**Statement of Purpose**

**The Firs**

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**Introduction, Aims, Objectives & Philosophy**

**Staffordshire County Council Preface: -**

The corporate strategy of the County Council outlines the Council’s commitment to providing support for vulnerable children to help them achieve their potential regardless of economic and social backgrounds, home circumstances, ethnic background, gender, disability, and health.  It is committed to local service delivery and excellent service quality.

As part of the Directorate of Children and Families, Staffordshire County Council’s vision is ‘A county where big ambitions, great connections and greener living give everyone the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy’ One of the identified priorities for delivery is to support independence at all ages. The Firs will strive to contribute directly in achieving this for young people.

Families and Communities is the Children Services element of the Children and Families Directorate and ensures that the needs of children, young people and families across Staffordshire are identified early, the right help is put in place and the escalation of problems is prevented.

**Aim of The Firs: -**

***This document is the Statement of Purpose and function for The Firs, 87 Newport Road, Stafford. It has been written to comply with Schedule 1 of the Children’s Home Regulations (April 2015) and the Children Homes Quality Standards (April 2015).***

**Our Ethos, Aims & Philosophy**

**Our Mission:** ‘To ensure we provide security, stability and support in a nurturing environment offering children and young people a new chapter with positive memories’

**Our Vision;** ‘To ensure our service is underpinned by a staff team who are recruited for their passion and dedication in caring for the young people by not only providing them their basic needs, but to help them realise their true potential’

**Our Purpose;** ‘To build safer lives and futures by creating a home that provides a family centric, secure environment where young people are nurtured and supported to have healthier and happier lives’ The Firs aims to support the young people to live a safe and healthy lifestyle, which provides opportunities to learn, progress, grow and explore new activities and ventures. Our home provides a warm, fun, and homely environment which is filled with laughter, nurture, care, and positive values. One of the main priorities of the team at The Firs is to develop each young person to reach and even surpass their full potential; this is reached by giving equal opportunities, taking a genuine interest in the young people, their lives, thoughts, wishes, beliefs and interests. Our experienced staff team are here to support and empower young people to be happy and to gain memorable experiences and meaningful moments.

**What We Seek to Achieve at The Firs**

We hope that the journey here at The Firs provides all young people with a sense of independence, responsibility, and satisfaction. We hope for the young people to learn, gain understanding and respect all members of society irrespective of age, gender, disability, race, sexual orientation, and ability.

**We seek to achieve this through the following key objectives:**

* Opportunities to grow and learn through discussion
* 1:1 and Group Cultural Awareness
* Being Positive Role Models
* Promote wishes and feelings of the young people
* Exploring New Ventures
* Empowering the young people to manage informed risks
* Multi-disciplinary approach
* Shared age appropriate risk-taking
* Responsibility
* Respect
* Interaction
* Taking an interest Education
* Listening and acting on young people’s views & wishes.

**Our Values**

The Firs encompasses a range of values, which are important to the home and for the young people who are looked after by us:

**•Dignity and respect:** Recognising the value of young people, their uniqueness, and their right to be treated with dignity and respect whilst promoting their responsibility to treat others equally.

**•Diversity**: The staff will recognise the diversity of the young people and take a pro-active approach in respecting their differences.

**•Equality**: Ensuring that all the services and facilities in the home are accessible and available to all. Our staff will not judge the young people’s circumstances and backgrounds. It will not discriminate on the grounds of race, culture, language, religious beliefs, gender, sexuality, or disability.

**•Quality:** Promoting quality services which are based on agreed standards and meet legal and best practice requirements.

**•Independence:** A commitment to provide opportunities for young people to think and act independently whilst ensuring their safety and the safety of others via continual assessment and reassessment of their behaviour, thinking and attitude.

**•Rights:** A commitment to young people, rights and entitlements as set out in the United Nations Convention the Rights of the Child.

**•Listening:** A commitment to listen to young people and help them express their wishes, needs, fears and concerns about their behaviour / thinking in whatever way is identified as being best suited to the young person.

**•Development and fulfilment**: A commitment to support young people to a healthy developmental pathway that supports their skills in developing healthy relationships that looks towards a New Life

**•Confidentiality**: Treating all personal information in the strictest of confidence and with respect.

**Our Therapeutic Model**

**REFLECTIVE THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION (RTI)**

Founded on the principles of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI Cornell University), this approach is as creative and innovative as it is intensive, coupling a restorative approach it demands exploring new and different ways to work with individual young people in crisis.

As we have high expectations of our residential workers at The Firs. RTI focuses as much on the worker as it does on the young person. It teaches our care workers the necessary skills to interact with young people and respond appropriately to crisis situations and reactive behaviour fuelled by emotional outbursts. Within RTI, self-awareness is crucial in allowing workers to respond appropriately to challenging behaviour, high levels of emotions and risk. As role models, skills, personality and mental resilience of the worker are the most crucial tools required to optimise all support and interventions.

The aims of RTI are two-fold, firstly to provide immediate emotional and environmental support to young people in times of stress, crisis or risk, and then, throughout the placement, to enable both constructive and effective ways to deal with stressful situations and painful feelings. At times when the young person becomes emotionally flooded or displays reactive behaviour the worker is equipped with several strategies and management techniques to assist them and reduce the risk to all parties involved.

The crucial element of the process is that it allows the young person to gain insight and understanding into the reasons why they react in that manner. This is facilitated in a reflective therapeutic interview, 1:1 session, which helps identify the feelings that the young person has been displaying, before connecting them to their behaviour.

The long-term goal of RTI is to afford young people the opportunity to develop internal mechanisms of control over their emotions and feelings, which will create change in the behaviour displayed.

Research reflects RTI techniques to be hugely successful in facilitating change within young people by creating opportunities to examine and address painful feelings and stress, improving the quality of their lives.

**Caring for Children**

The Firs is a residential Childrens service which provides planned (and emergency placements where required)

We are a home that looks after up to 3 male or female young people from the age of 12 yrs to 18 yrs.

The young people that we look after at The Firs may display a range of complex needs including and not limited to.

• Young People with Sexually Harmful Behaviours

• Young people with ASD

• Young People with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

• Young People with Attachment Difficulties

All staff at The Firs work with attachment and restorative practices in mind and fully understand the needs of young people with different attachment difficulties.

This is done by the staff team expressing positive regard for each unique young person regardless of past behaviour. We discuss and agree positive rewards and plans of care along with risk management with each young person so that they can agree and understand boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Through weekly house meetings each individual young person can voice their own opinion on the running of the home alongside other residents. We provide opportunities for children and young people to develop a routine in a homely environment with stability in a sensitive and structured home.

Each young person can feel valued and is able to gain control of their behaviour and express themselves in appropriate ways. At The Firs we provide opportunities and support for young people to recognise the consequences of negative and destructive behaviour and explore alternative, constructive, and more beneficial strategies to support them to learn how to manage their own behaviours.

All young people need help, guidance, and support as they grow and develop and the team at The Firs are determined that not only young people are safe but that they also feel safe.

All young people have the right to a safe, secure environment and opportunities to explore themselves, their abilities, their beliefs, areas for development and potential, their sexuality and the world around them. We believe these are the essential building blocks for the foundation of progress, resilience, and integration. All young people are entitled to physical and emotional care of excellent quality. All staff at The Firs ensure that warmth, stability, consistency, structure, and boundaries are constant active features of their work with the young people in their care.

**Recreational, Sporting and Cultural Activities**

The team at The Firs believe that an occupied mind is healthy one and promote a wide range of activities that are both fun and educational. The Firs is committed to the creative use of recreational and sporting activities and believes that exposure to new and challenging activities such as sports, outdoor activities, creative art and drama can broaden young people’s outlook on life and give positive expression to negative feelings and fears.

Young people are encouraged to participate with the upkeep of the house and gardens to gain an understanding and respect of nature and take pride in the environment in which they live. Together the young people and staff discuss and plan the type of activity or event they would like to participate in and where possible, the young people initiate the planned activity.

The young people have access to television, music, books, games, and magazines. They have access to writing and art materials and will be encouraged to express their feelings and thoughts through poetry, creative writing, and art etc. The young people will find these activities to be both fun and therapeutic.

The young people have access to computers and are also able to access the local library where they can play games or use the Internet if appropriate. All Internet access will be closely monitored to ensure the appropriateness of the sites that are accessed. The use of outdoor activities with young people is a way of building trust and a sense of achievement. The activities are designed to encourage personal growth in life skills by using the environment to build on current strengths; physically, mentally, and emotionally.

**Cultural Identity & Religious Observance**

The team at The Firs are committed in supporting the religious and cultural needs of each young person in our care. In line with our anti-discriminatory policy, The Firs will not tolerate persecution or abuse from other residents or staff on religious or cultural grounds.

Those who wish to attend regular religious service will be supported to do so, provided a satisfactory risk assessment has been conducted and the organisation vetted for child protection reasons. The Firs will be pro-active with its links to local religious groups and local minister of religion and seek their advice where appropriate to ensure that any links made by the young people are safe.

The Firs believes that a young person’s cultural identity and ethnic heritage are an integral part of their character and should be supported and developed. Young people have the right to grow up with the sense of their identity and we believe that promoting diversity and creating an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance will achieve this.

**Promoting time with family, friends, and others**

Arrangements for spending time with family, friends and others is also paramount to young people and staff. We know how important it is for appropriate face to face time with family and friends to be maintained and encouraged.

In the ever-evolving electronic world, we embrace this to include young people to build any bridges. For example, the use of social networking sites, video calling, and interactive gaming are all used to promote time with family and friends, when it is safe to do so.

Young people are also encouraged to make friends within the local community, if appropriate. This could involve young people attending one of the many local educational faculties, volunteering and taking part and joining any number of clubs available locally to The Firs.

Family time arrangements are always confirmed with the social worker and family on or before a young person comes to live with us The Firs. We are strongly committed to ensuring that safe and positive family time is supported, whether this be face to face, telephone, home, and outdoor visits. All of which are supported and encouraged by the staff.

Young people living at The Firs are encouraged to maintain contact by letter, sending photographs or pieces of schoolwork and to mark significant dates such as birthdays, and religious celebrations etc.

We also recognise the benefits of working with the family wherever possible and welcome visitors to the young people at The Firs, providing they are confirmed as safe to do so.

Significant dates such as birthdays, and religious celebrations are marked by encouraging activities in and outside the home such as inviting those important to the young people to celebrate their special day.

Emergency restrictions on family time and visitors are only made to protect the child/young person from significant risk of harm/safety/wellbeing. Any ongoing restriction on contact must be agreed with the Local Authority and should take the young person’s wishes and feelings into account. This will be regularly reviewed to ensure we are meeting the social, emotional, and physical needs of the young person.

**Including young people in the quality of their care**

At The Firs we have high aspirations for all children and young people and believe that young people should be provided with a high quality environment, in a comfortable, friendly atmosphere and conditions which meet their diverse needs, where they feel safe, valued and respected as unique individuals.

**Restorative Principles**

At The Firs we work to the core principles of Restorative Practice:

* **Collaboration** – Working together with families and professionals to provide a service that is open and honest whereby we can meet individual needs of each young person who accesses the service
* **Fairness –** We ensure that families are treated fairly and offered the same opportunities whilst considering each family’s very individual needs
* **Participation –** We encourage and support families to be involved in the development and success of the serviceand welcome feedback with regards to our performance
* **Respectful-** The Firs team is respectful in their actions and communications with families and uses language that is positive and encouraging
* **Honesty –** At The Firs we are open and transparent with families with regards to the level of support and interaction we can offer
* **Trust –**We strive to build positive and healthy relationships with both young people and their families to ensure that we are all working together to enhance and improve their lives.
* **Safety** – We ensure that families are involved in the development of personal support plans for each young person to ensure their safety and wellbeing when placed with us at The Firs.
* **Non-discrimination –** At The Firs we do not discriminate or judge families and offer all families who access the service a welcoming non-judgemental approach
* **Accessibility –** We provide a service that is flexible as we recognise that all families are different and have very different needs and expectations

At The Firs we believe that our work is only possible through the building of positive, healthy relationships with young people and their families, through listening to and understanding their wishes and feelings, whilst promoting the young person’s rights and involving them in age appropriate way in decision making.

The team’s ethos is underpinned by a restorative approach to caring for, and supporting children and young people, built on the foundations of the core principles of restorative practice. We work from the fundamental concept of children and young people as equal human beings, with rich and extraordinary potential.

At The Firs we aim to provide a positive intervention for children, young people, and their families at difficult times in their lives. We aim to support and supplement the work of other professional colleagues to achieve the best outcomes for the young people and their families using the service.

**Anti-Discriminatory Practice, Respect and Children’s Rights**

At The Firs we believe that discriminatory behaviour is learnt and exists because of the functions it serves for individuals, cultures, and institutions.

Anti-discriminatory practice therefore requires strategies and actions on all levels. True anti-discriminatory practice is proactive, dynamic and involves everyone. The Firs recognises that young people need to develop their individual identity and all young people are entitled to be treated with respect by all professionals.

At The Firs we will not tolerate any form of discrimination from staff, young people, their families, or visitors. Staff will challenge any comments or any form of discrimination and if deemed necessary, police advice may be sought. All staff members have a responsibility to educate the young people and each other and will actively promote ant discriminatory practice with appropriate “consequences of actions” imposed in line with The Firs ’s Behaviour Management Policy to combat any form discrimination/racism.

All young people in the home are made fully aware that their views, wishes, and feelings are listened to and considered in all aspects of their care. They are also helped to understand why in some cases they cannot be acted upon and know how to obtain additional external support and how to make a complaint. The young people are also made fully aware that the views of others who are important in their lives are also listened to and considered.

Children’s rights are very important at The Firs and some young people have experienced situations where their rights have been denied. It is our aim to ensure that each young person who comes to the home is provided with a safe and stable environment. The staff take an antidiscriminative approach and are non-judgmental.

Promoting individuality is extremely important which the home can achieve through life story work, cultural awareness, dress, music, freedom, food exploration, promoting choice and research.

**The Firs and Facilities**

**Description of the location of the home**

The Firs is located on the main road with its own private driveway set back from the road. The building is a large 4 bedroomed Detached property with its own car parking facilities and gardens to the rear and sides.

The service is very close to Stafford town centre which is a 20-minute walk away. The local train station is a 15-minute walk from the Firs site.

We have good access to all local amenities such as bus routes, sports venues, colleges and schools along with easy access to libraries, shops cafés and restaurants.

We are a 10-minute drive from Cannock Chase, and a 10-minute drive from Junction 13 and 14 of the M6 and other transport links.

**Type of accommodation and sleeping arrangements**

We have 3 bedrooms for young people plus one sleep in bedroom for staff all with equipped with TV’s, mobile charging ports and colourfully decorated in a very modern style. Bedrooms are private and can be locked from the inside and outside for privacy. All bedrooms are single occupancy. There is a shared bathroom on the first floor and the staff sleep in room has an ensuite shower room.

We have a small lounge with a TV, comfortable sofa and snuggle chair and decorated to a high standard.

**Outside Space**

We have a carpark with spaces for around 6-7 cars for staff and visitors plus 3 fleet cars parked at the front of the property for the use of young people when being transported in and out of the service and to meetings and activities.

There is a large garden area at the rear and side of the building with a potting shed where we grow vegetables and a herb garden and small area for sitting. We encourage our young people to engage in looking after this garden area.

There is a large shed for tools and gardening equipment.

**Fire precautions and associated emergency procedures**

The premises have a comprehensive fire alarm system that consists of smoke and heat detectors, manually operated call points and fire extinguishers.

Smoking is strictly forbidden throughout the building.

The Firs ensures that positive steps are taken to ensure the Health & Safety of young people, their families, and staff always. The premises are managed and maintained in accordance with the Health & Safety Procedures of the County Council. The Firs has a Locality Risk Assessment and a Business Continuity Plan which is live and reviewed on a regular basis. Staff are trained in these procedures and refresher training is provided. The service complies with Staffordshire Fire Brigade requirements.

Basic fire precautions include a weekly alarm test and inspections of fire protection equipment, monthly emergency lighting checks and fire drills (am and pm). Full night-time fire evacuations are completed with waking night staff and young people.

Staff on duty undertake 3x daily fire walk of the premises 1xam, 1xpm and one during the night to check no exits are blocked and are clear and there are no breaches of the fire procedures.

The Firs also maintains a Fire Precautions Record Book, which is available for inspection and contains detailed information on fire precautions, drills, and tests. As part of the admissions/ induction process all young people will have a walk-through fire evacuation. Any significant issues or concerns will be recorded and if needed the young person will have a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP) to ensure their safety.

**Bullying**

The Firs operates a zero-tolerance bullying policy and will do everything to ensure that both staff and residents feel protected, happy, safe and secure. Both staff and young people have a responsibility to ensure the anti-bullying policy is implemented.

Staff will actively challenge and confront bullying on every occasion. All episodes of bullying will be reported to the Manager and/or Senior members of the team and will be investigated.

All episodes of bullying will be recorded in the young person’s personal support plan and addressed in the weekly meeting between the keyworkers and the young person. Any incidents of bullying should be responded to sensitively and appropriately. Staff will ensure that all young people look at positive solutions to rectify or deal with bullying behaviour and young people who may bully others should be given suitable guidance. Young people who are being bullied will be supported and given the opportunity to go through the complaint’s procedure.

**Safeguarding and Child Protection**

At The Firs the staff team will be familiar with the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children and Young People procedures and will ensure they have read and understand them.

All staff receive training through our own induction training package, along with additional Safeguarding level 1 and 2 training delivered by Staffordshire Safeguarding Childrens Board to ensure that they are aware of child protection issues within a residential home. Staff also receive regular ‘refresher updates’ around child protection issues and any new legislation through team days and monthly meetings.

All staff are made aware that they can discuss any concerns with regards to child protection training with the Residential Manager and Senior Residential Workers of the home or through supervisions.

Young people will be protected from abuse through a comprehensive vetting procedure/recruitment process for all staff and thorough assessments and monitoring processes (impact assessments) for new young people placed at The Firs.

We promote the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance. The Whistle blowing policy works in line with the Quality Standards, with a culture that supports a young person-centred approach, one which puts the child or young person first.

We operate a culture of openness and transparency allowing staff to be aware of their responsibilities along with feeling able to, and safe to, challenge practice, decisions, views and the behaviour of others to ensure the welfare and protection of the young people in our care .

The Registered Manager will work in conjunction with other agencies with regards child protection issues to ensure that an inter-agency approach is maintained and that the home is not operating in isolation. Local inter-agency protocols on prevention and investigation of any kind of child abuse will be followed.

The home follows a robust safer recruitment procedure which includes contacting LADO where possible so that all avenues of safeguarding our young people have been explored. All potential candidates are made aware of our robust systems in place and it is explained to them that the The Firs takes safeguarding very seriously.

The Firs has a Designated Safeguarding Lead

**Radicalisation and Extremism.**

Staff must know how to identify children who are at risk of radicalisation and extremism and what to do if children are identified as being at risk. To enable awareness in this area, staff are required to attend the Prevent training course or Extremism and Terrorism which is in line with the latest government guidance and fulfils the safeguarding outcomes as specified by Ofsted.

**Missing from Home**

No young person will be permitted to be absent from the premises without clear agreement from the Social Worker and parents.

Should the young person fail to return by the agreed time then the young person individual missing protocol (Philomena Protocol) would be followed by staff. Staff on duty will try to contact the young person through the listed telephone numbers given to them before the young person left the home.

Whenever possible, a staff member will search the local area and visit the address given by the young person. The address and telephone number will also be given to the Police, along with any other telephone numbers and addresses staff feel may be of use. The Police will be assisted in filling out the missing person’s form, search for the young person where possible and an up-to-date photograph of the young person will be issued by the home to the Police.

Upon the young person’s returns home, they will be welcomed back, and a discussion will be held with the young person and appropriate action will be taken. The action will be specific to the incident and the young person’s legal status.

A return to home interview will be carried out by an independent professional, along with a safe a well check. Written records will be kept of all instances of unauthorised absences or missing from home and will be recorded on the young person’s individual risk assessment.

These absences/missing’s will be discussed in the young person’s professionals’ meetings and a plan will be implemented to minimise any further incidents of missing episodes. All staff members are made aware of the homes procedure for unauthorised absences and missing’s along with the local police authority policy on young people missing from home.

**Keeping safe: staff and young people**

New staff during their induction period will be guided through the necessity for not only good supervision skills, but also for the need to hand over and record any relevant observances they have made.

New staff will receive fortnightly supervision for the first 6 months of their employment and monthly thereafter unless otherwise required.

When caring for vulnerable young people it is important to get the balance right between good supervision and intrusion. Supervision is an opportunity to be open and honest and share feelings, experiences, and challenge where necessary.

At The Fir’s we believe that an environment where we are transparent and open is a safe environment where young people and staff feel comfortable and able to raise any concerns and issues, they may have thus creating security and safety for all.

At The Fir’s we are committed to building positive relationships with the young people we support; this can be partly achieved by involving ourselves in the activities they are doing and not just being there as ‘sentries.

We risk manage all activities, however, understand that young people can also learn by taking informed risks as part of their development and growth.

We must also be mindful that at times it is useful to keep a discreet but safe distance and recognise that young people may not always want the presence of an adult too close by. By sitting in the same room yet not ‘in their space’ we can maintain safe supervisory levels while allowing them some degree of space.

The home regularly reviews the Location/Area Risk Assessment which entails useful information on the local area such as areas of concern or those which are at risk of crime, substance misuse, danger, and exploitation. The Firs works closely with the local police and carries out research to ensure we are updated on any changes in the area.

At The Fir’s we have access to other service that can support the team with ensuring the safety and welfare of the young people in our care such as MACE, YOS, CAMHS and T3.

**Admission Requirements to The Firs**

Before a young person can be admitted to The Firs, a full risk assessment of their needs must be carried out.

The Firs will also carry out an Impact Risk Assessment which details all relevant information such as risks of anti-social behaviour, sexualised behaviour, harm to self and others, drug and alcohol misuse and details of the impact the young person moving in may have on other young people already residing at the home .

Where possible admissions to The Firs will always aim to be as planned as Staffordshire County Council is able to as this this good practice and will support a positive transition into the home

With regards to planned placements the Registered Manager or Senior Residential Worker will visit the young person at their current home where possible so that they can introduce themselves to discuss and assess with the young person their needs.

The young person will be invited to visit the home for an introductory visit (if this is appropriate) before their admission to the home.

Assessment of the young person’s needs will take the following into account:

• The young person’s history and age, their background, and a pen picture of their family their health needs (including allergies) their emotional and behavioural needs.

• Their cultural and social needs, the level of support they require.

• The level of behavioural support required, educational needs, any potential risks posed to them by other young people or vice versa.

The young person will be given copies of the ‘Young Person’s Welcome Guide’ and our Statement of Purpose, which will be fully explained to them. If a young person needs help understanding the information such as by pictures or translation to another language The Firs will endeavour to support this through whatever needs necessary.

The young person and their parent/carer (where appropriate) will be invited to discuss the general ethos of The Firs with the Registered Manager or their Key Worker. The team will clearly define what the young person can expect from The Firs and the young person will have a clear understanding of what The Firs expects from the young person.

The expected standards of behaviour will be discussed as often as necessary to ensure that the young person has understood.

For emergency admissions, the procedure is for a risk assessment, impact assessment and an assessment of the young person’s needs to be undertaken within the first week. This is in addition to information provided by the Social Worker and other professionals involved.

If young people wish to bring cherished possessions to The Firs we will record any possessions and belongings and if requested by the young person, we will be happy to keep their valuables locked away in their own safe place which is located in the office.

72 Hours after the admission to the home a meeting will take place with the Social Worker to discuss how the initial first few days have been , an opportunity to raise and concerns and discuss the plans going forward and arrangements for health , wellbeing and education .

After 28 day the first Looked After Child Placement review will take place which is more of an opportunity to discuss how the placement at The Firs is going and start to make plans moving forward.

**Complaints Procedure**

Staffordshire County Council has a Complaints and Representations Procedure which complies with the present legislation.

‘Customer Feedback and Complaints Team, Wedgewood Building, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH.

Telephone -0300 111 8000

Email – [complaints&customerfeedback@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:complaints&customerfeedback@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Website: www.staffordshire.gov.uk which complies with the present legislation.

All staff at the home are conversant in the department’s Complaints and Representations Procedure for young people and their families.

During the induction process all young people are advised of their right to complain and explained how to make a complaint. Where possible complaints will be resolved locally by the Manager but if this is not possible then a young person will be supported to access the complaints procedures. They will also be helped to access independent advice and advocacy from “Childrens Rights Service” (Change, Grow, Live)

Young people who live at The Firs can expect to be listened to, reassured, and have their views taken seriously by all members of staff. Where low-level issues arise in relation to the routines of the service, other young people resident, or day-to-day decisions, every effort is made to assist and encourage young people to resolve them informally.

Young people and their families have the right to make a complaint using the formal complaints procedure at any time or directly to the Registered Manager. Staff are on hand to assist young people to complete a written complaint.

Alternatively, young people and families can speak directly to Staffordshire County Council’s Complaints Team via their Freephone number 0300 111 8000. The Registered Manager will usually manage formal complaints at ‘stage 1’ and will seek to resolve any issues to the young person’s and family’s satisfaction at the earliest stage.

Young Person friendly complaints forms are also available for the young people placed around the service for easy access with stamped address envelopes to enable them to make a complaint without needing to approach staff for a form.

Young people have the right to escalate their concerns to stage 2 of the process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint’s resolution. An independent person will be commissioned by the Complaints Team to undertake an investigation, mediation is also offered as an alternative under stage 2 of the complaint’s procedure, however this is voluntary on behalf the complainant. If the young person or family remain unsatisfied with the outcome at stage 2, stage 3 of the procedure involves referral to the ombudsman

The young people will be supported in accessing independent advice from Children’s Rights Service – Change Grow Live.

* Telephone: 07809 587007 (9am-8pm Monday-Friday and 10am-4pm Saturday.
* Email: SSCRS@CGL.ORG.UK
* Formal complaints can also be made to OFSTED. Contact can be made by telephone on 0300 123 1231. Or in writing to:

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M12WD

**Whistleblowing**

The staff team at The Firs are encouraged during staff meetings to address issues of personal boundaries, and to challenge each other about any conduct that they may feel is inappropriate, however slight they may consider. We have created a very open and honest environment where the team feel comfortable to raising any concerns directly and without delay.

Instances of more serious abuse by a member of staff, whether directed at a young person or another member of staff, will be acted on immediately. This can include incidents of intimidation, physical or verbal bullying or sexual inappropriate behaviour. This behaviour should never be ignored, overlooked, or left until a later date for supervision or written off as unimportant.

Staff witnessing or hearing a complaint from a young person about issues of abuse should go directly to a senior member of staff who will then contact the Responsible Individual in the absence of the Registered Manager. If it is felt that the matter has not been resolved satisfactorily, the staff member reporting the incident should contact Ofsted.

**Children and Young Peoples Behaviour**

**Surveillance**

**Behaviour management, Restorative Practice Positive reward**

Challenging behaviour will be discussed with the young person rather than staff entering a head to-head confrontation. The Firs believes that it is important to identify the underlying causes for the behaviour rather than respond to aggression. Positive reward systems are agreed with young people so that they learn positive consequence. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be made clear to the young person and clear choices outlining possible courses of action will be given to help in negotiating the conflict. Regular house meetings will be held to discuss the management of behaviour and to talk through potential sources of conflicts. These meetings will ensure that an open channel of communication is maintained.

* The Firs has an identified Champion who supports, monitors, and reviews all incidents, this includes the positive facilitation of debrief sessions with young people and the staff.
* Professionally trained staff, in de-escalation and restorative approaches is included in all staff development plans.
* The restorative intervention may be carried out in a manner proportionate to the harm.
* For example, some restorative questions may be all that is required in certain circumstances at the time of the incident (e.g. minor insulting language). Whereas, for more serious matters, for example, violence, racism, etc. a planned conference may be required.
* Breaches of home rules, depending on seriousness, may in some circumstances harm others and these too can be dealt with using a restorative approach in addition to or instead of formal consequences.
* At the Firs we have a positive reward system in place that is individual to each young person the rewards will be bespoke to the young person so that they are relevant and any consequences will relate to the behaviour to support the young person to learn from the incident that lead to the consequence being applied
* Any formal rewards or consequences which are applied to children or young people must be approved by the Registered Manager/Senior Residential Worker following consultation with the young person. Any formal consequence must be appropriate, strictly time limited and flexible enough to be reviewed and rescinded at any time.

**Physical Intervention**

We recognise that managing the complex behaviours of vulnerable young people who reside at The Firs carries with it enormous responsibilities. When intervening to manage unacceptable, harmful, or dangerous behaviours, our team are supported by clear and detailed guidance, which sets out the basic principles of their interactions with those they care for.

The policies include very clear guidelines on the framework of acceptable strategies in respect of control, discipline, and restrictive physical intervention.

Methods of control guidelines for residential staff can be found in the “Control with Care in Children’s Services” leaflet (PROACT-SCIPr-UK®).

Methods to de-escalate confrontations or potentially violent behaviour are used wherever it is appropriate to avoid the use of restrictive physical interventions. These interventions are only used in exceptional circumstances, to prevent injury to any person (including the child who is involved) or to prevent serious damage to the property of any person.

Complex behaviours often necessitate complex responses and for that reason the service has a ‘Behaviour Management Policy’ which brings together several strategies which form the basic components of effective care and support, in line with DFE Policy & Guidelines May 2021.

The staff at The Firs have undertaken training with regards to Restorative Practices and work along these principles to enhance and improve relationships rather than the use of consequences wherever possible.

All staff are trained and receive annual refresher training in Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention PROACT-SCIPr-UK®. The residential service currently has one PROACT-SCIPr-UK® trainer;

The strategies utilised within the provision are audited via Loddon School to ensure it is utilised within the specified frameworks. All behaviour management strategies are fundamentally used to ensure young people stay safe. Parents will be made fully aware of our approach as part of planning and induction process to the service and that all our interventions are recorded, reviewed, and updated in partnership with parents and other professionals. Parents and social workers will be notified if it has been necessary to undertake a restrictive intervention.

**Educational Arrangements & Health and Promotion**

**Attending Education**

When a young person comes to live at The Firs, we will discuss their education with the social worker and parent/carers. The placement plan will also outline needs and support required by young people to promote education, however, in addition to this, each young person referred to The Firs will have a Personal Education Plan.

The Firs agree in line with legislation that each young person should be given every opportunity to access full time education and will therefore support the young person to attend their education as soon as possible after they move into the home.

Educational arrangements will always be addressed at statutory reviews and the recommendations are recorded and acted upon.

The Firs staff team work closely with young people, parents, individual schools, their Social Workers, and other professionals to ensure that young people access appropriate educational provision in a timely way. We also have strong links with the Virtual School and Education Co-ordinator and where problems occur, they have the appropriate networks to support the service and families to negotiate and problem solve.

The culture of The Firs places a high value on education and training. There is a clear expectation that young people are fully engaged in educational activities and staff support young people to access their education programme. Regular school attendance is expected and encouraged by all staff. If a young person refuses to attend without any apparent reason, the home will reinforce the expectation and consequences of nonattendance through discussion with the young person and their Social Worker.

The home provides facilities/resources for private study and we also have computers that can be accessed by the young people to support them to complete homework, revise for exams etc. If young people are not in receipt of a full-time education timetable, it is expected that our partners will provide support packages as an alternative to education.

**Attending health appointments and General Health**

Each young person who resides at The Firs will be entitled to the following services:

• A Doctor

• A Dentist

• An Optician

• Other specialist medical practitioners as when required

The needs of each young person will be met on an individual basis agreed as necessary via placement plans and reviews, or by the young person requesting specific therapeutic treatment.

Each young person’s Placement Plan/Health Plan will contain details of the following.

• Their medical history

• Optician records

• Details of yearly medicals

• Hearing records

• Details of specific treatments and medications

• Records of developmental checks regimes or therapies

• Specific medical conditions with details

• Details of health-related advice and of necessary preventative measures guidance given to the young people

• Involvement of parents/significant during their placement others in health issues

• Written records of any medication

• Staff members will promote health diet and lifestyle

• Details of any allergies and reactions to foodstuffs

• Dental health records

Young people will be encouraged to participate in menu planning as well as the preparation and implementation of the menu. The staff team can offer advice and information on health issues relating to areas such as sexuality, contraception, smoking, alcohol consumption and substance misuse.

**First Aid**

All of the staff team at The Firs have undertaken first aid training , there is a number of staff who have completed the first aid at work 3 day training course who have a more in-depth knowledge of first Aid in practice and we will allocate one person per shift who has undertaken this training.

**Administration of Medication**

All the residential team at The Firs are trained in the safe administration of medication and this training is refreshed regularly every 2 years.

Staff are not permitted to administer medication unless they have undertaken this training.

Medication that is kept on the premises is checked and audited on every shift change over to ensure that this is correct according to our medication records.

**Placement Plans**

All young people who reside at The Firs will have their very own Placement Plan. This plan will be implemented soon after admission with input from the young person, their family (where appropriate), their keyworker, their Social Worker and Education Provider.

At the firs we believe that a plan is more likely to work successfully when the young person is fully involved in the implementation and development of the plan.

Once completed and agreed by all involved the plan will be closely monitored by the responsible allocated keyworker and reviewed and discussed regularly. The Placement Plan will be discussed in the keyworkers supervision and monitored by the Registered Manager.

**Staffing and Contacts**

**Arrangements for the supervision, training, and development of staff**

All staff are recruited in accordance with the County Council’s Procedures and will be subject to checks as detailed in Schedule 2 of the Children’s Home Regulations (April 2015). All will have undergone an enhanced Disclosure & Barring (DBS) clearance prior to being employed. Further in accordance with the Vetting and Barring legislative framework all DBS checks for the staffing establishment are updated on a three-yearly basis.

All staff will be provided with job descriptions and person specifications for the posts they hold. Staff will be expected to adhere to the Codes of Conduct as set out in the Staffordshire County Council guidelines.

All staff will be expected to undertake an induction to the service regardless of role and qualification in their first 3 months of service. In addition to this training wide spectrums of training courses will have been provided.

All staff will be expected to participate in one to one supervision sessions. These will be facilitated monthly for duration of 1 to 3 hours.

All staff members will have the opportunity to be involved in *“we talk”* sessions with their direct line Manager, usually undertaken during supervision where targets, goals and further development can be set, and/or improvement to practice can be discussed and explored .

Staff who are newly recruited will receive supervision on a fortnightly basis for the first six months of their service. Casual/sessional staff will receive supervision at no less than one session per 8 shifts. Monthly staff and managers meetings will be held.

All staff are provided with training to enable them to provide a high-quality service that enables the best outcomes for children and young people with diverse needs. This will be a minimum of 6 days per annum. All staff have formal appraisals.

## Leadership and management

The management of the provision is the responsibility of the Registered Manager who is required to ensure that the performance of the home is reviewed in line with the Children’s Home Regulations 2015.

It is the responsibility of the Registered Manager or their representative to ensure that all significant events defined under the Regulations are notified to OFSTED. Copies of all notifications are kept by the Registered Manager. The Registered Manager is empowered to call a meeting of all of those involved in an individual Child’s Service Plan should significant events occur defined under Regulation 40.

The financial responsibility for the home lies with Staffordshire County Council which has allocated specific budgets for the running of the home.

The service has a compliment of a multi-disciplinary team with many years’ experience of looking after young people in a residential environment. The team have a diverse range of skills, knowledge, experience and competence working with children and young people.

**Organisational Structure of the Service**

**Head of Children in our care and Care Leavers**

**Head of Service Children’s Residential Services**

**Registered Manager**

**Deputy Manager**

**2 x Senior Residential Workers**



**1 x Part Time Bursar**

**2x Residential Support workers**

**4 x Residential Workers**



**1x Part time**

**Handy man**

**3 x Residential Night Workers**

**Roles and responsibilities of staff**

**Registered Manager-** oversees all staff and carries full responsibility for all matters within the service. Dealing with the development of the service and staff team, safeguarding and risk management. Monitoring all recording and operations of the home.

**Deputy Manager –** Oversees all staff and carries the responsibility for the home in the absence of the Registered Manager. safeguarding and risk management. Monitoring all recording and operations of the home.

**Senior Residential Workers-** are responsible for overseeing Residential staff, and they have full responsibility for the service whilst on duty and when the Registered Manager is not on duty. They are expected to undertake staff supervision and Inductions, completion of the services referrals for short breaks and support with the day to day running of the provision.

**Residential Workers -**provide day to day support to young people and family’s resident at the service ensuring that their physical and emotional, health and educational needs are met. They have keyworker responsibilities which include maintaining individual placement plans and Personal Support Plans.

**Residential Night Workers-** have responsibility for the welfare of the young people at the service adhering to individual plans and Personal Support Plans along with Health & Safety and security of the building overnight. Also, to co-work with Residential Workers on aspects of Young People’s case files.

**Handyman-** maintain the garden an complete general repairs around the home.

**The Bursar** is responsible for the fabric of the building, budgets and overseeing and supervising the Support Staff, and supplying administrative and financial facilities for the daily operation of the provision, liaising directly with the Registered Manager.

**Staff Recruitment, Training and Development**

All staff are recruited in accordance with the County Council’s Procedures and will be subject to checks as detailed in Schedule 2 of the Children’s Home Regulations (April 2015). All will have undergone an enhanced Disclosure & Barring (DBS) clearance prior to being employed. Further in accordance with the Vetting and Barring legislative framework all DBS checks for the staffing establishment are updated on a three-yearly basis.

During the interview process for new staff, we try to include the young people as much as possible. We encourage young people to set questions and be part of the interview process. This enables the young people to feel part of the recruitment of the staff who will care for them and it also enables us to see how the potential new staff member interacts with young people.

All staff are expected to undertake an induction to the service regardless of role and qualification in their first 3 months of service. In addition to this there is a training programme that not only ensures that mandatory training for the role is undertaken but also specific training to enhance and develop practice.

Training for the role is continual to include mandatory refresher courses along with on going development and learning for the individual.

All staff will be expected to participate in one-to-one supervision sessions. These will be facilitated on a monthly basis for duration of 1 to 3 hours. This is an opportunity for the staff member to be supported and develop along with discussions about practice and supporting their own wellbeing.

Staff who are newly recruited will receive supervision on a fortnightly basis for the first six months of their service. Casual/sessional staff will receive supervision at no less than one session per 8 shifts.

All staff are regularly appraised through the “we talk” process where tasks, projects, goals, personal and professional development along with their own aspirations are planned and discussed with targets set.

The “we talk” process is ongoing throughout the year and continually updated through the supervision process and reviewed annually. “We Talk” is also and opportunity to discuss, challenge and improve any concerns regarding practice, attitudes, values and behaviour and the expectations regarding professionalism in the role.