individual practice with children and young people will be undertaken in consultation with placing authorities and where appropriate with children and

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young people and their families. All interventions with children and young people including any practice that may constitute restriction of liberty will be subject to regular review and consultation.

#### **6. Health**

Although particular significance is given to a young person's emotional health throughout their placement at Oakwood House, we believe a young person's physical well-being is equally important. Each young person who comes to Oakwood House becomes a patient at our local GP surgery which has a good understanding of our task and the experiences and specific needs of the young people we care for. If a young person wishes to be seen by a female or male doctor this is respected. Young people are also registered with local dental and ophthalmic practices. We ensure each young person has an annual full health assessment, alongside regular dental and optician check-ups. Where appropriate young people are consulted and can contribute to their health plans.

We have written procedures relating to the storage, rotation, recording, administration and disposal of medication, both prescribed medication and homely remedies. Staff receive medication training to ensure administration and storage of medication in line with best practise guidance. The young people are encouraged to discuss openly all aspects of their health and well-being, while their right to privacy and confidentiality is respected. Support and education in relation to wider health education issues is offered on a 1-1 basis or in small groups according to the young person's age and stage of readiness for this input, for example sex and relationships education, smoking, alcohol and substance misuse. There are close links with the LAC professionals in the area and individual programmes are discussed as and when required with both the young person and others as appropriate. Where appropriate and following a risk assessment, some young people may be able to self-administer medication, this decision is based on a range of factors and is reviewed on a regular basis and set out in their Placement Plan

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#### **6.1 Exercise**

Every young person is encouraged to take exercise in a way that they enjoy. Staff plan, organise and join in with games and sports. There is a wide range of informal and formal opportunities to exercise including individual activities (e.g. walking, bike-riding, swimming); team games (e.g. football, rounder's) through to pursuing more specialist hobbies like football, dance and horse riding at clubs in the local community. These are provided for their physical health benefits as well as their contribution to the young people's emotional development and well-being.

Relaxing, resting and being able to sleep well are essential elements of young people's lives. Part of our treatment programme aims to help young people use opportunities to rest and relax, giving their minds and bodies opportunity for quiet and replenishment in our well-equipped Sitting Room and Study. When young people move into Oakwood House they have a well-furnished and comfortable bedroom which they are encouraged to personalise and create a sanctuary for themselves. During the evening young people are supported to complete routines and unwind, they are then offered individual chill time and support based on their current needs to best enable them to make the transition to being on their own then settling to sleep.

#### **6.2 Diet**

Eating well has a critical impact on physical health and mental wellbeing. All young people are provided with a balanced diet and helped to develop healthy eating patterns. We have a good understanding of the specific needs of our young people and their sometimes complex relationships with food and diet. Each young person's individual needs are taken into consideration in the planning and preparation of meals. We recognise the importance of the provision of good food and its contribution to a young person's development, identity and emotional health therefore attention to detail in relation to food preparation is essential. Young people are encouraged to become involved with menu planning, shopping, the

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preparation of meals and to engage in conversations about what they like to eat and about the food provided. There is a chalk board in the kitchen where Young people are encouraged to leave suggestions which are incorporated into weekly menu's. Helping to buy, prepare and cook food is part of their experience of day-to-day living within the community. Young people are supported to attend group mealtimes making them a pleasant social occasion. Cultural differences, personal choices i.e vegetarian and vegen diets and health requirements i.e allergies are always provided for and respected. Throughout the year we hold a variety of themed evenings celebrating different cultures and faiths, food is a central part of these experiences offering the opportunity to sample a wide variety of new foods and flavours.

### **6.3 Smoking**

Oakwood House has a non-smoking policy for young people, staff and visitors. If a young person was nicotine dependent on admission Oakwood would work closely with health partners to support the young person in ceasing their habit.

### **6.4 Alcohol, drugs and illegal substances**

No form of alcohol is allowed on our premises. No recreational drugs are allowed on our premises. Should any young person access alcohol or drugs this would be addressed immediately and if necessary consultation would take place with the relevant agencies.

## **7. Education and facilities for private study**

Our Integrated Systemic Therapy considers that alongside the care and treatment it is essential that young people receive education which is similarly adapted to their emotional state and which can deliver the best possible educational outcomes. Specifically, throughout the duration of each young person's placement we aim to help them 'catch up' educationally, as far as possible. We aim to help each young person achieve as much as their abilities and

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time permit, while helping them achieve a true sense of worth. Young people at Oakwood either attend Greenfields School, (Lower School is situated a short drive along the road and upper school is in the grounds of The Gables House next door), or an external Educational provider depending on their age and educational needs.

Greenfields lower school is a converted house consisting of four large classrooms and a kitchen for cooking. It also has a large playground with play equipment and a back garden area with access from the playground and one of the classrooms. To create the KS1 and KS2 experience in a smaller setting, young people are in small classrooms where they are taught the majority of their lessons. The expectation is for the young people to work as part of a small group with their peers, with the understanding that this may sometimes be difficult for our young people.

Greenfields upper school is a purpose built educational unit with a classroom for Maths and Literacy, a practical classroom for Science, Humanities and Design Technology, as well as a smaller room for individual teaching sessions. To create the KS3 and KS4 experience in a smaller setting, young people are supported to manage the transition between classrooms for different subjects. The expectation is for the young people to work as part of a small group with their peers, with the understanding that this may sometimes be difficult for our young people.

The staff to pupil ratio in both lower and upper school is 2:4 supported by the Head Teacher, two Deputy Head Teachers, Teachers, Classroom Assistants and two Clinical Educational Support Assistants across both schools. This level of staffing ensures that whilst our emphasis is on group working each young person can receive individual support when necessary.

The curriculum is individually tailored to engage the interest of the young people and differentiated to meet their specific educational needs. In addition to the core subjects, the school provides young people with the opportunity to focus on their own area of interest under the ASDAN programme. The school has a well-rehearsed young person-led induction

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programme which encompasses our systemic and psychodynamic thinking, focusing on building relationships with the educational staff and allowing joined up thinking with the educational and residential teams, necessary for successful outcomes in terms of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties coupled with those additional barriers to learning.

Staff at Oakwood work hard to communicate with all school provisions, with external providers this is managed via email, phone calls and handover books or in person. With Greenfields School there is a daily handover with the Clinical Education Support Assistant to pass on relevant information. For all provisions this enables any concerns or current issues to be handed over to school staff so they in turn can support the young person. House staff will regularly attend parents meetings, school events and take an interest in all aspects of school life. School staff from all provisions are always invited to participate in reviews and planning meetings for each young person and residential staff contribute to School review meetings and the delivery of the educational programmes to ensure that there is a focus on individual educational needs.

Young people are encouraged to use the local library and visit places of interest related to their school projects. Staff members offer 1-1 support whilst young people complete their homework in the study which has a variety of resources available.

For those young people admitted at all Key stages the home and Head Teacher at Greenfields School will work in partnership with the local authority and the host authority virtual schools structure to identify an appropriate education provision that support the individual needs of the young person. Greenfields School is well established within the Host authority and the Head Teacher has good links with the virtual school head as well as links to partner organisations that provide alternative education programmes for those young people who have difficulty in accessing mainstream provision and the young people that will be moving onto post 16 education at the end of Key stage 4.



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#### **7.1 Special educational needs**

When a young person is admitted to Oakwood House, particular attention is paid to their educational needs. Education can be provided by our own well-staffed registered independent school for young people with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties as well as identified Additional Educational Needs up to the end of Keystage 4. Full time education is provided by well qualified teachers with a special needs background and wide experience, who are committed to working alongside the residential staff in an holistic and therapeutic way, so that the young people feel ‘contained’ and supported. The young people are also supported by well qualified and experienced learning support assistants who work alongside the teachers to promote learning, social and independence skills.

Currently we enjoy excellent liaison with Kent Local Authority and thereby local authority maintained schools; this means that we are able to advocate and negotiate for a young person to enter an appropriate local provision when they have completed year 11 or where a young person remains in the area after leaving Oakwood House.

#### **7.2 The education structure**

The residential team at Oakwood House work very closely with both Greenfields Upper and Lower School and a sense of community between all sites is very much promoted. The Head Teacher is part of the senior management team, which encompasses both home and school across Greenfields Community, and attends various meetings, business and young person focused, at the houses throughout the week. The residential and educational team work closely together to support in the link of psychodynamic and systematic thinking and practise between both settings. The residential team is available throughout the school day for school support, communicating at regular intervals with the Clinical Education Support Assistant to ensure the day to day therapeutic thinking across the community.

The expectation is, that the young people at Oakwood House will be in full-time education

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regardless of their age. We are pro-active in responding to non-attendance and planning supported re-integration following any period of absence. When a young person refuses school we actively try to engage them in conversations about the reasons behind their refusal whilst holding in mind the emotional impact of their personal histories on their ability to attend education. Communication with all education providers plays an important part in helping them to understand the young person's needs and how best to engage them in school and in learning. If non-attendance becomes a persistent problem, staff from the house and school work together, involving social workers and the virtue school to put strategies in place that will help to re-engage the young person.

### **8. Young people's participation in cultural, recreational, sporting and cultural activities**

Cultural, recreational and sporting activities form important building blocks in a young person's life. Young people benefit enormously from individual and group activities in terms of social interaction with their peers and building their individual self-esteem. Young people living at Oakwood House are actively encouraged to experience a variety of activities and once settled in the home are encouraged in choosing to follow a hobby or activity for which they have special aptitude or interest. Young people are encouraged to pursue external hobbies and interests in line with their wishes and feelings and appropriate to their individual stage of readiness for increased social engagement; attending clubs or activities provides young people with opportunities to develop their sense of identity alongside the opportunity to relate socially with peers. This enables links to community and provides the opportunity to develop relationships outside of the community that also support young people through their transitions. When young people make friends through these activities they are offered opportunities to meet socially with them outside of the club.

There is a wide range of choice available locally in relation to clubs and activities, including horse riding, dance classes, swimming, ice skating, fishing, as well as more community-based activities such as Young Farmers Club, football, St Johns Ambulance Cadets. There

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are also opportunities for group excursions to places of interest and activity parks. Whatever the activity, young people are supervised by appropriately trained staff. Group activities are planned in conversations between staff and young people ensuring that plans benefit each young person.

Cultural activities as outlined previously are supported on an individual needs led basis, however we also offer group activities to support all young people in their understanding of difference, such as celebration of different cultures and religions.

### **9. Promoting appropriate behaviour, control, physical intervention and discipline**

We believe the foundation to achieving our therapeutic task at Oakwood House is the fostering of positive relationships between the staff and the young people within a clearly defined set of boundaries. We aim to establish good and appropriately professional, interpersonal relationships between the staff and the young people. These relationships provide a sense of containment, through a consistent but appropriately flexible understanding of the many different situations they must manage on a daily basis, underpinned by a sense of personal concern and commitment to each young person.

Young people placed at Oakwood House are severely emotionally traumatised by their past experiences and have difficulties in relating to others. They therefore display negative, unkind, destructive and aggressive behaviours at times, especially when their feelings become overwhelming for them. The histories of the young people we care for are such that the focus of their personal development is inevitably taken up through the interplay of their past conflict and trauma in the present. Crossing boundaries within the community is an inevitable part of the work with the young people, while they struggle to begin to establish a more trusting and co-operative partnership with those around them.

Through Integrated Systemic Therapy we seek to view the young people's behaviour as

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communication and over time use this in helping them develop a greater understanding of themselves, their past experiences and their day-to-day thoughts and feelings. We support young people to manage their challenging behaviours and in time develop more appropriate ways of communicating their feelings to others.

The management of difficulties resulting from negative behaviour is often the focus of small groups, personal meetings with key workers and staff, and community meetings. Young people are encouraged (and supported) in raising matters which concern them. Each young person is helped towards a sharing of the responsibility for group and individual well-being, and supported in finding verbalising their feelings and listening respectfully to others. Acknowledgement and understanding are generally the main aim of such a task, but occasionally a sanction may be incorporated as part of an appropriate response. Where a sanction has been the appropriate response there will be opportunity for young people to reduce or indeed lift the sanction dependent on the individual circumstances, enabling a positive outcome for the young person. If property has been damaged, then the young people have the opportunity to engage in reparative work in helping to put right and repair the damage. We are proactive in planning rewards and incentives to help young people have positive experiences to aim for each week, in attempting to encourage positive reinforcement and discourage negative behaviours.

Individual risk assessments enable staff to make informed judgements, in conjunction with each young person's individual behaviour management plan which details the methods of control that are used and states the young person's preferred method. When there are concerns about an individual young person our risk assessment process allows a systematic process of assessing risk, determining strategy and informing practice around a young person to contain the situation.

#### **9.1 The creation of positive relationships**

Our therapeutic approach is formulated on the creation of positive relationships. Each of the young people will have a Keyworker helping to support them in their placement along with

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the support of all the team. Young people are supported to develop an understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others and to express their feelings about others' behaviour. High levels of supervision and guidance are offered to encourage behaviour and relationships which have a beneficial impact for each young person and the group. Achievements and participation are celebrated and rewarded. Where behaviour is unacceptable or has a destructive impact, it is responded to with consistency and clarity within the context of understanding the individual young person's history as well as the group dynamic.

Relationships between staff and young people at Oakwood House are based on honesty, mutual respect and understanding. The staff team is expected to maintain clear safe consistent and understanding boundaries for the young people. Rewards and sanctions are part of the mechanisms for care and control within the context of thoughtful consistent relationships and these are monitored by the management team to ensure that rewards and sanctions are proportionate to the event and appropriate to the needs of the individual young person.

### **9.2 Restrictive physical intervention**

Our Therapeutic Care Staff are trained in restrictive physical intervention, CPI safety intervention. We have in house CPI trainers who are certified by Crisis Prevention Institute to deliver this training. A training manual including descriptions of each of the physical interventions is available in the office for reference. A 'Keep Me Safe. Treat Me With Dignity' CPI booklet is also given to new referrals in conjunction with the Young Person's guide, which demonstrates in cartoon picture form what physical intervention looks like. Restrictive physical intervention is permitted only in circumstances when a young person may be intent on causing harm to him/herself or to another person, or when causing serious damage to property. A restrictive physical intervention will only be used as a last resort. When efforts to de-escalate the situation have been exhausted and the young person is continuing to display risk behaviour.

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Young people who have suffered traumatic early life experiences often display violence, self-harm or damage of property as a way of communicating their distress. For most young people the relationships they develop with staff at Oakwood will be their first experience of safe adult relationships and therefore they will at times communicate their extreme emotions associated with their early life experiences through their behaviour towards these trusted adults. Over time, the young people are helped to learn to communicate these feelings in a more appropriate manner, and find alternative strategies to deal with these negative emotions.

Following an incident where restrictive physical intervention has been used the young person and staff involved will be given the opportunity to debrief and reflect, and conclude by negotiating alternative strategies for the future to prevent a similar incident occurring. We monitor and review the levels of serious incidents and physical interventions weekly in the Post Incident Review meeting. We use these meetings to guide our practise and hope to reach new learning outcomes and continue best practise. Through the use of this meeting staff are able to debrief, and any adjustments to risk assessments, behaviour management plans or placement plans are discussed.

### **9.3 Rewards**

Praise and encouragement is given at all times for positive behaviours through everyday interactions with the staff. The Community meeting is a more formal space where staff can communicate and acknowledge things that are going well for individuals and the group, giving the young people a real sense of achievement.

There are many opportunities to reward young people at Oakwood within their daily lives for positive behaviour and show positive reinforcement, for example; picking a choice of activity, time with a member of staff of their choice, choosing a meal, later bedtimes at a weekend, a trip out or the opportunity to earn extra pocket money for doing household jobs.

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We are proactive in planning incentives to help young people have positive experiences to aim for, thereby encouraging positive reinforcement and discouraging negative behaviours, alongside helping young people to measure their progress. Positive incentives and rewards are highly individual according to each young person's preferences and motivations, alongside their age and stage of development. We believe that positive incentives are effective in helping to motivate young people in working towards individually identified areas of development and supporting their development of self-esteem.

#### **9.4 Sanctions procedures**

Where patterns of persistent negative behaviour become apparent for any individual young person or combination of young people, we support them to change these patterns over time through combining supportive reflection with staff they share close relationships with, positive incentives to help motivate them to work towards behavioural goals and occasional sanctions as appropriate. Responses to individual young people's negative behaviour are carefully considered by the staff team who offer young people supportive alternatives to negative behaviour and the opportunity to reflect on the impact of their behaviour on others, as appropriate to their age and level of understanding.

Sanctions are used as part of establishing positive relationships with young people to maintain boundaries and control. They are used to engender the concept of restitution and reparation; the notion that mistakes or wrong-doing can be repaired and things, (including people) can be 'made better'. The sanctions imposed are usually seen as being related to a particular incident, particularly if an acknowledgement of the consequence of a particular behaviour is not possible in an alternative way. We endeavour to ensure all sanctions adequately reflect the behaviours, are varied and effective, and decided following discussion within the staff team. Managing group and communal boundaries within the community is normally seen as a precursor to providing an appropriate guarantee to managing group outings from the community and a loss of leisure outings may follow a serious incident. However, this does not apply to any educational, external clubs or family visits. Fines are rarely used at Oakwood House, and only in context of reparative payment, which constitutes

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occasionally the loss a percentage of their pocket money in relation to damage for which they are held responsible. Young people are invited to share their views following a sanction.

The following are Permissible Sanctions:

- Restitution  

‘Making good’ or repaying an individual or community for the consequences of unacceptable actions or damaged caused. A proportion of pocket money may be withheld to facilitate this.
- Reparation (for example by helping to repair damage)
- The loss or curtailment of leisure activities
- Confiscation of electronic devices

Increased supervision or restrictions on the availability of transport is used as a tool for safe management but not as a sanction.

### **9.5 Searching Children/ Bedrooms**

It may be appropriate to conduct a search of a young person or a young person’s belongings, including the searching of their bedroom, if there is reasonable cause to believe that the young person has concealed weapons, illegal drugs or other items which may place the young person or other at risk of significant harm. If there is suspicion that such items are concealed staff will attempt to obtain the items with the young person’s cooperation and give the young person the opportunity to handover the suspected items. In the event where the young person does not wish to cooperate with staff our Searching Children/ Bedrooms procedure will be followed in consultation with the Director/ Senior Management Team and the young person’s social worker, unless in extreme circumstances, where it is felt the young person was in immediate risk.



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#### **9.6 Prohibited methods of control**

None of the disciplinary measures prohibited under Regulations 8 of the Children Act 1989 have ever been permitted at Oakwood House. No young person is allowed to be subjected to corporal punishment, deprivation of food or drink, restrictions of visits or communications with family and friends (except where young people need protection from a particular communication or visit), the wearing of distinctive clothing, physical restrictions imposed by accommodation, deprivation of sleep or intimate physical searches.

#### **10. Safeguarding**

Childhood First is committed at every level to safeguarding and child protection in order to promote young people's welfare. We take seriously our duty to protect every child from abuse and maltreatment and to prevent impairment of health or development.

Our Safeguarding Policy is available on request and underlines our commitment to interagency working. We have established a good relationship with our LSCB and the LADO. All concerns of a child protection nature will be referred by the Registered Manager/ Director to the Local Authority. In any circumstances where Safeguarding procedures are undertaken, the child's social services and parents (where appropriate) will be kept closely involved and informed as required by Working Together to Safeguard Young People 2015. Child Protection matters are directly dealt with by the Director, Deputy Director (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Assistant Director.

On admission, a comprehensive risk assessment undertaken for each young person covers all aspects of safeguarding. This is reviewed regularly, or immediately if the need arises, to ensure that any new behaviours or historical information disclosed can be factored into our response in the safeguarding of the young person. All staff receive annual safeguarding training, together with support and guidance in safeguarding and promoting young people's welfare whenever required. Additional safeguarding training is implemented

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when appropriate or when linked to a specific area.

#### **10.1 Preventing bullying**

Oakwood House does not tolerate any form of bullying and is committed to developing a culture within which all individuals are supported in confronting both being bullied and the potential to become a bully. We employ a restorative approach in relation to incidences of bullying or unkindness wherever possible, seeking to help the young people develop a greater understanding of themselves and of the impact their actions can have on others. We encourage young people to be assertive in response to bullying and to make staff aware of any interactions which have left them feeling upset.

We strive to create and maintain an environment where young people are treated with dignity and respect at all times. All staff are vigilant for signs of bullying and any concerns are brought to the attention of the Registered Manager and other senior staff. There is a clear system in place for reporting, tracking and responding to incidences of bullying. This is monitored by the Registered Manager. If bullying occurs, the young person will be encouraged and supported in expressing their concerns through open communication. Within the community this could be either in the Community Meeting or in conversation with a member of staff. All young people are aware of where they can find information regarding appropriate external contacts e.g. their social worker, Childline or Ofsted should they wish to contact them.

#### **10.2 Child sexual exploitation**

Staff complete training in the risks associated with child sexual exploitation, the vulnerability of our young people's group and potential behavioural indicators of a child being groomed/exploited. The management team ensure the assessment of associated risks is integrated within each young person's individual risk assessments e.g. arrangements enabling them to independently meet up with friends outside the home. The close

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partnership working ethos within the staff team, alongside the expectation for open communication in relation to all areas of the young people's care helps to minimise the risk of exploitation from within the home.

A thorough Location Assessment is regularly reviewed and updated. The assessment concluded the location of Oakwood House is suitable for our purpose of residential therapeutic childcare, additionally the high supervision levels of the young people at Oakwood House minimises risks associated with our location.

### **10.3 Radicalisation of children**

Therapeutic staff members at Oakwood House complete Prevent and Radicalisation training and have an awareness that children can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means including the influence of family members or friends, direct contact with extremist groups and through the internet. Staff members understand that this can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm. The high supervision levels of the young people at Oakwood House and careful risk assessment in relation to the young people spending time off site independently or attending clubs/groups significantly reduces the risk of radicalisation. Staff members seek to remain vigilant to potential indicators to radicalisation, and young people are encouraged to discuss their internet use and safety in an open and honest manner with staff with the understanding that they will receive the support that they need. Any concerns that staff may have, are raised with the young person's Local Authority.

### **10.4 Internet safety**

Staff members complete e-safety training to ensure they are well informed as to the risk associated with use of the internet. Due to the vulnerability of the young people placed at Oakwood House Staff Member's will work in collaboration with the young people to draw up individual internet agreements to promote safe internet use. Staff will endeavour to

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continually educate young people on internet safety informally through conversation and more formally in keyworker sessions.

Childhood First uses an IT surveillance system called "Securus" which enables Directors/Registered Managers to pick up key words that staff and young people input into the Childhood First system through emails, reports, etc. this provides an early alert to any potential safeguarding concerns about staff. If a young person's internet use is of concern Oakwood will work with the Social Worker to implement systems to monitor it with the use of Apps such as Qustodio

#### **10.5 Female Genital Mutilation**

Staff members complete online training ensuring they are aware of the issues associated with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and in particular of our duty to inform Children's Social Care should we expect or know of any child who may or has been subjected to FGM.

#### **10.6 Significant events**

Events and Notifications under Regulation 40 of the Children's Home Regulations are sent to the required authorities as well as to the Chief Executive (Responsible Individual). Notifications are held confidentially within the home and are cross-referenced with other systems such as referrals to LADO or LSCB, these are monitored by the Registered Manager and through the Regulation 45 process and by the Reg 44 visitor.

### **11. If a young person goes missing**

Due to the high levels of supervision of the young people living at Oakwood House staff members on duty know where all the young people are at any given time. It is very unusual for a young person to go missing, however in this instance the senior member of staff would

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be immediately informed and would co-ordinate the search for the young person while ensuring the remainder of the young people's group is appropriately supervised; the missing from care checklist facilitates this process. The senior member of staff ensures the young person remains in sight wherever possible and that they are followed if observed leaving the grounds. If the young person is not found once the initial search of the house, grounds and immediate surrounding area has been completed the Director and Senior Management team would be informed.

If a young person goes missing an immediate search is conducted, Oakwood House would work with Police, social services departments and parents to locate missing young people and ensure their safety. As required, there is a MISPER protocol in place. During normal office hours the young person's social worker would be contacted, if unavailable information would be passed to the duty social worker. At evenings and weekends relevant Emergency Duty Teams would be contacted. Our 'Missing from Care' protocol has been developed in partnership with the Ashford Police.

#### **11.1 Action taken when the young person returns**

The young person is always welcomed back to Oakwood House in a non-punitive manner, space being given by staff to reassure them and assess any immediate needs, for example medical treatment, food, drink, blankets etc. If possible, the staff would determine where the young person had been and with whom, although this would be approached with sensitivity, recognising that they may be tired and frightened, depending on their experiences while absent. Other agencies/persons involved in the search for the young person would be informed as soon as possible that the young person has returned. Young people will be seen by an appropriate independent person, or police officer as soon as is practically possible, to explore the reasons for their absence and check on their wellbeing.

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#### **12. Contact between young people and parents, relatives and friends**

It is our policy to work in partnership and facilitate positive contact for each young person and their family and significant others who have been important in their past. Throughout each young person's placement at Oakwood House, we therefore encourage and facilitate contact with family and friends wherever possible and appropriate. For young people with little or no family contact we support their local authority in identifying significant external contacts such as an independent visitor. Contact with parents, families and significant others are arranged in consultation with the young person's social worker and in accordance with the young person's Care Plan.

We endeavour to foster a normal home environment for the young people who live at Oakwood House, including promoting positive and normal friendships within their peer group. Due to many young people moving to Kent from out of area, many of the young people have limited social networks and therefore at Oakwood we help the young people to maintain friendships outside of their afterschool clubs. Where appropriate we help the young people to meet up to socialise independently with peers from outside the community usually with a member of staff nearby and available to be contacted by phone in case support is needed.

Depending on the young person's care plan contact with families is either arranged and supported by staff, this would involve pre-planning a date, time and activity such as bowling, a meal out or a visit to a tourist attraction with the contact then being supervised by a member of staff preferably the young person's Keyworker, however some young people organise their own contact whether this is in person or via phone or messaging. In these cases staff will always be available to offer support if it is wanted and to provide transport to and from contacts.

Contacts with family or friends can also take place at Oakwood House, this would always need to be organised in advance with the staff in order to respect the thoughts and feelings of the other young people who live at Oakwood. We have some comfortable

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communal rooms that are suitable and we have a lovely big garden with a woodland area, which can be utilised.

Video or telephone calls are always an option especially between face to face contacts.

It is the aim of Oakwood to build positive relationships with the young people's families encouraging regular communication and offering support. As part of our work with families the Senior Management Team supports the young person's family members in developing their understanding of themselves and the events that led to their young person coming into care; ultimately better equipping them to be able to relate to their young person now and in the future.

In the event that face to face contacts cannot go ahead at short notice, in cases such as illness, alternative measures will be put in place, such as telephone/video calls and a new plan is made as soon as possible.

### **13. Cultural, linguistic and religious needs**

Oakwood House ensures that young people are supported in their wishes regarding their individual cultural and religious inheritance. We would however, challenge an understanding of any culture or religion which was disrespectful of others. Young people who wish to maintain a religious observance or to attend a religious institution, are supported by staff to do so alongside encouragement to explore and develop their own beliefs. Individual arrangements are incorporated into the young person's individual care planning process. In accordance with individual needs we would ensure that suitable quiet areas were facilitated to enable a young person the opportunity to practise their religion, for example identifying a space that is suitable for observance of the Muslim religion. We also seek to ensure that any specific linguistic needs are accommodated.

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### **13.1 Religious instruction and observance**

Oakwood House does not follow any formal religious observance, but young people who wish to practice a particular faith are supported in doing so on an individual basis. We consider that fostering a young person's growth in understanding their world, including their cultural and any religious inheritance is an important aspect of their wellbeing, and we seek to nurture this growth for each individual young person.

### **14. Complaints**

Our complaints procedures are available in the home or can be accessed via Childhood First Procedures Manual (<http://childhoodfirst.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>).

#### **14.1 Complaints by young people**

Complaints and 'grumbles' from young people can be discussed in Community Meetings where young people are supported in challenging one another or staff and in voicing their feelings if they are unhappy about something. Most issues are adequately and effectively resolved in this forum, which fits with our therapeutic model and is a healthy way of enabling young people to overcome issues with support from the group.

If young people feel that they have been treated unfairly or inappropriately in any way, they can complain to their key worker, to any member of staff or to the Director, Deputy Director or Assistant Director. The Deputy Director is the designated Complaints Officer at Oakwood House; If the young person's complaint is about the Deputy Director, the young person can access other senior staff or use an external agency to express their concern/complaint.

If any young person wishes to make a complaint to a person outside of the community, they may do so directly to their social worker, Ofsted, Children's Rights Director, Regulation 44 visitor, parent or other person they feel comfortable talking to. They may also contact



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directly, either by telephone or by letter, the Complaints Officer at Kent County Council with whom Oakwood House is registered or the Complaints Officer for their individual placing authority.

Information about how to make a complaint is available in a booklet kept on the notice board in the study room, listing relevant telephone numbers and websites, alongside young people's complaint forms. We endeavour to resolve complaints internally where possible, but where complaints need to be taken up at a formal level, our complaint's procedure or the local authority complaints procedure may be utilised.

### **14.2 Complaints by employees**

In line with our policy, wherever possible complaints and grievances shall be resolved in an informal manner, firstly by the establishment of a culture in which staff are encouraged and expected to address issues of concern and conflict at source. This informal framework is supported by a formal procedural framework, which guarantees that any complaints shall be addressed appropriately where informal means have failed; this is undertaken in consultation with HR.

### **14.3 Complaints by third parties**

Where an external agency or other third party has a concern or complaint about any aspect of the work of any part of Childhood First, of its Directors, staff or young people, then it would be our wish that any such complaint be raised at the earliest opportunity. It would be the Director's aim that the concern or complaint should be resolved, wherever possible in an informal way, unless of course where the complaint is of a nature where more formal action is appropriate, in which case it shall be the Director's responsibility to support such action.

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#### **15. Facilities and services**

Oakwood House is a large, detached 1930's style house with accommodation on 2 floors. All young people have their own bedroom and there is no room sharing. A young person's bedroom is their own personal and private space. The home is located in a beautiful part of Kent, on the parish boundaries of Tenterden and Biddenden. It is within easy travelling distance of the nearest major town Ashford, which enables ease of access to resources often found in town and city locations, and which can support young people in meeting their individual needs and good transport links to London.

Oakwood House is a spacious home that provides areas for group work as well as allowing for individual space. It provides a warm and friendly environment that is furnished and decorated to a high standard. The home has a fully equipped kitchen, dining room, and communal areas. Staff members have individual sleeping-in rooms with staff bathrooms nearby; these rooms are equipped to ensure that staff who are sleeping in are able to rest and relax. Consultants work with the staff group to ensure that staff training and development are conducted to a high standard.

The house is set within spacious grounds incorporating, ample lawn area and woodland. Young people are encouraged to play in the garden and particular emphasis is placed on resourcing young people's play activities in the community. Additionally, there is a vegetable garden maintained by staff which the young people are encouraged to help with.

##### **15.1. Suitability of location**

Oakwood House is a detached house with 4 bedrooms and additional bedroom space for staff sleeping in rooms on the outskirts of the small town of Tenterden in Kent. The grounds at Oakwood House cover two acres and include a woodland area with a large fenced garden with grass area and vegetable patches.

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Young people are not able to bring pets to Oakwood House due to the potential risks to the animal's safety that the behaviours of some young people may pose.

We regularly review and update our Location Assessment which involves consulting with a number of local organisations in relation to potential risks within the locality, in particular risks relating to safeguarding and child sexual exploitation. We also collect views from young people and staff on the suitability of the location. To date the Location Assessment does not present any risks which are not largely mitigated by the high supervision levels young people receive at Oakwood House. We are satisfied that the location of Oakwood House is suitable for our purpose, both in relation to minimal risks within the locality and in relation to the diverse range of leisure opportunities easily accessible from our location.

#### **16. Accommodation and room sharing**

Oakwood House has a warm family home feel with good accommodation and spacious grounds. Each young person has their own bedroom, there is no room sharing. Young people are consulted in relation to furnishings and decor within the home and particular attention is paid to how and where their personal property is kept. All furnishings and fittings conform to health and safety regulations.

Each young person's bedroom is their own personal and private space. Staff respect the young person's right to privacy, however there are times when staff will enter the young person's bedroom, for example when invited by the young person, to tidy and clean, or if there are immediate concerns regarding the young person's safety. All bedrooms are furnished and decorated to a high standard taking into account the individual needs of the young people. During their placement at Oakwood House young people are encouraged to personalise their bedrooms according to their wishes and feelings. This will include observance of diversity and recognition of the young person's history, cultural, religious backgrounds etc.

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#### **17. Surveillance within the home**

There is a buzzer system which alerts sleeping-in staff if any bedroom door is opened at night. This is in place to provide safeguards for both staff and young people. The system does not prevent young people from leaving their bedrooms, it enables staff to respond to a young person in need during night time hours as well as alerting staff to any young people trying to access other rooms or leave the building etc. This is outlined in each young person's Placement Plan. We seek consent from each young person's placing authority and/or parents, in accordance with their legal status. The buzzer system is explained to each young person on their arrival, as appropriate to their age and level of understanding, emphasising that the system means a member of staff will always be available to them at night if they need somebody.

As previously mentioned Childhood First uses an IT surveillance system called "Securus" which enables Directors/Registered Managers to pick up key words that staff or young people input into the Childhood First system through emails, reports, etc.

#### **18. Fire precautions and emergency procedures**

Oakwood House has written statements in relation to fire precautions and evacuation procedures, which are known to both young people and staff and which are reinforced by regular recorded fire drills. Our Fire Safety Policy outlines responsibilities, recordings, drills, procedures, training and assembly points. Staff are aware of our health and safety policy and regular risk assessments are made which cover all aspects of the home and specified excursions beyond our community. Oakwood has a range of operational continuity plans that would be deployed in the event of an emergency.

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**19. Registered Provider and Registered Manager**

Oakwood House is fully owned and managed by Childhood First.

Registered Office: Childhood First, 210 Borough High Street, London. SE1 1JX

Registered Provider and Responsible Individual: Gary Yexley, Chief Executive

Work address: Childhood First, 210 Borough High Street, London. SE1 1JX

Director and Registered Manager of Oakwood: Harry Lukens

Work address: Oakwood House, Biddenden Road, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6TD

The Registered Manager is supervised by and directly accountable to Robyn Bartram who is the Therapeutic Services Director.

**20. Consultant to Oakwood House:**

Group Organisational Therapist: Kim Hardie

Qualifications: BA, MA

**21. Residential Therapeutic Staff**

Staff members are recruited through a rigorous selection process which involves both informal and formal interviews. The views of the young people at Oakwood House are incorporated as appropriate to their age and level of understanding. All appropriate checks are carried out according to current legislation and guidelines before any prospective

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member of staff begins employment with us. We endeavour to provide a range of appropriate role models of both sexes.

Name	Position	Relevant Qualifications	Experience
<b>Chief Executive and Registered Provider</b>			
Gary Yexley	Chief Executive and Responsible Individual	MBA (Dist), Leadership and Management in Healthcare (Cant University), MA (Tavistock), Psychoanalytic Observational Studies	Chief Executive, Institute of Integrated Systemic Therapy & Childhood First. Child Psychotherapeutic Counsellor (UKCP accredited)
<b>Director and Registered Manager</b>			
Harry Lukens	Director and Registered Manager	Practitioners Diploma UKCP Accredited Psychotherapeutic Counsellor Enrolled on Group Analytic dynamics in Integrated Systemic Therapy Practice (MA)	Commenced 2013 TCW, DTL, TL at Greenfields House, Assistant Director at Gables House, Director, Integrated Systemic Fostering Deputy Therapeutic Services Director
<b>Deputy Director</b>			
	Deputy Director On Maternity Leave Feb 24 – Feb 25	BA (Hons) Health & Social Care. iST Practitioners Diploma, iST Supervision module Child UKCP Accredited Psychotherapeutic Counsellor	Commenced 2012 TCW, DTL, TL and Assistant Director at Greenfields House

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		Studying: Integrated Systemic Therapy Practice (MA)	
	Acting Deputy Director (Maternity Cover)	Advanced Diploma in Psychosocial Care Cert Psychosocial Care, Supervision Module Studying: Integrated Systemic Therapy Practice (MA)	Commenced 2008 TCW,DTL,TL at Greenfields House Prior Experience: Learning Support Assistant, State Enrolled Nurse
<b>Assistant Director</b>			
<b>Team Leaders</b>			
	Team Leader	IST Certificate Level 4, Level 6 Practitioners diploma IST, Level 6 Post Graduate Certificate in Clinical Supervision, iST Child Mental Health module (MA), Studying: Integrated Systemic Therapy Practice (MA)	Clinical Practise Coordinator 2019 -2021  Prior Experience: 4 years therapeutic experience at Gables House
	Team Leader	NVQ3 Children & Young People, Level 3 Transition award in Play  iST Practitioners Diploma Supervision module  Studying: Integrated Systemic Therapy Practice (MA)	Commenced: 2017 TCW at Greenfields House Prior Experience: Community and Events Coordinator, Parenting Programme

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	Team Leader	Intermediate level apprenticeship and NCFE Level 2 in supporting teaching and learning in schools, A levels in English Literature, Law and Psychology, IST Foundation Course, IST certificate , iST Practitioners Diploma Studying: Supervision module	Commenced 2019 TCW at Gables House, DTL at Oakwood  Prior Experience: Teaching Assistant. Activity coordinator
<b>Deputy Team Leaders</b>			
	Deputy Team Leader	Access to higher education diploma (Humanities) Level 3, BTEC/GCSE qualifications, IST Foundation, IST certificate Studying: iST Practitioners Diploma	Commenced 2019 TCW at Gables House
	Deputy Team Leader	Foundation Course iST Certificate Course Studying: iST practitioners Diploma	Commenced Dec 2020 TCW at Oakwood  Prior experience: Foster Carer
	Deputy Team Leader	Health and Social Certificate Foundation Course iST Certificate Studying: iST Practitioners Diploma	Commenced Dec 2020  Prior experience: worked with Young adults with complex needs  NHS nursing Assistant



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<b>Therapeutic Care Workers</b>			
	Therapeutic Care Worker	Advanced level in Health and Social Care Diploma in sport and Exercise Science Completed Foundation Course iST Certificate Course	Commenced July 2021
	Therapeutic Care Worker	Batchelor of Science Degree with Honours Foundation Course Studying: iST Certificate	Prison Officer Police Officer Porchlight Volunteer Started September 2022
	Therapeutic Care Worker	Studying: Foundation Course	Support worker for people with learning difficulties Personal Nursing Assistant Started December 2022
	Therapeutic Care Worker	Completed Foundation course Due to start Certificate course in September 2024	Started as TCW August 2023 Previous experience: Higher Level Teaching Assistant Residential care support worker
	Therapeutic Care Worker	Studying: Foundation Course	Started as TCW January 2024 Previous experience: Part time support/health care worker whilst at University Family support worker

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Greenfields School			
<b>Head Teacher</b>			
Kelly Cartwright	Head Teacher	Graduate Teacher Training Programme - gained in June 2006, Graded Outstanding. BA (Hons) in Contemporary Dance - gained in 2004, Graded 2:2.	Commenced June 2017.  Prior: Many years previous secondary school teaching experience including 3 years as head of KS3 (literacy).  Completed iST certificate
<b>Teaching Staff</b>			

Staff Member	Position	Qualification	Experience
	Assistant Head Teacher	BA (Hons) Sociology	Commenced: 2014 Prior: 7 years' experience teaching as UQT. <b>Completed: iST Certificate</b> <b>Completed: iST Prac Dip</b> <b>Studying: Supervision Course</b>

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	Assistant Head Teacher	BA (Hons) Spanish PGCE Key Stage 2	Commenced: 2015 Prior: Prior experience as Primary Teacher <b>Completed: iST Certificate</b> <b>Completed: iST Prac Dip</b> <b>Studying: Supervision Course</b>
	Teacher	BEd (Hons) Primary Education	Commenced: 2020 2 years' experience as Mainstream Primary School Teacher <b>Completed: iST Certificate</b> <b>Studying: iST Prac Dip</b> <b>Studying: Supervision Course</b>
	Clinical Education Support Assistant (Lower School)	BSc Clinical and Health Psychology Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care	Commenced: 2012 8 years' therapeutic care experience <b>Completed: iST Certificate</b> <b>Studying: iST Prac Dip</b>
	Clinical Education Support Assistant (Upper School)	BTEC Music and Drama	Commenced: 2014 4 years' therapeutic care Experience <b>Completed: iST Certificate</b>
	Unqualified Teacher	BSc (Hons) Economics	Commenced: 2014 Prior: Previously worked for many years in Financial Services Sector. <b>Completed: iST Certificate</b>
	Classroom Assistant	BA (Hons) Fashion Design	Commenced: 2014 Prior: Worked in Insurance Industry <b>Completed: iST Certificate</b> <b>Studying: iST Diploma</b>
	Unqualified Teacher	A Level English, Sport Studies and German	Commenced: 2017 Prior: Previous experience of working as a Teaching Assistant in SEN <b>Completed: iST Certificate</b>
	Teacher	BA Primary Education 5-11 (Hons)	Commenced September 2023 Prior: 5 years' experience as mainstream Primary Teacher <b>Studying: iST Foundation</b>
	Teaching Assistant	A Level Business, Accountancy and Psychology	Commenced January 2023 12 years' experience in the financial sector. <b>Studying: iST Foundation</b>
	Teaching Assistant	NVQ Level 2 in Health & Social Care	Commenced January 2022 20 years' experience in care industry

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			<b>Completed: iST Foundation Studying: iST Certificate</b>
	School Secretary	Extensive Secretarial Qualifications  A Level English	Commenced: 2014 Prior: Over 40 years' experience as Secretary/PA and Office Manager.

<b>Administration and Support Staff</b>			
	Clinical Case Administrator  (Part Time)	Extensive Administrative Qualifications	Commenced December 2019
	Statutory Compliance Administrator		Extensive Administrative experience  Commenced April 2021
	Business Support Administrator	Extensive Administrative Qualifications	Commenced October 2018.
	Estates Maintenance Manager	Extensive Maintenance Qualifications	3 years' experience in a therapeutic setting
	Estates Maintenance Assistant	Maintenance Qualifications	Commenced December 2016
	Estates Maintenance Assistant		Commenced September 2022
	Estates Maintenance Assistant		Commenced October 2022

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## **22 Supervision & Training**

### **22.1 Supervision**

Central to Childhood First's Integrated Systemic Therapy is that staff work within a comprehensive framework which emphasises a thorough understanding of the young people and of themselves in relation to the therapeutic task. Staff members receive several group supervisions each week, including new group, key working group, case discussions, and staff dynamics meetings. These meetings offer a range of ways of understanding the history, inner world, current functioning and impact of the young people as individuals and as a group, as well as exploration of the impact of the staff on the young people.

Staff members are also supervised individually by a line manager, all of whom are experienced practitioners, to facilitate the purpose of continually reflecting on and thinking about the overall task, its planning and integration. This work is supported by our Consultant who works with the staff team for 1 day a week facilitating our dynamic supervision programme. The work of the community is also supported by the input of our Lead Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist, who is present in many of our staff meetings and young person focused forums offering a clinical understanding when thinking about the young people.

### **22.2 Training**

Childhood First is committed to in-depth staff training. Our work-based training programme has been developed in partnership with the Tavistock Clinic and the School of Social Science at Middlesex University. This programme together with our Integrated Systemic Therapy underpins our care and treatment of the young people and the professional development of our staff.

The training requires staff to understand and articulate the links between theory and practice in the context of their day-to-day work with the young people, with one another

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and the outside world. On commencing employment all staff undertake the iST foundation course followed by the iST Level 3 certificate. We also encourage staff to undertake further training which benefits both the individual and the community enhancing our overall practice

### **22.3 Integrated Systemic Therapy (iST) Training**

The aim of the Integrated Systemic Therapy (iST) programmes is to provide a practice-based training for professionals caring for children and young people with complex emotional and psychological needs. iST training is professionally accredited by United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) via the College of Child and Adolescent Psychotherapies (C-CAP) and academically accredited by Middlesex University. Those who successfully complete the training qualify as UKCP-accredited Child Psychotherapeutic Counsellors.

The programmes are particularly aimed at group-based care settings (e.g. residential therapeutic communities, residential children's homes and special schools and smaller units) where the assumption is that the core of staff training and development needs to be practice-based, with the essential aims of developing the individual, the team and organisational practice.

The main purpose of the Certificate, Diploma and Practitioner's Diploma, is workforce development for the staff who work within our own therapeutic communities. This training provides the basis for the staff to learn the theoretical and practical application of Childhood First's unique iST model, within which the whole organisation works.

## **23. Organisational structure**

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#### **23.1 House**

There are 15 members of staff at Oakwood House. Supporting the Director / Registered Manager are a Deputy Director, an Assistant Director and Three Team Leaders. The teams provide 24-hour 365-day care for the young people, following a rota based upon a repeating 3-week system. The senior team ensure a well-managed home in which the home's resources needs and staff development needs are met together with all the statutory requirements. Annual leave is carefully planned enabling rotas to be predictable for both staff and young people. In addition, ancillary staff who support the main team, covering the important areas of administration and the environment. At night, 2 staff sleep in once the young people are settled. Staffing levels are adjusted according to need and amendments to young people's individual risk assessments. The Director is able to monitor the welfare of young people through a variety of weekly forums as well as through ad hoc conversations. The Director facilitates the community meeting which ensures attunement of both group and individual needs.

#### **23.2 School**

When a young person is placed at Oakwood House particular attention is given to their educational needs. Young people will attend Greenfields Upper school, situated next door in the grounds of The Gables. Education is delivered in small groups allowing individual attention for each young person and the opportunity for each young person to reach their full potential.

We are committed to working in partnership with the young people's social worker to ensure individual educational needs are met. Therapeutic care staff attend school events and open evenings and take an interest in all aspects of school life. Additionally, school staff are regularly invited to participate in young people's reviews and planning meetings.