north east
autism society

Statement of Purpose

Aycliffe Short Breaks

Updated: June 2026

About NEAS

For 40 years we've led the way in providing autism-specific care and education for children, young people and adults across the North-east of England.

Recognised for our innovation and excellence, everything we do stems from an unswerving belief in providing bespoke person-centred support. It's at the heart of who we are to recognise the uniqueness of every human being, and to understand that no two autistic people, or in fact any humans within an understanding of neurodiversity, will have the same needs or wants.

Through the work of our Autism and Neurodiversity Think Tank we remain committed to listening to and being informed by the very people we exist to support.

This passion for innovation, personalisation and a commitment to empowering those who work for us and for those we work alongside, has allowed us to add to and adapt our services year on year, keeping us right at the fore of autism-specific service provision in the UK.

Our services include residential homes for children and adults, and supported living services, which are specifically tailored to the individual needs of the people we care for. We also provide a short break and day care provision for children and adults. NEAS has 3 purpose-built specialist schools and a college, providing education services for children aged 3-19, post 16 education and social/vocational training along with supported and open employment opportunities for adult. NEAS also provides a network of family support within the community.

For more information regarding our services, head to [ne-as.org.uk.](ne-as.org.uk)











Welcome to Aycliffe Short Breaks

Whether it's for a single night or an extended visit, our residential short breaks service offers respite to both parents and carers, as well as the children and young people we support.

We can accommodate young people over the 75 days a year under section 20 voluntary accommodation.

We offer a safe environment where children and young people can have fun, make friends, learn new skills and develop independence.

Our Children's Short Breaks service is based at our Northeast Centre for Autism site in Newton Aycliffe and caters for those aged between 5 and 19.

Aycliffe Short Breaks aims to:

- Provide a physically safe and comfortable place to live and to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child
- Provide consistent and reliable staff, modelling and 'good parenting' to support and encourage children during their stay
- Ensure that all the key developmental areas of health, education, emotional and behavioural development, family and social relationships, identity, self-care and social presentation are addressed in the planning for each child
- Listen and respond to children's concerns and encourage them to express their views and opinions. Ensure each child's rights and individual needs are respected
- Facilitate positive experiences and constructive use of free time. Encourage children to participate in social and leisure activities
- Encourage children to plan and work together towards household decisions regarding activities, decoration of the house, purchase of equipment, house rules and sanctions etc.
- Work towards positive outcomes with children, their parents, carers, social workers and relevant others
- Facilitate contact between the children and their family, friends and other relevant people
- Welcome visitors to the home
- Work in accordance with relevant policies and procedures

This Statement of Purpose provides an overview of Aycliffe Short Breaks. It is our statutory duty to produce this document under the Care Standards Act 2000 and Children's Homes Regulations 2015, but we hope it will also provide you with some useful information about what we do.

Further information is available on our website at www.ne-as.org.uk or from North East Autism Society's head office on 0191 410 9974.
Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information or would like to arrange a visit.

Our values

At Aycliffe Short Breaks we aim to provide an environment, which is safe, child centred and where children's individual circumstances, rights and opinions are respected. We believe that where it is part of a clear plan to meet their identified needs, a period of short break care can be a positive option for a child.

We work in partnership with children, families and fellow professionals to ensure that children have access to the opportunities, resources and support their needs to achieve a positive future.

We work within the framework of the Department of Health Looking After Children (Assessing Outcomes), materials which identify seven key areas, which we need to consider. These have led to the following seven objectives in our Children's Services Plan:

- children should, as far as possible, enjoy good health.
- children should fulfil their educational potential.
- children's behaviour should reflect a healthy emotional development.
- children should enjoy satisfying social, family and peer relationships.
- children should become competent at looking after themselves.
- children should have a clear idea of who they are and their background.
- children's social presentation should reflect a healthy self-esteem.

A key factor in achieving these objectives is clear communication and a team approach. We are committed to improving our own communication systems at all levels and to fulfilling our responsibilities within the agreed time periods.

Short breaks measure the effectiveness of our approach through regular consultation with children & young people, families and professionals through reviews & meetings, questionnaires and home visits. We collate all the responses and use the information to measure the quality and performance of the service we offer allowing us to be proactive in all we do.

Our Vision, Values and Purpose

Mission Statement

Our mission is to work together inspiring, supporting, celebrating and equipping autistic and neurodiverse children, young people and adults.

Our Vision

"Working together to inspire, support and equip autistic and neurodivergent people to fulfil their potential in life"

Core Values

- To have the people we support at the heart of the organisation
- To operate a fair, respectful and honest culture
- To strive for the highest quality
- To operate with integrity

Society-Wide Strategic Aims

- To demonstrate and maintain good professional practice and effective management of resources – “be trusted”
- To demonstrate value for money
- To keep service costs competitive
- To be vigilant to opportunities and risks
- To be creative and flexible in developing new services in line with research and practice developments, public policy and legislation

Service Strategic Aims

Strategic Aim 1
Improve outcomes for autistic individuals, those with learning difficulties and / or disabilities within the North-east region contributing to economic growth and social inclusion.

Strategic Aim 2
Constantly strive to improve overall organisational performance, demonstrating greater self-regulation and self-determination.

Strategic Aim 3
Inspire highly creative and innovative learning and teaching.

Strategic Aim 4
Promote equality, equity and respect for all.

Strategic Aim 5
Enhance leadership and management for improvement, innovation and change.

Strategic Aim 6
Energising improvement through new ways of working, innovation and efficiency and further contribute to local solutions for economic and social development.

Strategic Aim 7
Develop the organisations capacity to shape and influence policy and our context, locally and nationally, working collaboratively with other leaders within the sector and across the public and private sectors. Turning policy analysis and interpretation into practice.

Short Breaks Philosophy and Values

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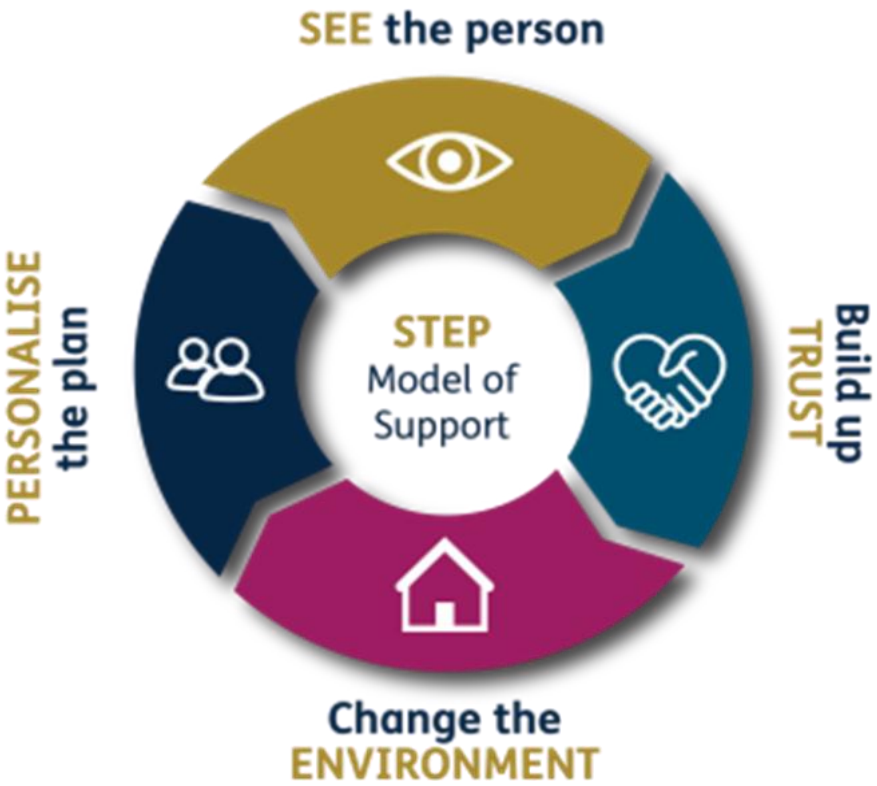
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STEP Approach



The STEP approach embodies our core values, ethos and beliefs of the individual being the centre of their care and support and the need for this to be individualised as all people are unique. The STEP approach combines recognising the uniqueness of Neurodivergent experiences and combines this with key areas of support and life inclusive of environments, relationships and care planning. The aim of STEP is to support residents to lead the best lives possible; through bespoke care that in turn reduces instances of dysregulation and anxiety, and therefore behaviour that may concern us

We believe our residents:

- Have talents and skills.
- Are valued members of our society and community.
- Have the right to be treated with dignity and understanding.
- Should have an excellent quality of life through opportunity and learning.
- Should be allowed to express themselves individually.
- Should have strategies that are effective in promoting positive and durable lifestyle changes.
- Be supported to develop skills over time.
- Should not be restricted in life.

In order to support our residents to lead full and fulfilling lives we focus on four key areas:

SEE The Person

- We understand that everyone has the same **human rights** including the right to be treated fairly, with respect and dignity, and to have a say over their own lives.

- We will make sure that we understand a person's **sensory profile** and how it affects them.
- We will understand the person's **communication** needs and meet them with a total communication approach.
- We will investigate and understand any **co-occurring conditions** that may affect somebody and help where we can.
- We will listen to the person, understand what is important to them, and always put their wishes, **preferences** and goals first.

Develop TRUST

- We will develop strong **relationships** of shared respect and empathy with the people we support.
- We will promote **choice and control** for people over how they live their lives, and consult with them, their families and advocates.
- We will work to make people feel **safe**, protecting staff and individuals from harm or abuse.
- We will take past **trauma** into account, recognising its impact on people and being aware of their feelings, needs and concerns.
- We will work tirelessly to reduce the number of **restraints** and only use restraint to avert harm and keep somebody safe.

Change the ENVIRONMENT

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PERSONALISE the Plan

- We will create highly personalised STEP plans for everyone who accesses our services and review them continuously.
- We will draw up and implement quality improvement plans for each service.
- We will share plans and profiles across services to provide consistency and continuity of support.
- We will analyse the data we collect to learn from it and continuously improve our support.
- Staff will be supported by STEP trainers, quality improvement partners, STEP champions and a STEP panel that meets monthly.

We have achieved BILD Accreditation in our STEP training programme. This involves a highly individualised programme that has been developed via a person-centred approach through a referral system. Once a referral has been placed our dedicated STEP team will provide support to the service to devise proactive strategies. This will be achieved through meeting with the team, the individual, observational work as appropriate and data analysis. Training will then be disseminated to the staff team through the form of bespoke workshops. STEP Plans are reviewed regularly through a multi-disciplinary approach and are risk assessed. All staff at Acorn House have been trained in this approach and refresh their skill and knowledge level every 12 months in line with the BILD Code of Practice.

The STEP Plans have a large emphasis on proactive intervention. Where Children require a reactive

assessment in addition to proactive support a referral to the STEP team will be placed. Where a referral has been made, a Principal Breakaway and Restraint Instructor will assess the individual and make relevant recommendations. This will always be done in conjunction with the view of proactively reducing the necessity of reactive strategies as a last resort. All physical interventions have been risk assessed by a Physiotherapist and are reviewed and evaluated every 12 months in line with the BILD Code of Practice. A referral response will be provided to the Senior Manager and Registered Manager for consideration and is discussed with the resident (where possible) along with involved professionals, family members and advocates as appropriate and applicable.

All incidents are recorded electronically on the MACS incident recording system. These can be viewed and shared by the team at Acorn House and other relevant professionals to ensure transparency and accountability. A copy of the STEP Policy can be requested from NEAS's Head Office on 0191 410 9974, or by contacting the home's manager via email.

Facilities and Services

Our short breaks service offers flexible and therapeutic living arrangements to reduce sensory overload and provide opportunities for increased independence. As children enter the short breaks provision, there's a welcoming reception area where introductions can be made. There's also a lift for disabled access onto the first floor where short breaks is situated.

The home is situated on Cedar Drive within North East Centre for Autism. The site is adjacent to the A167 and within easy access of the A1M. The site offers additional facilities such as an indoor swimming pool, sports hall, play park and nature trail. The centre provides residential services, family support, holiday clubs, Education facilities and training. The home is within close walking distance of Newton Aycliffe town centre, which offers all local amenities and leisure facilities, local bus routes and a train station.



The living accommodation on the first floor provides the following:

An apartment with two bedrooms and a shared bathroom. Spacious living area with an open plan kitchen - this environment is ideal for children who have additional needs and require a quiet environment away from the main living area.







Four Bedded Living Area:

Within the main area of the short breaks service, we have 4 bedrooms, which all have individual en suite facilities so the children have their own unique space.

One of the bedrooms is accessible for children who may also have a physical disability and is compliant with building regulations for disability access. All bedrooms have been decorated neutrally with fitted wardrobes, chest of drawers, a bedside cabinet and a comfortable chair.



The staff ensure that bedrooms are personalised prior to the child's stay and we welcome children bringing their own personal possessions to make their short break experience as familiar and relaxing as possible.



Other facilities:





Large spacious dining area in the communal area along with a dining area in the kitchen in order to offer more flexibility;

- Two lounge areas offering an entertainment area and also a quiet reading area
- Laundry facilities
- Locker area to store valuables
- Medical dispensing room
- Sensory Room
- Art Room
- Staff sleep in room and office facilities.

We also provide activity rooms such as a computer suit, a quiet reading area, play room and sensory room.



Children are given the opportunity to be involved in age appropriate community based leisure facilities and outings are arranged on a regular basis, including trips to parks, the coast, cinema, shopping and local places of interest.

Children are encouraged to join local clubs and groups and to maintain links and friendships with others to prevent social exclusion. If a young person took part in a hobby or activity prior to their short break, the staff will support them to continue.

Christmas, Birthdays and other special occasions are celebrated.

Pocket money, clothing and toiletries are provided by the young person's family or carers.

Children will enjoy a healthy and nutritious diet that meets their individual needs and takes into account allergies, likes and dislikes and any medical consideration i.e. young people who may require a liquid diet or are "peg fed". Cultural dishes will be available to meet cultural needs and enable all children the opportunity to live in an environment which embraces multi-cultural aspects of life in Britain today.

Board of Trustees



Dr Rakesh Chopra – Chair of the Board of Trustees

Rakesh is a retired GP from Ashington, Northumberland and is married with two children. His son is autistic and became a day pupil at Thornhill Park School at the age of five and has now progressed through to a placement with adult services at New Warlands Farm.

Rakesh has taken on the role of Chair of Trustees in order to help the Society take forward its excellent work with supporting autistic children, young people and adults as well as supporting their families.



Jillian Crumble – Trustee

Jillian lives in Durham and studied at New College Durham acquiring a HND in Business and a Hon's Degree in Social Work. At present Jillian is a full time carer for her autistic son. Jillian has three children and her middle son has attended Thornhill Park School, Thornbeck College and has been at New Warlands Farm since 2003 as a day pupil. Jillian joined the Society in 2005 as a Trustee.

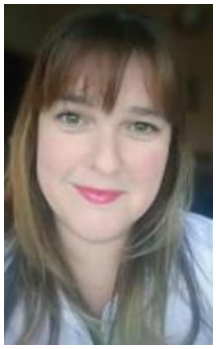
Jillian believes it is important that the views of parents should be heard. Still to this day she feels privileged to see at first hand how the Society supports children, young people and adults to have a wonderful future and how the Society continues to expand.

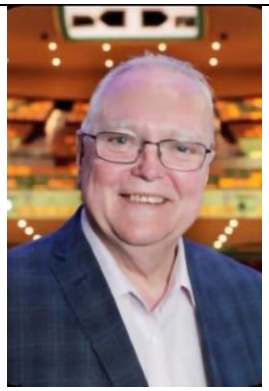


Lisa Waller – Trustee

Lisa Waller has over 30 years' experience working in management positions in a wide range of sectors including Travel & Tourism, Recruitment, Welfare to Work and most recently further education. She was Head of Business Development at Derwentside College, before joining New College Durham at the start of 2023.

Away from the busy office Lisa enjoys spending time with family and friends, visiting the countryside and going to the theatre. With a love for musical theatre Lisa has been an active member of Fatfield Musical Stage Society for 40 years both on and off stage!

Nicola Leonard- Trustee Nicola works as a Lean Coach with a national bank but has years of experience in customer service, business change, communications, training and leadership. Using her skills outside of the workplace, Nicola founded an online community for mothers during covid which now supports over 1000 mothers in sharing stories and connecting. She also enjoys walks along the Sunderland coast. As a mother to two young children, Nicola is particularly enthusiastic about supporting neurodiverse children, adults and families. Nicola has first hand experience of some of the support gaps experienced by families and is passionate about helping us to bridge those gaps.	
Trustee- Bob Nicholson Bob is a retired University Technical Manager having spent 43 years in the university sector organising/ running and planning Medical Research Institute laboratories/ services. He is a married man with two children, one of whom is Autistic. Bob's son has attended NEAS Schools and colleges from the age of five, now has a residential placement and attends Adult day services at New Warlands Farm. Bob says "I am delighted to be a trustee of the society as i believe that neurodiverse children/ Adults need the support and opportunity necessary to lead fulfilling lives".	
Trustee- Stephen Eyres Stephen is currently a Police Officer in North Yorkshire, having relocated to the area in 2018, following 10 years in the Metropolitan Police in London. He has worked in a number of different areas including safeguarding, CID and domestic violence. The move to North Yorkshire was partly influenced by the fact that Stephen's close family live in Co Durham. His youngest brother is autistic and is an adult residential service user in Sunderland, in supported living accommodation provided and staffed by NEAS. Stephen has therefore seen first-hand the excellent quality of care and support provided by the service.	
Trustee- Jim Beall Jim brings 50 years' public service experience to the Board. This	

includes 33 years of working in a local authority social care environment, both adults and children, and 18 years (and counting) as elected councilor in his native Stockton-on-Tees. As a councilor, Jim has had lead roles in adult social care and health and was deputy leader of the council for 11 years before becoming civic mayor of the borough. NEAS was one of his chosen charities alongside Easten Ravens Trust, a children's charity he chairs. Jim represents the Roseworth Ward and supported the establishment of Kiora Hall school there, helping it to forge links with the local community and Easten Ravens. He says "I was so impressed with the positive approach of NEAS that i was keen to support the ongoing development of its work, especially in Teesside, and readily accepted the invitation to become a trustee".	
Trustee- Steve Connor Steve has worked in the criminal justice system in a variety of roles for 20 years. As a former school governor and member of the independent monitoring boards of a large prison, Steve retains an active interest in the social issues affecting the community. Having received his own diagnosis as an adult, Steve now researches autism and is completing his PHD around the needs of autistic individuals who have involvement with the criminal justice system. This involves a keen focus on social developments, and Steve is keen to support the society in working with autistic individuals in a neuro-affirmative and individualised way.	
Trustee – David Parker David graduated from Newcastle University with a degree in mathematics before training as a Chartered Accountant in the audit department of a national accountancy firm in Bristol. After qualifying he moved back to his native north east where he worked for a local independent accountancy firm before moving to be the Financial Controller of IAM Sold, a Fast Track 100 property auction house. Following this he worked at Newcastle United Foundation heading up their finance team as Finance Manager, before moving to Home Group's accounts team. He has extensive experience of working both for and with a wide range of	

charities and is proud to have the opportunity to use these skills developed to serve as a trustee of NEAS.	

Senior Leadership Team



Paul McGinnety, Chief Executive Officer

Paul has worked in social care, public services, and community development for more than 25 years. He started his career as a family support worker and went on to hold senior leadership positions in local governments in the North East, Saint Helena, and Jersey, where he was the Director of Local Services.

With a wealth of experience supporting vulnerable people, he joined the North East Autism Society as Chief Executive in 2026. This role builds on his long-standing relationship with the organisation

	and highlights his dedication to improving the lives of autistic and neurodivergent individuals. **Qualifications:** BA in Sociology and Social Policy at Durham University. Management course at Leeds University Paul is trained in Major Incidents and led the Humanitarian response to a number of incidents in previous roles. Paul was also the Public Guardian for St Helena Island.
	**Derek Groves, Chief Operating Officer - Care and Community Services** Derek began his career with the North East Autism Society in 2015. He started out as a Social Enterprise Manager, where he worked in partnership with local employers and service providers to develop pathways to employment for neurodivergent and autistic individuals. In 2016 he stepped up to become Employment Services Manager. After almost 10 years in the role Derek spent 18 months on a secondment with DWP as a Supported Employment Implementation Specialist, where he advised local and combined authorities across England on how to deliver support employment for autistic and neurodivergent people. In 2026 he returned to the charity as Chief Operating Officer for Care and Community Services. **Qualifications:** Masters in Business Administration - MBA, Senior Leadership, University of Sunderland 2021

Brian Stoker – Head of Care and Responsible Individual

Brian began his career with NEAS in 1990. He initially worked within Children's Residential Services for five years before moving to be part of the development of Adult Services. After spending five years as a Residential Home Manager he moved to the role of Head of Adults Care Services. During his time as Head of Adult services he developed Supported Living Services, enabling individuals to move from residential care into their own homes with individualised support. In January 2014 Brian was given the opportunity to manage NEAS Children's Services.



Qualifications:

Bachelor of Philosophy - Special Education: Autism (Adults)
BTEC Higher National Certificate - Business
Diploma in the Management of Care Services Management NVQ Level 4



Cath Blair
Operations Manager

Cath commenced employment with NEAS October 2013. . Cath has previous experience working in a residential school for the past five years supporting children with ADHD, EBD and learning difficulties also supporting their families both in a residential and school environment. Cath has taken part in the Webster Stratton training programme; Cath has completed her NVQ Assessors Award August 2009, as well as BSc (Hons) Degree in social work July 2011. NSQW 2013.

Qualifications:
NVQ Level 3 Children and Young People (2005)
NVQ Level 4 Management (2007)
NVQ4 working with young people (2008)
NVQ Assessors Award August (2009)
BSc (Hons) Degree in Social Work (2011)
NSQW (2013)
Safe Handling of Medication, Safeguarding and Child Protection Level 3

Induction and Training

New staff are appointed on a three-month probationary contract, during which time they must complete our formal induction programme. Additionally, if their appointment was made on the condition they complete or commence a particular qualification, this is also monitored. A full week induction takes place prior to their commencement of work in their designated workplace.

Staff will also be assigned a mentor, who they are able to shadow and will provide guidance during the probationary period. New staff members are given and induction workbook to work through during their first weeks induction programme.

NEAS's compulsory core training includes:

NAME OF COURSE
Introduction to North East Autism Society
Level 3 Residential Childcare (NVQ)
Emergency First Aid
Health and Safety – including risk assessment, COSHH, fire safety
Moving and Handling People
Level 2 Safe Handling of Medication Certificate
Positive Proactive Support (Core Theory)
Positive Proactive Support (Practical)
Level 2 Autism

Sensory and Behaviour
Food Hygiene
Safeguarding Children
Child Sexual Exploitation
Working with Children with Disabilities
FGM
PREVENT/British Values
Food Allergy
Equality and Diversity
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

Additional training may apply to some roles.
This training includes:

NAME OF COURSE	ROLE SPECIFIC
• Supervision & Appraisal	Leadership team
• Epilepsy Awareness	Working with children with epilepsy
• Picture Exchange	Working with children using PECS

Communication System	
• Safeguarding Adults	Working with vulnerable adults
• Mental Capacity Act	Working with vulnerable adults and children
• Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards	Working with vulnerable adults

Consultation, Comments and Complaints

If any children or their family/carers wish to comment at any time on the service they receive from NEAS we encourage this. Positive comments are always welcome but we take complaints seriously. If anyone is dissatisfied with anything, they should bring it to the attention of the staff who will deal with the matter. A complaint can be made verbally or in writing and every effort will be made to resolve any difficulties. If things cannot be settled internally, a formal complaint can be made and leaflets are available to all children and parents. The complaints procedures will be explained clearly to children on admission and is available in symbolic format.

Options available are to contact the Complaints Manager of your placing local authority or by sending a Complaints Form to:

Donna William – *Registered Manager*

Cath Blair - *Operations Manager*

North East Centre for Autism
Cedar Drive
Newton Aycliffe
Durham
DL5 6UU

Tel: 01325 328089
Email: Donna.williams@ne-as.org.uk
Email: Catherine.Blair@ne-as.org.uk

Brian Stoker - *Head of Children's Residential & Short Breaks Services*

15 Lumley Court
Drum Industrial Estate
Chester-le-Street
Durham
DH2 1AN

Email: brian.stoker@ne-as.org.uk
Tel: 0191 410 9974

OFSTED
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD
Telephone: 0300 123 231
Email:enquires@ofsted.gov.uk

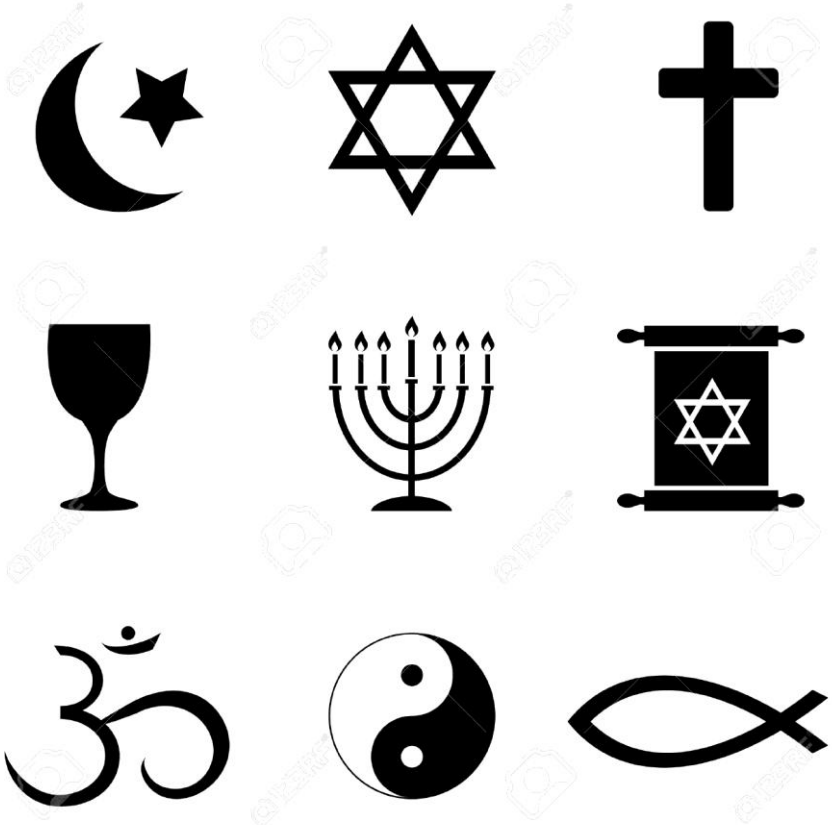
Policies and Procedures

Supporting Religion

If children have particular religious beliefs and wish to pursue these beliefs it is important that they feel able to do so. The staff team within Aycliffe Short Breaks will actively support children to pursue their religious beliefs. This will be in many ways including providing a choice of food, preparation of food, celebration of religious events, specific clothing and insuring the child has transport to their chosen place of worship. Additionally, the staff will support them to have contact with other people from similar backgrounds via local amenities such as social groups or churches.

In meeting the needs of children from minority ethnic groups and to combat racism we aim to create a stable, accepting environment which embraces multi-cultural aspects of life in Britain today.

Child P



Aycliffe Short
Breaks have a duty of
care to ensure that
they provide a
safe

environment for the children accessing the short break service identifying and reporting as soon as possible if they note any sign of abuse. The registered provider will ensure that the correct reporting, notification mechanism of Children's Homes is undertaken.

Staff members working within North East Autism Society use the Local Safeguarding Children Board Safeguarding Children Policy, Procedures and Guidelines. These procedures

recognise that children are entitled to protection from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.

A child's welfare is the paramount consideration, and if staff members have any concerns about a child's wellbeing they will record this and discuss it with the Registered Manager or Deputy Manager. If this is out of hours they will discuss with the Management Advice Line. All staff members undertake safeguarding training with annual updates.

If safeguarding concerns are identified, these are referred to the Local Authority Safeguarding Team and to social workers so that arrangements can be made to investigate them. Although the child is the primary focus of any such investigation, it is recognised that the needs of parents and carers should not be overlooked.

All safeguarding contact details are available on the general office wall. These are also in accessible format for children and are all readily available. Full policies and procedures are also available on the staff Share Point system and a paper copy can also be requested.

Views of the Children

The children are encouraged to participate in programmes/discussions, and 1:1 key worker sessions, which involve seeking their views about the operation of the home and the service they receive. Young people's meetings are held regularly and questionnaires are completed with the young people to establish their views and wishes about the quality of the care they receive and are also available in PEC's format.

Anti-discriminatory Policy, Promotion of Equal Opportunities and Children's Rights

The staff team at Aycliffe Short Breaks work in ways that are consistent with and supportive of NEAS Equal Opportunities and Anti-discriminatory Policy.

The staff team aims to be continually aware of the ways in which certain groups within society are disadvantaged, particularly in relation to age, gender, ethnicity, religion, class, disability and sexual preference.

Supporting Religious Beliefs and Culture

Aycliffe Short Breaks staff will work in partnership with the children to facilitate religious observations including attendances at religious groups and any dietary requirements a child may wish to partake in provided there is no risk of significant harm. Children will be encouraged to thrive culturally.

Dignity and Respect

We recognise the value of children, their uniqueness, and personal needs. We are committed to respond to children with dignity and respect.

Equality & Diversity

We aim to ensure that services are accessible. We promote opportunities for all children. The services provided by staff at Aycliffe Short Breaks will not judge children's circumstances and backgrounds and will support and help children to make positive choices in their lives. Children are supported to live lives rich in purpose, meaning and personal fulfilment. They are valued for their ethnic background language, culture and faith. They are treated equally and fairly in an environment which aims to be free from bullying, harassment and discrimination. Children are able to complain effectively without fear of victimisation.

Partnership

We are committed to working in partnership with children, their parents and families, social workers and with other agencies and organisations in order to provide children with the help and support they need.

Quality

It is our intention to provide quality services. We will work towards continuously improving the work that we do in line with legislation, The children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, Best Value and best practice requirements.

Independence

We have a commitment to providing equal opportunities for children to act and think independently, whilst having particular regard to helping children to keep safe.

Listening

We have a commitment to listen to children about what they think about the care they are receiving and about what is important to them in their lives. In particular we will listen to any comments or complaints they have about their care and we will deal with these fairly and openly in accordance with the company procedures. The children have the right to an independent advocate to support them.

Planning

We aim to ensure that children's needs are assessed and plans to meet these needs are made and regularly reviewed with children. This will include Individual Care Plans, Residential Placement Plans, and Health Care plans, Risk Assessments, Education Plans and Transition Plans. We have a commitment to involve children and their families in decisions and to ensure that they have a voice about how they are helped.

Development and Fulfilment

We will encourage children to reach their full potential. We will work in ways we believe that children should be encouraged to make the most of opportunities for education, leisure, employment and the promotion of their health.

Confidentiality

We will treat all personal information respectfully, sensitively and confidentially. The team is committed only to sharing personal information with other professionals about a child on a "need to know" basis, balancing the need to protect with being able to provide a good service.

All young people have the right:

- To be treated fairly.
- To be provided with a high standard of care in a warm, safe and clean home where all dietary and health needs are supported.
- Welcome family and friends into the home in accordance to their individual person centred plan.
- To learn through experience.
- To be consulted and involved in everything related to their own personal needs. To access the religion of their choice and to celebrate this.
- To have appropriate choice delivered in a way that the young person understands.
- To have accessible information provided to them where appropriate.
- To receive care, which is planned and reviewed regularly.
- To have the support to express their feelings especially if they are unhappy about something.

Responsibilities:

- Staff have a duty of care to ensure that young people are safe, supported according to their individual needs and abilities and are protected from any act or omission of harm.
- Staff act as role models for young people.
- Staff will act as a chosen key worker for each young person and promote communication and relationships between Belford and the young person's family and friends.
- We will ensure effective placement planning, monitoring and evaluation systems to demonstrate the young person's development.
- We will liaise with the young person's school to ensure the continuity of educational programmes.
- We will respond quickly and be flexible in the changing needs of the young people and work proactively with other professionals.
- We will ensure the right level of experience and mix of staff are on duty at any one time

Bullying and Harassment

A bully is defined as person who hurts, intimidates or persecutes a weaker person. It is normally an intentional act which is aimed at causing distress to the weaker.

Some autistic people may struggle to understand the concept of bullying. Any form of behaviour that causes distress to others, regardless or intent or reason, is treated as a serious matter. Any instances of such behaviour will be investigated, responded to and monitored.

Staff use many forms of alternative and augmented communication to help young people to divulge their feelings including things such as feeling bullied. Staff are also observant and alert to any

changes to patterns of behaviour which may indicate a young person is bullying or being bullied. The young person's behaviour development plan will address aspects of behaviour that may be causing harm or distress to another young person.



How we protect our young people:

- We encourage respect, particularly for others' dignity and privacy.
- The Children's Guide is in accessible format informing them of what bullying is and how to respond to it or make a complaint.
- We advocate for each individual, and key worker support is available.
- Produce detailed placement plans and positive & proactive support plans.
- We host regular meetings so that everyone has an opportunity to air their feelings.
- Provide high level of support and supervision.
- Monitor indicators of Well-being which help to spot the subtle signs of bullying.

Education

All children will continue to attend their own schools during their stay. The primary responsibility for reviewing and updating their Education Plan lies with the child's parents, social worker and the school. However, staff will encourage children to attend school and can occasionally support with transport although this is arranged through their local authority, homework facilities for private study and other school activities because continuity of education is recognised as a crucial factor in promoting good outcomes for children during short breaks. Staff will work closely with school to enable a consistent approach in promoting their attainment in education.

Health Care and Promotion

Parents / Carers who have parental responsibility are responsible for arranging and attending health appointments.

Where children are already registered with a GP no changes will be necessary. Where this is not the case staff will liaise with the child's social worker to ensure they are registered with a local GP before accessing a short break.

Children will be encouraged to discuss current issues related to drugs, HIV/Aids and to take an active interest in their own health.

Staff will provide information on Sex and Relationships Education as part of their commitment to promoting the best health outcomes for children. Parents who do not want their child to participate in Sex and Relationships Education at the home will have their wishes respected.

Main meals are prepared by the staff with assistance from the children. Suggestions for menus are welcomed and the staff provide a varied and healthy diet with a range of choices to cater for dietary needs and preferences. Young people are encouraged to go shopping, to become aware of all aspects of budgeting and the practical side of running a household.

Facilities for making drinks and snacks are available at all reasonable times.

A comprehensive Health Care Plan is completed and updated regularly while children are accessing short breaks.

Smoking

Children are not allowed to smoke in any of our premises. Children who are already smokers are encouraged and supported to give up. Staff do not smoke in the premises.

Substance Misuse

NEAS have a principle of zero tolerance to the misuse of substances on the premises. Action will be taken, in accordance with NE-AS Procedures if a child misuses, is in possession of, or is under the influence of illegal substances.

As part of their duty to promote good health for children, staff will encourage children to discuss issues of substance misuse and offer support, advice and guidance to those children who abuse substances on a regular basis. A referral to the substance misuse team will be made if more specialist support is necessary.

Contact Arrangements

Aycliffe Short Breaks staff recognises the importance of maintaining links with children's parents and families to ensure continuity of care.

Staff encourage parents to keep in contact with them to discuss the needs of their child.

Regular parent's support groups are held in the home to ensure that they have the opportunity to express their views on the operation of the home and the quality of the service provided. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for parents to meet other parents.

Parents/ Carers are sent an annual questionnaire to complete which give's parents who are unable

to attend the opportunity to have their say.

Electronic and other Surveillance Techniques used

If a child is electronically tagged as part of a court sentence, the equipment is installed by an outside agency and the staff at Aycliffe Short Breaks have no responsibility for it.

In accordance within the assessed need, some children may have a listening device switched on in their room at night to enable the night duty officer to monitor their safety and members. The details will be recorded on their Residential Placement Plan and regularly monitored and reviewed. External doors are operated by an electronic fob system which will automatically release in the case of a fire.

Positive Proactive Support

Autism is an unchanging neurological difference. Autistic people may react differently in situations to what you expect. Some autistic people may have a lack of social understanding, be unable to anticipate what is to happen next in certain situations and be unable to effectively communicate their needs. This can result in challenging behaviour.

We believe our young people:

- Have talents and skills
- Are valued members of our society and community
- Have the right to be treated with dignity and understanding
- Should have an excellent quality of life through opportunity and learning
- Should be allowed to express themselves individually
- Should have strategies that are effective in promoting positive and durable lifestyle changes.
- Be supported to develop skills over time.
- Should not be restricted in life

We have achieved BILD Accreditation in our Positive & Proactive Support training programme. This involves a highly individualised program that has been developed via a person-centred approach through a referral system.

Our trained instructors develop a training package specific to the needs of our home and the young people that live at Belford.

Each young person has a positive & proactive support plan that is developed alongside the young person, their family and Local Authority representative and is agreed before implementation.

Positive & Proactive Support Plans are reviewed regularly through a multi-disciplinary approach and are risk assessed. All staff at Belford have been trained in this approach and refresh their skill and knowledge level every 12 months in line with the BILD Code of Practice 2014.

This service does operate a locked door procedure which is only operated due to young people being at risk of either running away or having a lack of awareness of the dangers within the community and because of their individual vulnerabilities.

We abide by the **Mental Capacity Act 2005** and practice within the following five person centred principles:

- A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they do not.
- A person is not to be treated as unable to decide unless all practicable steps to help them do so have been taken without success.
- A person is not to be treated as unable to decide merely because they make an unwise decision.
- A decision made, under the Act for / on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in their best interests.
- Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

A decision to have a locked door procedure fully complies with the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards whereby we have requested individual and independent assessments conducted by two external professionals.

This acts as evidence of the decision-making process undertaken and thereby provides a safeguard for any decisions made on behalf of the individual who may lack capacity. This assessment process is fully communicated to the individual's Local Authority and guardians.

The Positive & Proactive Support Plans have been designed using the Multi-Element Behaviour Support Model. This model provides a larger emphasis on proactive intervention.

The proactive elements of the plan are overseen by the PPS Planning Team who will carry out various assessments, e.g. environmental assessments, motivational and functional analysis, behaviour baseline assessments, etc. in order to provide a proactive approach to positive behaviour.

Where young people require a reactive assessment to their individual behaviour a PPS referral system is available. Where a referral has been made, a Principle Physical Intervention Instructor will assess the need for physical interventions or breakaway techniques. The Instructor will meet with the young person, undertake observations and speak with key staff who know the young person well.

All physical interventions have been risk assessed by a Physiotherapist and are reviewed and

evaluated every 12 months in line with the BILD Code of Practice 2014. A referral response will be provided to the Senior Manager and Registered Manager for consideration and is discussed with the young person (where possible) along with their parents and social worker.

A Physical Intervention Acknowledgement Form is signed by all parties. Training is then conducted on a bespoke basis and refresher training also takes place every 12 months. Centralised records on training is held at our Head Office but also provided to the home.

A copy of the PPS Policy can be requested from NEAS's Head Office on 0191 410 9974, or by contacting the home's manager via email.

Restriction of Liberty

Children who attend Aycliffe Short Breaks, have a right, as all children have, to be treated with respect, care and dignity. It may sometimes be necessary to restrict their liberty to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Restrictions may take many different forms including:

- Preventing unauthorised people entering the building thus preventing children from leaving the home i.e. locking doors.
- Restrictions in contact with others i.e. may hurt younger children or babies.
- Day to day restrictions i.e. restriction in choice of food because are fed by a tube or restrictions in choice of activities because too dangerous, or restrictions in choice of clothes because for health reasons e.g. need to wear a pad.
- Mechanical restrictions i.e. movements restricted by use of lap belts, Harnesses, protection head gear to ensure safety.
- Medication restrictions i.e. if the young person is prescribed medication to control their physical or mental abilities or is being given covert medication.
- Physical restrictions i.e. being prevented physically from doing certain things for their own safety.
- Privacy restrictions i.e. the child lacks the capacity to consent to care or treatment and decisions are made by their family.
- Baby monitors may be used to monitor young person throughout the night if stated in their placement plan to ensure their safety.

If any of these restrictions are placed on the children who attend Aycliffe Short Breaks, then they should be recorded in detail in the 'My Life' Books/Residential Placement Plans.

Absent without Authority

At short Breaks we ensure that all young people are supervised both during the day and at night according to their Assessment Needs. If a young person has been known to run away, a Missing Person's Risk Assessment is created to assess the risk and provide a history of outcomes of past experiences.

If a young person does go missing the police are notified immediately, whilst staff conducts a localised search. The safety of the young people is paramount. On their return the young person will be supported and monitored, a full investigation will be initiated and reported to Ofsted.

If the young person wished to speak to an independent advocate, this can be arranged. Parents and professionals would be kept fully informed of any action taken to prevent reoccurrence.

At Short Breaks we have a comprehensive Missing from Care policy which is linked to the Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Missing from Care Policy and local Policies Missing Children and Young People Protocol.

Fire Precautions

Fire drills are carried out monthly and we actively support young people in understanding fire safety. We do this through picture/symbol fire procedures, talking about fire safety and through fire drill simulations. All drills are recorded within the fire log, and include young people's comments and scenarios used.

Within the fire book we have a procedure when it would be necessary to evacuated the building in an emergency such as fire, flooding.

All exits are clearly marked and with emergency windows and fire equipment in place that is checked regularly we provide a safe home to young people. Fire equipment and alarms are tested at regular intervals and is recorded in the fire log book.

We also participate in three monthly night time simulation drills to raise staff awareness on fire safety. We also have an evacuation plan which highlights the procedure for staff to follow in the event of a day or night time fire and accommodation required for the young people in the event that the building is unsafe. This has been done in agreement with Ofsted and County Durham and Darlington Fire Service.

The staff carry out weekly checks on Belford fire equipment, recording and drills. We also liaise with County Durham and Darlington Fire Service on all matters involving fire safety.

All of our staff have been trained in first aid and management ensure there is a first aider on duty at any one time. All staff are trained in fire safety and complete weekly fire safety checks that are recorded in the fire safety check book.

Fire precautions and emergency procedures are inspected during monthly statutory Regulation 44 visits and during the registered managers monthly Regulation 45 reporting. The health and safety officer also ensures that portable appliance testing (PAT) is carried out on a yearly basis. The boilers are serviced annually to ensure that they are safe for use.



Meet the Team



Cath Blair
Operations Manager

Email: **Catherine.Blair@ne-as.org.uk**

Address: Aycliffe Short Breaks
North East Centre for Autism
Newton Aycliffe
County Durham DL5 6UN

Cath commenced employment with NEAS October 2013. Cath completed NVQ Level 3 Children and Young People 2005, NVQ Level 4 Management, (2007) Diploma in Management, (2007) NVQ4 working with young people (2008), Safe Handling of Medication, Safeguarding, Child Protection Level 3 and many in-house training courses. Cath has previous experience working in a residential school for the past five years supporting children with ADHD, EBD and learning difficulties also supporting their families both in a residential and school environment. Cath has taken part in the Webster Stratton training programme; Cath has completed her NVQ Assessors Award August 2009, as well as BSc (Hons) Degree in social work July 2011. NSQW 2013.



Donna Williams
Registered Manager

Email: **Donna.Williams@ne-as.org.uk**

Address: Aycliffe Short Breaks
North East Centre for Autism
Newton Aycliffe
County Durham
DL5 6UN

Donna began her career in residential care in February 2000, where she worked as a support worker for Adults with Learning Disabilities. Donna commenced employment for the NEAS Short Breaks Children's Service on October 1st 2013 and has worked in a variety of settings. She gained employment with Darlington Borough Council in August 2002 and was later promoted to Senior Residential Child Care Worker in 2008. During this time Donna completed many training courses and gained an NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and young people in March 2004, CMI diploma level 5 and NVQ level 4 in management in June 2009, and also NVQ Assessors Award in November 2009. Donna completed her NVQ Level 4 (CYP) in September 2011 and has since completed a BA Hons Degree in 'Working with Young People'. Donna has undertaken supervisory and management responsibilities as the deputy Manager of the service and became the Registered Manager for Short Breaks in December 2014. In June 2016 Donna resumed her position as deputy manager for a short period before taking on the role of manager again in February 2018.



Theresa Arrowsmith- Assistant Manager

Email: **Theresa.arrowsmith@ne-as.org.uk**

Theresa began her career in residential care in 2001 working in both Adult & Childrens services in a residential setting & day care. Theresa commenced employment for NEAS as a co-ordinator in 2014. Theresa has numerous responsibilities In this role and runs a weekly after school club In the local community centre and deals with enquires from families signposting them to find the appropriate support, she has a positive relationship with families and the young people, as well as supporting the staff team Within short breaks.
During this time Theresa has completed many training courses and gained an NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and young people in, Medication level 3 certificate Diploma level 5 and NVQ level 5 in management. All mandatory training Is up to date and she has recently taken on the role of Assistant Manager for Short Breaks in February 2025.



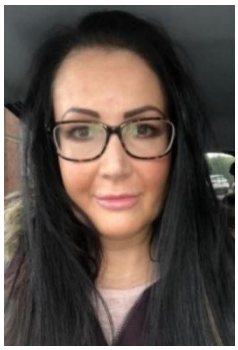
Emma Ryan – Residential Team Leader (full Time)

Emma joined NEAS children's Short breaks services in March 2021 on a casual contract and June 2021 was given a full time contract within children's Short Breaks. Before this Emma had previously worked for NHS covid support and as a travel agent for many years but wanted a change of career. Emma has completed mandatory training to support her role within Short breaks and has since completed her Diploma level 3 in August 2021 and has also completed her diploma level 5 May 2022. Emma took on the role of Team leader February 2025.



Rachel Pattison- Residential Child Care Officer (Full Time)

Rachel joined NEAS Short Breaks in September 20211, Previous to this she worked in Healthcare for 7 years and she was a senior Care co-ordinator in a residential setting for 3 years. Rachel has worked in live in care supporting people with both physical and learning disabilities (adults and children) dementia and mental health. Rachel has her level 3 in safe handling of medication, and she has now complete her diploma in working with young people in a residential setting level 3 In March 2024 and Is due to complete her level 4 In June 2024 and has now signed up to complete her diploma level 5.



Kelly Ann Naylor- Residential Child Care Officer (full Time)

Kelly joined NEAS children's Short breaks services in February 2021 and she completed part of her induction period within adults Short Breaks gaining more experience in different settings. Before this Kelly had mainly worked in retail but has worked in some childcare settings such as playgroups and schools supporting children with learning disabilities. Kelly has completed mandatory training to support her role within Short breaks and has since commenced her Diploma level 3 in March 2021. Kelly has since completed her Diploma level 5.



Sarah Redden - Residential Child Care Officer (full Time)

Sarah joined NEAS children's Short breaks services in February 2023. Previous to this Sarah worked with vulnerable adults in both the community and residential homes for 13 years, she also has a nephew who has Autism who she supports. Sarah has completed her weeks induction training and has now completed her Diploma level 4 and has completed the level 3 January 2026.



Lana Foster - Residential Child Care Officer (full Time)
Lana joined NEAS children's Short breaks services in July 2023. Previous to this Lana has worked in various care settings, such as nurseries and elderly care, she has completed Level 2 in Health and Social Care, Medication Level 3, Level 3 in Adult care and has completed her weeks induction training has now commenced her Diploma level 4.



Holly Maclean- Residential Child Care Officer (Full time)

Holly joined NEAS Short Breaks on the March 2025, Previous to this Holly has worked numerous care settings including schools, supported living, and as a health care assistant for the NHS. She has worked with both adults and children with complex needs. Holly has completed he weeks Induction training and has completed all relevant training courses, she has a Level 3 in Health and Social care and has now commenced her Diploma Level 3 in Working with Young People in a residential setting.



Opeyemi Adekunle- Residential Child Care Officer (Full time)
Opeymei joined NEAS Short Breaks on the July 2025, Previous to this Opeyemi has worked numerous care settings supporting adults and children with learning disabilities, Autism and Epilepsy where she has completed relevant training in Safeguarding, medication and first aid. Opeyemi has completed the weeks Induction training and is currently completing all relevant training courses., She will commence her Diploma Level 3 in Working with Young People in a residential setting.



Theresa Utomi- Residential Child Care Officer (Full time)

Theresa Joined NEAS Short Breaks on the 8th December 2025, previous to this she has worked within the education sector supporting children with Autism and challenging behaviour and In social care working with the elderly. Theresa has completed her Health and Social Care Level 3 previous to commencing NEAS and has completed the weeks Induction training and is currently completing all relevant training courses. Once she has passed her probation period she will commence her Diploma Level 3 in Working with Young People in a residential setting.

Maintenance team – Newton Aycliffe



Ben Howard- Caretaker

Staffing

Aycliffe Short Breaks Children's Home employs staff of all sexes consisting of the Registered Manager, Assistant Manager, Team Leader, Residential Child Care Workers and 1 full time Handyperson. Staffing is assessed depending on individual need, should the home have young people with complex needs or who display challenging behaviour, the staffing ratios will be changed to reflect these needs.

Hours that staff work are either early shifts 7.00 am - 3.00 pm or 8.00 am - 4.00 pm, late shifts either 3.00 pm - 10.00 pm or 4.00 pm - 10.00 pm, night duty hours 10.00 pm - 8.00 am, long day shifts 9am-9pm and Office day shifts 9.00 am - 5.00 pm. The pattern of hours can change to meet the needs of the service and service users. One member of staff sleeps in the home at night with a member of staff on waking night if required. These hours staff work may be subject to change in order to meet the needs of the young people. Manager/ deputy manager work a mix shifts in order to manage the home sufficiently.

Staff have access to an out of hours management 'on call' system where the registered manager or the deputy manager can be contacted for support and advice. In an emergency they can contact the Emergency Duty Team out of hour's service.

Agency and Casual Staffing, Volunteers and Students

Within Aycliffe Short Breaks if there are staffing concerns due to sickness absence, leave or training, they will be met from a pool of relief staff who have undertaken the NEAS recruitment process, or at last resort and if necessary agency staffing from an approved agency. The recruitment of agency staff is completed with the support of NEAS Human Resource Team who have clear and rigorous policies.

Aycliffe Short Breaks occasionally recruits volunteers who gain valuable experience from working alongside permanently employed workers. Volunteers undertake a rigorous recruitment process before they are offered work.

All volunteers, casual and agency staff are offered regular support and supervision and are able to access the main training programme.

Occasionally Aycliffe Short Breaks offers placements for students who are completing relevant degrees of diplomas at local colleges and universities. Relevant checks and supervision is available to safeguard the young people and ensure appropriate support for the student.

The organisation structure and profiles, outlines the experience and qualification of persons working in the home and are located in Appendix 1 and 2.

Admission Criteria

A Placement will only be agreed at Aycliffe Short Breaks if:

- A clear care plan has been agreed with specific outcomes identified as the aim of the placement within appropriate timescales.
- Appropriate arrangements for the young children's education are linked to the placement.
- Risk assessments have been undertaken prior to admission.

The Planning and Admissions Process

A planning meeting will be held prior to the child accessing Aycliffe short Breaks, to share information and to agree a plan of care. Before the day of admission all the relevant documentation should be provided.

Additional information required includes:

- Details of any conditions or special requirements.
- Prescribed medication.
- Policy for the management of particular behaviours.
- Regular routines or appointments.
- Ongoing issues re health or education.
- Improper absence information.

- Any assessment reports or information from other professionals e.g. Support Plans, Core Assessments, IEP's, social history reports.

The children will also have a questionnaire to express any thoughts or how they feel about accessing short breaks. They are assigned a key worker and receive a Welcome Booklet that explains what it will be like staying at Aycliffe Short breaks. The key worker will discuss the day-to-day care and any issues pertaining to their lives.

Emergency admissions would be accommodated in short breaks for children already accessing the service although any other emergency would have to go through the admissions process and so long as this didn't compromise the young people who are already accessing the service at that time.

Reviewing Arrangements

Reviews are held to discuss the children's care plan. The review will address key development areas and will make recommendations for amendments to the plan. These recommendations should feed into the Residential Placement Plans.

Residential Placement Plans

Residential Placement Plans will set out clearly the assessed needs of the children, the objectives of the placement, how these are to be met on day to day basic, contributions to be made by the staff team and how the effectiveness of the placement is to be accessed in relation to each main element of the plan. The Residential Placement Plan will be consistent with any plan prepared for the child by the Social Worker.

The plan will include the following: -

- Health needs and health promotion
- Safeguarding and promoting welfare
- Promoting physical and emotional well being
- Education needs and attainment targets
- Cultural, religious and racial needs
- Social and leisure needs
- Contact arrangements with family, friends and other relevant people

A key worker in the short break home will ensure that the requirements of the plan are implemented into the day-to-day care and will monitor and evaluate as necessary. The starting point for developing the plan will be the Care Plan provided by the social worker on admission, which will include the child's / young person and family's needs, views and preferences. Additionally requirements for the plan will be determined at Reviews and Planning Meetings and through the homes monitoring processes.

Residential Placement Plans should be shared with all relevant professionals.

Key worker sessions and regular young person's meetings will be completed with the child, to discuss the support and assistance the young person will need to ensure a successful transition into

adulthood. The Residential Placement Plan and the plan of care should feed into the Pathway Plan which if a looked after child should be completed in conjunction with the Transitions Social Worker and or the Leaving care team.

The children will be encouraged to participate actively in meetings concerning planning for their future and supported at all times in communicating their views and opinions about their placement at Aycliffe Short Breaks.

From the day of admission, daily records will be kept on each child. Each child will be encouraged to participate in this process and in the planning of their care. Children have access to all information held in their files unless we are asked to keep particular information confidential.

Transition Planning

Children from the age of 16 may have a Transition Plan, this will outline plans in respect of education/training employment, accommodation, and financial support, and emotional support, activities available to the young person when they reach 18 years old and transfer to Adult Services.

In some circumstances we may support a young person until they are 19 years old, if this is agreed to be beneficial to that individual and does not have a negative effect on other children accommodated within the service. The additional time will be used as a transition period into adult's services. In order to do this we will reduce the number of children and young people by the number of people age 18 and over to meet regulations.

This plan is the primary responsibility of the children, their parents and the social worker. However, the staff at Aycliffe Short Breaks will encourage and support young people and carry out tasks/activities as requested.

Any actions to be completed by the staff will feed into the Residential Placement Plans.

Fire Precautions and Health and Safety

Aycliffe Short Breaks ensures the safety and security of the children and staff by ensuring safety from the risk of fire and other hazards. Regular visits from the Fire Authority are made to advise on requirements to ensure the safety of the home Regular checks are made of fire safety equipment.

The procedure in the event of fire is detailed in the children's welcome booklet. All children are instructed in procedures to be followed should there be an outbreak of fire and are regularly reminded to ensure their safety. Again the booklet is available in Symbol's for young people who lack some communication skills.

All equipment and electrical appliances are regularly maintained, checked and repaired as necessary.

Risk assessments identifying hazards, level of risk to health, safety or welfare are completed with identified action to be taken to reduce the risks. The risk assessments are regularly reviewed to ascertain if the action identified is effective.

Access to Residential Files

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the children have a right to see information held about them. They will be actively encouraged by the staff to access and read their individual file to correct any errors and record any views or concerns. The file will often contain information from a wide range of services, for example schools, health professionals and the police and, consequently, may contain information about other individuals. These individuals are referred to as "third parties". Information about third parties is their personal information and will not generally be made available to the child.

Staff should ensure any confidential information relating to a third party is removed from the file before access is given.

Parents may wish to access rights on behalf of their children and careful consideration must be given to any instructions made by the child. However, the child's wellbeing should be taken into account, if information disclosed to their peers might have a detrimental effect.

Further guidance can be accessed from the staff team or from Information Commissioners Office, Promoting Public Access to Official Information and Protecting Your Personal Information, Subject Access Requests and Social Services Records (www.ico.gov.uk)

Further Information

Please contact the Registered Manager Donna Williams (01325) 328098 or Theresa Arrowsmith or Catherine Blair (01325) 328084 or Head of Children's Services Brian Stoker (0191 492 4381) if you require further information or would like to have access to the comprehensive records of all Policies and Procedures.

Date Reviewed:	04/06/2026
Version:	67
Date Sent to Ofsted:	04/06/2026

Reviewed	Reasons for review
27th June 2014	New Staffing Structure
25th July 2014	Change of description of registration status of manager to Registered manager.
24th August 2014	Meet new regulations
12th September 2014	New Staffing Structure
14th January 2015	New Staffing Structure
26th February 2015	New staffing structure and extra paragraph to enable the service to exceed the 17days for a planned placement.
24th April 2015	Amended to be in order of the regulations and slight change to staffing.
23rd June 2015	Change to staffing and additions to staff details to include start date for short breaks.
28th July 2015	New Staffing Structure
01st September 2015	New Staffing Structure
16th October 2015	New Staffing Structure
23rd October 2015	Amendments to be in line with Regulations
09th December 2015	New Staffing Structure
08th February 2016	Amendments to transitioning, post 18 years. Addition also made to staff's qualifications.
13th April 2016	New Staffing Structure
20th April 2016	New Staffing Structure
01st July 2016	New Staffing Structure
23rd August 2016	New Staffing Structure
13th December 2016	New Staffing Structure
21st February 2017	New staffing structure and staff qualifications.

9th October 2017	New staff structure.
10th November 2017	New staff structure.
30th January 2018	New staff structure.
02nd March 2018	New staff structure.
30th April 2018	New staff structure.
02/05/2019	New staff structure.
14/06/2019	New staff structure.
04/08/2019	New staff Structure `
07/11/2019	New staff Structure `
15/01/2020	New staff Structure `
20/02/2020	New staff Structure `
20/04/2020	New staff structure and qualifications update.
25/06/2020	New staff Structure `
13/07/2020	New staff Structure `
15/10/2020	New staff Structure `
14/01/2021	New staff Structure `
18/05/2021	New staff Structure `
21/01/2021	New staff Structure `
17/03/2022	New staff Structure
23/05/2022	New staff Structure
04/07/2022	Information updated throughout to ensure up to date and trustees amended as some changes.
07/09/2022	New staff Structure
05/01/2023	New staff Structure
09/02/2023	New staff Structure
09/03/2023	New staff Structure

23/03/2023	New staff Structure
17/05/2023	New structure for Trustees
19/06/2023	New staff Structure
23/08/2023	New staff Structure
22/09/2023	New staff Structure maintenance team
03/10/2023	New staff Structure
05/10/2023	Additional trustees added
23/11/2023	New staff Structure
16/01/2024	New staff Structure
26/03/2024	New staff Structure
21/05/2024	New staff Structure
05/06/2024	Removed maintenance staff
13/08/2024	New staff Structure
29/10/2024	New staff Structure
07/01/2025	New staff Structure
31/01/2025	New staff Structure
17/03/2025	New staff Structure
06/06/2025	New staff Structure
14/07/2025	New staff Structure
05/08/2025	Updated qualifications
11/08/2025	Small addition re section 20
09/09/2025	New staff Structure
06/11/2025	New staff Structure
18/12/2025	New staff Structure
04/02/2026	New staff Structure
12.02/2026	STEP Approach added
12/02/2026	Additional trustees added
04/06/2026	Change to SMT and Trustees



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