

Furze House

Statement of Purpose

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1 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1.1 The Registered Provider and The Registered Manager

The Registered Provider is Milton Keynes City Council

The Residential Manager of the home is Rosie Jeffkins

Rosie registered as Registered Manager in August 2021. Rosie has a Bsc Social Work and has been working between the MKCC children's homes since 2013. Rosie joined the management team in 2019. Rosie also has a Level 5 in Leadership and Management.

The Deputy Manager of the home is Emma Matthews. Emma has a BSc Degree in Social Work and has worked at Furze House since 2011. Emma joined the management team in 2017. Emma also has a Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management.

Emma Matthews and Rosie Jeffkins are the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) at Furze House.

The Responsible Individual is Victoria Courtis based at Milton Keynes City Council, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ. Victoria is the SEND Lead, Milton Keynes City Council. Her line manager is Marie Denny who is MKCC's Director of Education, followed by Mac Heath, Head of Children's Services

The management of the home is shared between Emma Matthews and Rosie Jeffkins. Support is also provided by the management team at Westminster House. All staff within the management teams are familiar with the service through working closely on a regular basis, regular management meetings and the sharing of an out of hours on-call system.

The Registered Manager is responsible for the day-to-day aspects of the home and ensuring all relevant pieces of legislation and regulations are met or exceeded. The role of the manager is:

- To set the culture within the home.
- To ensure the home has the resources to provide an excellent level of care and nurturing.
- To review the quality of care at least once every six months and report to Ofsted and senior management within Milton Keynes City Council.

- To review the facilities of the home and geographical area at least once a year to ensure both are conducive to the children using the service.
- To ensure there is the sufficient staff with the right skill mix to meet the needs of the children.
- To enable the children using the service to gain new experiences and develop their individual skills.
- To listen to you and your child if you complain.
- To keep up to date with research and developments in practice.
- To monitor how the home functions and work to achieve continuous improvements.

The Registered Person appoints an Independent Visitor to visit the Home once a month and report on the standard of care to Ofsted and senior management and council members within Milton Keynes City Council. This role is currently carried out by an organisation called Reconstruct.

Below is the link to our inspection reports from Ofsted

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/2/SC052599>

2 QUALITY AND PURPOSE OF CARE

2.2 About Furze House

Furze House is a purpose-built children's home that provides short break care for children aged 5-18. The home has a range of equipment designed to meet the needs of the children using the service. The building

has recently undergone a large renovation project including a new kitchen, two new bathrooms, new flooring and decoration throughout. The team, along with volunteers, have now decorated all the bedrooms.

Furze House has a total of ten bedrooms all for single use. Five bedrooms have facilities for wheelchair users including ceiling tracking and hydraulic or specialist beds. We have three specialist hydraulic beds and one floor bed. One of these beds is an enclosed safe space bed. The remaining bedrooms are used flexibly and can be adapted to meet the various needs of the children using the service e.g., particular types of light fitting, flooring etc.

One of the bedrooms has a shutter on the outside of the window. The shutter is used when a child cannot tolerate curtains or blinds at the window. The shutter is used to block out daylight to promote a good sleep pattern. The shutter will not be used without yours or your children's expressed consent and will be recorded in the individual's detailed care plan, supported by a risk assessment.

We normally allocate a bedroom to a child dependent on their individual needs. We do try to keep the number of bedrooms that a child will use to a minimum and will listen to the preferences that children express, as far as practical.

Each bedroom has door contacts and a microphone in the ceiling. These can be used to help keep children safe either at night or if they want to spend time in their room during the day. We will discuss the use of these with you before your child comes to Furze House and twice a year to ensure you are still happy for us to use the monitoring devices. This is a joint discussion with your child's social worker. We will consider the level of supervision your child has at home, and their medical needs. We will balance this against their right to privacy and agree what will be written into their care plan. We will also write a risk assessment which we will review at least twice per year or dependent upon individual need.

All bedroom doors are locked on the outside but from the inside, your child can operate it as a normal door handle to get out. The locks are to prevent children from going into someone else's bedroom. All staff are allocated master keys when they first begin their employment at Furze House. Keys to individual bedrooms are available for the duration of individual stays.

Internally the house is divided into three separate areas, each with their own kitchen, dining and lounge facilities and separate garden. These areas are called:

- Willow

- Rainbow
- Sunflower

The names were chosen by children using the service at the time.

Children are grouped between these units by:

- Friendships
- Enjoyment of similar activities and outings
- Behaviour and vulnerability
- Staff availability and skills mix

Sunflower unit gives us the flexibility to provide a service for:

- Children who need emergency provision
- Independent living skills development
- A quiet area away from the rest of Furze House

Furze House is equipped with ceiling tracking and hoists in the lounge and bathroom areas. There is one bathroom with a shower trolley and a wet room. Individual assessments are undertaken (as required) to ensure facilities are available to meet the special requirements of each child in conjunction with Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists. Specialist equipment may be purchased by Furze House following assessment. This equipment remains the property of Furze House.

There is a sensory room sited on the central corridor enabling direct access from Willow and Rainbow. We make the home comfortable and welcoming for the children, as well as being spacious and safe. There are toys and games in each area to meet a wide range of ages and needs.

We have guidance which we can share with children to ensure they understand how to keep themselves safe on the internet. We will make sure that children are supervised and kept safe but will balance this with their right to send electronic communication in private.

Each area has its own secure garden. We have raised beds in Willow and Rainbow gardens. A meeting room, sleeping in room for staff, office and storage areas are situated on the first floor.

2.3 Who We Are, What We Do and How We Do It

Furze House is run by Milton Keynes City Council and was developed to meet the support needs of children (aged 5-18 years) with special needs and their families living within the Milton Keynes area.

We are registered to provide short breaks and emergency provisions with the aim to enable Milton Keynes children to remain in Milton Keynes with their family and friends. The service provides families and carers the opportunity to recharge whilst their child is safe and well cared for.

There is a team of 18 staff which includes management, shift leaders, residential worker and domestic workers to support the running of the home. We work closely with Milton Keynes City Council's residential home Westminster House who will support with staffing from time to time. The staff have the same induction, training, supervision, and appraisal processes as those at Furze House. The staff team are well established and experienced in working at Furze House, having been with the service several years.

We want the best for the children using the service and work to ensure they are happy when they visit us. We will help them develop as people and promote independence. We recognise that each child is an individual with their own tastes, preferences and beliefs and will respect what each has to offer to others. The service's aim is to provide a positive, caring environment where the children feel supported and valued. Having different experiences are important for children to learn about themselves and others and to learn something new. We will aim to take the children on different activities out in the community and to take part in different experiences within Furze House. We actively enable the children to grow and develop, recognising and celebrating achievements.

The service holds social events which all children and their families are invited to. These have proved to be great fun and are enjoyed by all. We invite local counsellors, social workers, senior management from Milton Keynes City Council and our Regulation 44 visitor amongst others. It is a great opportunity for everyone to get together and have fun with our children. Amongst them, is our annual True Triumph Awards afternoon, where we recognise and celebrate the achievements of the children. We also hold regular coffee mornings. The aim of these coffee mornings is to provide a space for parents and carers to come together and socialise over a cup of coffee in a relaxed setting.

The service meets several children's needs and provides a home away from home environment. The team have worked with a wide range of different needs from behavioural to health and are all highly trained and skilled in these areas. We have close links to the complex needs health team who provide additional and refresher training for different health needs. We are able to meet all special dietary and feeding requirements as well as cultural and religious needs.

We provide both day care and overnight packages. We are open for planned short breaks, 50 weeks of the year apart from Bank Holidays. The service does have closed periods and is not run as a 24-hour service. We are only able to accept emergency placements for a maximum of 15 nights. We can also provide short breaks for a maximum of 15 nights in a row or 75 nights per year. Most packages we offer are 26 nights per a year. However, this is on a needs basis and is discussed with the managers of the Children with Disabilities team and Short Breaks team, the social worker and family. We close every other weekend and every other Tuesday. We are able, on occasion, to take special requests of care for your child if in need of support.

We will keep a record of all aspects of your child's time at Furze House. This will include quarterly summaries, work undertaken on targets and achievements and photos of outings and activities. The children will all have a daily record relating to all information during their stays with us. This is summarised quarterly along with any accidents and incidents. This information is shared with families and your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner.

We will provide you with a named member of staff who will be your link worker between Furze House and home. Your link worker may ask to meet you in your family home and will seek your consent to speak to others involved in the life of your child. We like to go into your child's school to observe them and find out about their schooling and how we can support this at Furze House. The link worker will keep in touch with you on a regular basis.

We will speak with you and professionals involved with your child. We will write a care plan which tells us how to care for your child. This is collated with the family, social worker/short breaks practitioner and schools. The care plan is checked on a regular basis, and we will ask for your input on this regularly to ensure all information remains up to date. Alongside the care plan are risk assessments which will focus on the action needed to be taken to reduce any risk for your child. We will ask your child for input for their care plans and reviews by using our three houses document which looks to seek your child's wishes, feelings and worries about their time at Furze House. We will also read their care plans together and make changes with your child. Within the home we use a post box where children can put in their feelings and opinions. These are then reviewed within our team meetings and a response is given to the child.

2.4 The Children We Work With

The children using the service have special learning needs sometimes alongside sensory impairment, physical impairment, specific health needs, communication difficulties, autism and behaviours that challenge. All children and families will have been assessed to identify the type and amount of support

required and how much will be provided by Furze House. Most children access Furze House for planned patterns of overnight stays.

We work with children from the age of 5 until they turn 18 years old. We will support families to transition into adult services alongside their social worker. However, we only work with children to the end of the school term in which they turn 18. If a young person stay falls on their birthday, we will rearrange the overnight for another day as soon as available.

2.5 Working Within the Equalities Act 2010 and Supporting Diversity

The Equalities Act 2010 requires that we respect the rights of individuals and ensure that our practice does not discriminate against anyone either directly or indirectly. We take this seriously and foster a culture which promotes and values difference and diversity. Staff will help the children to understand difference and develop positive social responses. The protected characteristics include age, disability, gender assignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This is very much supported within Furze House.

Your religion and culture are important to us, and we want to support you and reflect this in your child's care plan. We would like to know about the things that are important to you and your child. This may be whether you follow an organised religion, culture or family customs or a way in which your child chooses to express their individuality. This may simply be how you celebrate birthdays and important family events that you celebrate every year. This helps us to understand what experiences your child has and the things that are important to them.

When your link worker is writing the care plan, they will ask you about how you experience and celebrate your culture, religion and customs. We will work with families to support their child to attend religious meetings and services or undertake religious observation during their time at Furze House. We will follow dietary requirements and will provide halal or kosher food. We will ensure your child is dressed in a way which supports your cultural or religious conventions. We will attend to personal care needs in a way which supports religious and cultural needs. We have access to online platforms for music and TV shows.

We will celebrate different cultural and religious festivals by providing themed weekends or evenings. We will take part in community celebrations. We will try to learn how to say a few basic words in your child's language. We very much encourage families to support us with this and if you can, provide further information for the staff team to learn, this will be greatly received.

2.5 Signs of Safety

Furze House uses a signs of safety approach. Families using the service will be aware of this from their social worker as this is the approach used in Milton Keynes City Council children's social care. It is a strength-based safety approach to caring for children. It looks at what we are worried about, what is working well and what could we do to improve. It has a focus on outcomes for children putting them at the centre of the care provided. This is highlighted in our 3 houses approach with the children when gathering their feedback to go into their reviews. We look at what they are happy about, sad about and their wishes for their time at Furze House. This is shared with the family and social worker and actions from this are taken.

2.6 Writing to the Child

The style of writing at Furze House is in the 'writing to the child' approach. All of our report writing, log entries, summaries, review notes etc are written in this format. The language that is used keeps in mind that the young person may read this in the future and they are our target audience. This has put a focus on children being at the centre of our care and working around the child. This will mean families will receive documents and reports in this style. We encourage for this to be shared with the children and some children will request to read through their log entries to remind themselves of different activities they did at Furze House. The only time we differ from this approach is when writing the Care Plans, they are written in the 1st person as they are information that the child and family would like to share about how to care for them. This again makes the care plans more individualistic to each child.

2.7 Recording of Information

The service uses an online system to record all information about children and young people. This is called LCS. This is the same recording system that Milton Keynes City Council children's social care use and is linked to your child's social worker. This means authorised Milton Keynes City Council employees will be able to see all information that we add to the system relating to your child. This could be an overall account of your child's stay with us, any concerns, telephone calls to school or family, as well as any achievements and incidents that your child has been involved in. We do maintain some paper-based recording such as medication records.

3.1 Getting Started and Reviewing the Placement

A child can only be referred to Furze House if they open to the Children with Disabilities Team or Short Breaks Team. Your child's social worker or short breaks practitioner will discuss the referral form with you, and this will be sent through to Furze House. All referrals for access to short breaks at Furze House are reviewed by the CWD/Short Breaks Team Manager and the Registered Manager. The number of day care sessions or over nights is approved as are any changes to packages. The standard package is two overnight stays per month. The Registered Manager will also assess the information provided to ensure that the service can meet the identified needs of each child. The final decision regarding placement is that of the Registered Manager. Your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner will complete and send the referral paperwork to the Furze House Manager. There is currently a waiting list for the provision at Furze House which is subject to referral time and the needs of each child. Therefore, we are not able to give timeframes when first joining the waiting list.

Once the referral is received at Furze House, your child will join the waiting list, once there is a vacant place, the manager will allocate your child to a transitions residential worker who will complete the transitions. You will then be allocated a link worker on starting at the service. This will be the link between Furze House, home and any other relevant professionals involved in your child's life. The Residential Worker will arrange for the family to visit Furze to look round the building and gardens, meet other staff and provide you with our Statement of Purpose and your child a copy of the Children's Guide. We will give you a questionnaire to fill in, this will form the majority of the care plan. Please answer all the questions as fully as you can so we have the most relevant and up to date information. We expect to have the questionnaire back within 2 weeks. We aim to make this process as positive as possible and want you to feel comfortable to ask as many questions as you like to ensure you know what the process is - We don't mind if we must repeat things as there is a lot to take in!

The Residential Worker seek permission to contact your child's school and other involved professionals, in order to gather information and undertake assessments to write the care plan and relevant risk assessments.

After this stage, your child will either be offered a place at Furze House, or we may feel we do not meet your child's needs and not able to offer a place. This will be communicated to you and your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner.

We will consider your children's life experiences and identify ways in which we can help them maintain their development, learn new life skills and take part in new experiences. We will work alongside you and other professionals to help your child develop the skills needed for adult life. We will identify whether any specialist assessments are required and whether team members need to undertake specialist training to meet the medical needs of your child.

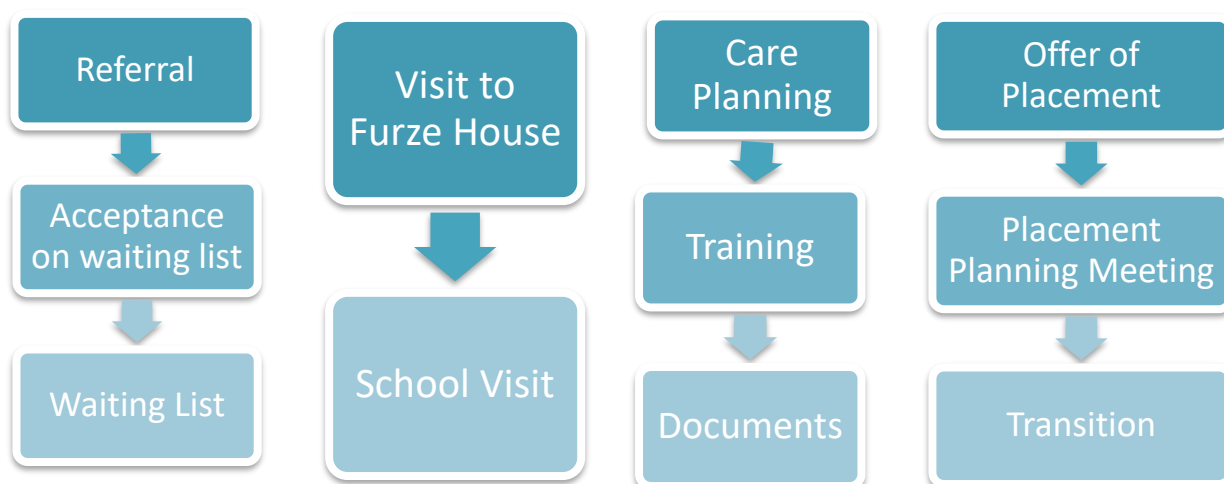
Once your child's care plan and risk assessments are completed, the placement meeting will be booked with the Furze House manager. The placement meeting will confirm how the home will meet the health, educational and day to day care needs of your child and answer any final questions you may have. Once the placement meeting has confirmed all the placement details, tea visits can begin. We like children to visit the home with their parents or carers a day or two before the first tea visit. Tea visits and longer day care sessions will build up until your child is ready for overnights stays. The pace of the introduction will depend on the needs of your child. The maximum length of a single, short breaks stay is 15 nights.

We use tea visits as one of the ways we match children to suitable nights. We look at the friendships they make on the tea visits and relationships they begin to form. We will take this into consideration when planning future overnights.

We will provide information about your child to the social worker/short breaks practitioner and placing authority, in this instance Milton Keynes City Council. In an emergency, the decision to agree to a placement will be taken by both the Children with Disabilities and Short breaks Manager, and Furze House Registered Manager, or someone deputising on their behalf. Your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner may come along and visit your child at Furze House or may attend our social events.

Reviews of your child's progress will take place every 6 months. We will provide information about your child's needs which will be reflected either within a Child in Need (CIN) or a Childcare Review (CCR) meeting. Your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner will be part of this review and we will be involved in the review of the care plan and risk assessments we have in place for your child. We will try and complete the Furze House review at the same time as your child's CIN/short breaks reviews, however, this is not always possible. We need these reviews to take place to ensure we have all the correct information for your child and all paperwork signed. It is important these reviews are arranged, and parents/carers attend these. If we are not able to have regular reviews, it may result in your child not being able to use the service until one is completed.

If your child does not attend the service for a 3-month period, they will be withdrawn from the service and will need to be referred by your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner again, unless there are exceptional circumstances such as health issues. If your child frequently misses scheduled overnights, we will organise a meeting with you and your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner to determine if our service is meeting your family needs. Frequent missed sessions may result in your child being withdrawn from the service.



3.2 Checking Everything is Alright

Furze House staff will work closely with parents, carers, teachers, health professionals and social worker/short breaks practitioner to ensure packages of support meet both the needs of the family and the needs of your child. We understand that a child is best brought up within their own family and aim to become part of a supportive network enabling a child to remain there.

Care plans will be formally reviewed at least twice per year, but this can happen more frequently if changes are needed. This is arranged in-conjunction with your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner. Staff working with your child may add something to their care plan, for example a toy or game they have enjoyed playing with or a new food which they have enjoyed. The link worker writes a summary of your child's visits. These will be either monthly or every three months depending on the package your child has with us. This will include a review of the targets we are working towards and any new targets which may be incorporated. We will discuss this with you.

We also create a memory book for your child which includes information about the work we have undertaken on their targets and how these have progressed, and photos of outings and activities which your child has taken part in. We send the memory books home, so you have a record of the time your child spent

at Furze House when they leave the service as a young person. We may ask your child to help contribute to their memory book and will help them access information we have about them. This may take the form of reading the things we have written about them or your child having access to their information if they request it.

The link worker may also talk to your child about their review. We encourage children to contribute to and attend their own reviews. This is done using an adapted tool called three houses which looks at your child's wishes, feelings and worries whilst they are at Furze House. We will ask for a review meeting if we think things are not going well and we will listen if you or your child ask for a review to be scheduled.

We will routinely ask you for certain documents for your child such as:

- Behaviour support plans
- Seizure care plans
- Any health care plans
- Sling service sheets for insitu-slings

3.3 Emergency Placements

The service does offer an emergency provision which is discussed with the management team of the Children with Disabilities Team. Emergency placements are accepted when there is no other option for the child to be cared for safely at home. This may result in some short breaks being rearranged to support in emergency situations. This will be a last result and all other options to be explored before making any cancellations. We are unable to accept emergency placements on our closure weekend and two weeks annual closures. It is the decision of the Responsible Individual and the Registered Manager as to whether emergency placements are accepted.

3.4 Contact with Family, Carers, Friends and Professionals

For most children there will be no contact with their family during visits to Furze House as the duration is so short. However, this will be determined by your child's needs, wishes and your views. Parents and carers are encouraged to contact Furze by phone for an update on their child's wellbeing if they have concerns, particularly during longer stays. All children can have private access to a phone during their stay.

Family members or friends are encouraged to visit children at Furze House during longer stays, although prior permission is essential. We can provide a private area within the building for you to meet. Visitors are always asked to give prior notice or phone before they set off so as not to clash with outings or activities.

If a person unknown to the service is collecting a child at the end of their stay, prior notice must be given to staff with sufficient description to ensure clear identification is made. We will ask the person involved to produce identification in these circumstances. We reserve the right to keep a child here if we are suspicious of the person collecting them. The Residential Manager and the Emergency Social Work Team would be contacted to confirm the action taken.

3.5 Transition

For most children, their transition to move on from Furze House will take place before their 18th birthday. However, some young people may need to move onto a more specialist placement and may move at a different time. The service will liaise with the social work teams, and once your child has been allocated a social worker from adult services, we will begin to support their transition out of Furze House.

Generally, transition planning begins when a child reaches 14 years old. An adult social worker will attend the child's education review at this time to develop an awareness of the needs of your child as they develop towards adulthood. The adult worker will undertake an assessment which helps determine the access your child will have to services in adulthood. The assessment considers the views and wishes of the child their parents and carers and the knowledge other professionals have developed whilst supporting your child. The assessment will take place at the most suitable time for your child but must take place by the time they are 18 years old.

Whenever transition takes place, we will contribute relevant information to assessments, share care plans and risk assessments with consent and support your child in the most appropriate way given individual circumstances. We will help your child to have their views heard at this important point in their life. We will develop a transition plan which will identify the role we will play, and the steps taken to achieve the outcome of the plan. We will ensure we communicate clearly with relevant people to ensure a smooth transition.

4 CHILDREN'S VIEWS, WISHES AND FEELINGS

4.1 Supporting Children's Rights

Furze House recognise that children have a right to services that support an ordinary life and that they have a right to be listened to, should not be discriminated against nor subject to abuse or bullying and have a right to personal privacy. We recognise that children with disabilities have the right to express views and have

these taken into account. We will learn how each child communicates and ensure relevant and up to date information is recorded in their care plan. We understand there are many forms of communication all of which are supported. Furze House will consult with the children using the service on many areas relating to their daily lives, e.g., food, clothing, activities. We will listen to what the children tell us and act upon their wishes. If we can't, we will explain why so that they understand. We currently work with a Participation Officer employed by Milton Keynes City Council to support the children using the service to have their voice heard. We will support children to attend wider events to help the development of self-advocacy skills. If your child needs someone to help them have their views heard, we can seek an independent advocate for them.

If your child is not happy with something we have done or something that has happened at Furze, we will listen to them, try to put things right and support them to make a complaint. A cordless phone is available for children to make private calls. This is kept in the office and can be used in any part of the building. We will keep the phone numbers on the children's noticeboard, so they know how to contact someone if they are unhappy or have a concern. In addition to the Statement of Purpose, we have produced a Children's Guide to help present a picture of Furze House. Along with the participation team, we have put together a short film of some of the activities we do at Furze House.

https://youtu.be/pqw1S_GPO2A.

4.2 Voicing your Views and Opinions

Furze House will listen to the voice of parents and carers in relation to their children and the way the service is delivered. We want you to feel comfortable and able to tell us when something is not right. We want the best for your child and will not penalise you if you complain. We will consult with you through the year on different aspects of the service and will put the outcomes of the consultation in the quarterly newsletter. It is important for the service to gather as much feedback as possible and we welcome all suggestions relating to the development within the home. You will also be asked within reviews your thoughts on topics about the service.

We will observe your child's behaviour and give them opportunities to influence their lives at Furze House. This might be something simple such as choosing the drink they want, to helping choose an outing or telling us what toys they would like us to get for the home. We want to know what will make their time with us as positive as it can be.

We have postcards available for the child to write their thoughts on, or we will write these for them if required. We will support the children to let us know what they think. The cards are posted into a box which is checked each week, and actions are then discussed in the team meeting before we provide feedback to your child.

4.3 Compliments and Complaints

MKCC has a Complaints, Comments and Compliments policy. All comments about services will be taken seriously and recorded. Complaints, comments, and compliments are viewed as an opportunity to obtain feedback from service users, which enable us to develop and improve our service. We will try to resolve concerns immediately. Complaints, comments and compliments can be brought to Furze House and will be recorded in our book. Formal complaints can also be raised with the council's Customer Care Manager. All concerns, comments and complaints will be reviewed to help us develop the way we work and improve the service to you. Initially any comment or complaint should be brought to the attention of the Registered Manager, see contact details above. We will review what you have said and identify any actions that we may need to take to resolve what you have said. We will let you know what we have found and whether we are able to make changes.

If you continue to be unhappy you can contact the people highlighted below:

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street

Manchester, M1 2WD

0300 123 1231

enquires@ofsted.gov.uk

Customer Care Manager

Milton Keynes City Council

Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East,

Central Milton Keynes, MK9 3EJ

01908691691

England's Children's Commissioner.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner

Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street

London, SW1P 3BT, 020 7783 8330

Info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

4.4 Positive Relationships

Furze House workers respect and value diversity and will deliver services which recognise and build on the strengths of individual children and help them develop skills to enhance their life. Each child will be viewed as an individual with their own needs, preferences, and differing life experiences. Children will be encouraged and supported to develop respect for themselves and others. We aim to meet the needs of all children by developing flexibility in the way we provide services. We will listen to how you would like us to care for your child and will try to follow your wishes. If there is something we can't do, we will tell you and explain our reason for this decision. We will not discriminate against your child because of their race, language, religion, culture, health, sexuality, disability, or behaviour.

4.5 Relationships with People

We will help children develop positive relationships with others based on respect and trust. We aim to provide children and their carers with a stable staff team and will work together to provide consistent experiences of the care provided at Furze House. We want your child to feel safe and secure when they are with us.

We will develop a communication style which is in accordance with the way we would want to be treated ourselves, by showing respect for others and supporting the children to respond to others in this way, whatever their communication style. We will develop positive but professional relationships with the children that use our service. We want to foster an environment where everyone feels able to express themselves, but not to the detriment of others. We will help them develop a caring attitude and approach to other people. We will help children develop friendships with other children and help develop social skills to foster this. We will help children understand the difference in how they should interact dependent on whether it is someone they know well or someone they have just met.

We will celebrate achievements and recognition as part of the culture at Furze House. We understand that small gains are as important as big achievements when supporting the development of self-esteem. We see each child as a unique individual and will take time to get to know them, their likes, dislikes and preferences. We will show an interest in the things they like to do and support this but also provide the opportunity to try new experiences. We will support children emotionally and understand that sometimes a cuddle is needed,

but this will be on their terms and appropriate for their needs. We will instil boundaries but only those which are necessary for the safety and emotional wellbeing of all. We will explain why these need to be in place and help children develop an understanding of this.

We will be attuned to potential bullying and work with the children to develop constructive and appropriate relationships with others. We will monitor the relationships between the children that use our service. We are aware that bullying can take place in all settings and are also aware this is a concept which some of the children using the service will not understand. We will intervene and help children to understand how their interaction makes others feel and help develop constructive behaviours.

We have a number of tools to help children understand about friendships, behaviour and communication. We will record any work we undertake and review the impact to see if it is being effective. If your child appears unhappy, we will try to find out why and we will tell you. We will support the child to 'tell' us about their feelings in whatever way they can express them.

Each month, the service arranges sessions for the children to discuss various home-related subjects and to include them in planning. We will discuss friendships, activities, toys, food, and the building itself. The agendas are developed and discussed in team meetings, and we try to include a variety of children in each meeting to ensure a well-rounded perspective and the chance for everyone to participate.

4.6 Positive Behaviour Management

Furze House works within the Children's Homes Regulations 2015, wider guidance and Milton Keynes City Council's Behaviour Management policy. The Children's Homes Regulations contain a list of means of discipline which are not allowed in children's homes. We work to enable children to develop positive or constructive skills to manage their own behaviour. We are aware that this takes time, consistency, perseverance, and insight.

Furze House also has its own Positive Behaviour policy which indicates how all aspects of behaviours are managed within the home. You can request a copy of this policy from your link worker, or from the manager. Each child will have their own care plan detailing different aspects of behaviour which may not be constructive and ways of working with the child that have been successful in other settings. We will work closely with your child's school and share information to ensure we are providing a consistent approach to your child's needs.

Each child will have individual risk assessments that focus on areas of individual need. Each child will also be assessed for the level of support they need during the day and at night. This is usually reviewed in team meetings but could also follow changes in behaviour that result in more frequent incidents.

We understand that certain behaviours may occur as a result of something happening in your child's internal world, either physically or emotionally. We understand that many of our children have difficulties understanding and expressing how they feel or what they need. Children will be supported and encouraged to develop skills which will help them manage their own responses and develop constructive behaviours. We will observe and learn their method of communication.

If an incident of behaviour that challenges occurs, workers will minimise the disruption and risk to other children. The distressed child may be guided to another area to give them chance to calm down. We use sanctions and rewards as ways of trying to support behaviour if this is appropriate to your child. Sanctions that we may use include taking the child into a quieter area either with or without staff support for a limited period of time in order to give time to calm and reflect on things. The worker will then talk to the child to help them develop constructive alternatives. Your child will always have someone nearby to observe them.

There might be circumstances where it is necessary for a worker to hold or restrain a child to ensure their safety, or the safety of others. We also class taking PRN medication for behaviour as a form of chemical restraint. All staff are trained to use Team Teach holds which are appropriate to the size and nature of the child. Team Teach is accredited by The British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD). We will notify you and your child's social worker/short breaks practitioner if there is an incident of us needing to use any Team teach holds with your child. Team Teach training is undertaken once every year and the trainer assesses the competence of those taking part. The training is broad and covers legal aspects, a range of de-escalation techniques. in addition to a range of restraint holds. For new members of the team, they will undertake a two-day training course. The trainer is knowledgeable about the service and the training is tailored to the behaviours we are likely to experience when working within the home.

Any episode of restraint will use the minimum force necessary and be for the shortest period of time. Children will be constantly monitored during any restraint to ensure their safety. The use of restraint is rare at Furze House as we try to identify when a child is becoming unregulated and intervene early to prevent things from escalating. All use of restraint will be recorded in the appropriate record book and countersigned by a manager within 48 hours. If we need to restrain your child, we will try to find out how they feel after the incident and if they are unable to tell us, we will observe them closely to ensure they are as calm, happy and

relaxed as we could expect. We will debrief staff to learn about what happened and try to identify triggers or changes to practice.

During our recruitment processes we look at the prospective worker's experiences and approach to managing behaviours. We recruit staff who can develop professional, but emotionally warm relationships with children. Once employed all workers are required to attend courses in communication, autism, managing behaviour and restraint within their first year of employment. We are aware that experiencing incidents of behaviour that challenge can be stressful for workers, and we will provide time after the incident for them to reflect on actions taken and their feelings.

5 ENJOYING AND ACHIEVING

5.1 Activities and Outings

At Furze House we provide a safe fun environment for the children, taking into account their age, individual needs and interests of each child. Each area within Furze House has its own range of toys, games, puzzles, books, music and DVDs, smart TVs, tablets and games. Messy play is a favourite, as are cooking, painting, water play and use of the sensory room. Children are supported to choose what they would like to do. This may be from a range of choices, or the knowledge workers have built up over a period of time. Activities may be organised for groups of children or on a 1:1 basis. After school, many children like to unwind by having a snack and being able to chill in front of the television or on the iPad. Children have the option to have quiet time in their bedrooms or in one of the den areas if they wish.

We will enable your child to take part in the life of the home. This may be by accompanying workers when household tasks are being carried out, helping to make choices about food and drink or making simple foods.

Furze House plans numerous outings and activities for the children during their stay. Weekends and school holidays are also an ideal time for children to try new experiences. We will let you know the activities your child takes part in and their experiences. Activities are planned in advance, particularly at weekends and in school holidays. We talk to children to find out what they would like to do and use our knowledge to ensure we find the right kind of activities. We focus on enabling children to experience different cultural activities and plan a monthly calendar with a mixture of activities which may include specialist food or meals, clothing, music, and craft activities. We also take part in community activities and events.

There is a section in each child's care plan that focuses on activities and play. We complete this from information provided by people who know the child best but also develop it as we learn more about your child in our setting. Furze House has its own minibus. All staff are required to drive, and the majority have undertaken their minibus training. Workers also use their own cars which are insured for work purposes.

Each child will have information written into their care plan indicating the level of supervision they need when out. Some children have individual risk assessments. Workers are clear about their responsibilities for keeping children safe and will update care plans and risk assessments as required. Mobile phones are always taken on off-site activities in case of emergency. The Shift Leader will ensure all emergency medication is taken out on trips and that an appropriately trained person is present to meet any health needs.

We make good use of the parks and Furzton lake all year round which gives us the opportunity to get out with the children and enjoy our natural surroundings. The children enjoy going to the shop to buy things whether it be for Furze House or with money they have bought for personal items and treats. The staff and children are known in the local community. When out and about people will say hello to us. Some of our children are keen to interact with dogs and, if appropriate, many dog walkers let their dogs be patted and fussed.

5.2 Pocket Money

When planning activities, we are mindful of the cost of things and do try to balance more costly activities with those that are free. We ask that parents and carers send pocket money to help with the cost of social and leisure activities for all weekend and school holiday visits. Pocket money is used for children to buy something whilst out. Workers will either manage pocket money on behalf of the child or support them to look after their own money. We have a range of shops available locally or within the wider area. Children like to go and choose a magazine or a treat and then pay with their own money. Parents and carers will be contacted if a larger trip is planned to seek consent.

When pocket money is brought in, the Shift Leader will check the amount and record the money into the child's pocket money book. The money is then kept in the pocket money safe. Any money unspent will be sent home with your child. The manager will undertake periodic monitoring to ensure records are accurate and the child's finances are kept safe.

6 EDUCATION

6.1 Working in Partnership

When a child is first referred to Furze House, the link worker, with parental consent, will visit your child at school. This enables them to begin to get to know your child and write relevant aspects of education into their care plan. Furze House will support children to attend school and support educational achievements. We will attend school reviews and contribute to the Education, Health and Care Plans. For most children using Furze House, this will mean attending one of the local special schools. Transport to and from school and Furze House will be provided by the Education department, if they normally do so during term time. Parents/carers will need to make sure they apply for this. Workers at Furze House will organise a packed lunch if the child normally takes one to school.

The link worker will gather information from school about your child's educational targets and where applicable their communication plan. We will incorporate aspects of this into their Furze House care plan and will usually use at least one of the educational targets as one of our targets. Each time your child visits Furze House we will identify one of their targets to focus on - This doesn't mean we won't be working on other things at the same time! We see life as a constant learning opportunity and have a culture within the home where we are all learning and developing, staff and children.

We understand that simple things such as encouraging signing, speech, singing, dancing, reading, art and craft activities are all educational in their own way and aim to provide an environment which is stimulating for your child. We keep a record of all 'Targets and Achievements' where we record the target we have focused on and how your child responded. Achievements are incorporated into quarterly summaries and your child's memory book.

We have an achievement tree on the wall in the main corridor to share and celebrate the achievements of the children who have been here the previous day. If there is something you would like your child to work on as a target, please let us know. This could be eating independently or using the toilet. We are happy to support what you are doing at home.

If children are set homework, Furze House will provide a quiet place for your child to work and the support they need to complete the task. We will usually adopt at least one educational target in the areas we are focusing on. The link worker will maintain in regular contact with school to ensure open lines of communication, attending relevant appointments in conjunction with parents and families.

7 HEALTH

7.1 Keeping Children Healthy

Furze House recognise that children with disabilities have a right to have access to a full range of health care. The responsibility for ensuring children attend medical appointments remains with parents and carers. However, if agreed, residential workers from Furze House may also attend appointments to provide support and bring advice back to up-date care plans and share with other workers.

Whilst visiting Furze House, each child will continue to be under the responsibility of their own GP. We will ask you for details of who this is when your child first attends Furze House, and we ask that you update us of any changes to this. We will also ask for the name of your child's dentist. If appropriate we will liaise with your child's GP and other health practitioners to ensure they are informed about relevant aspects of your child's health.

If your child becomes unwell at Furze House, the Shift Leader will assess whether your child needs to be returned home. There is an expectation that Furze House will always be able to contact somebody who holds parental responsibility, or someone identified by parents to discuss concerns and decisions taken. NHS 111 and the Walk-in Centre will be used for 'out of hours' services if we need to seek advice about the health or wellbeing of your child in an emergency. If parents are having a break away from Milton Keynes, Furze House must be given contact details including an address and phone number for the parents or carers. Ideally there should be contact details for a family member who is local and contactable in an emergency.

In an emergency, we will act in the best interests of your child. For some children specific plans will be written to address specific medical needs. These will be compiled with the relevant health professional. If a child needs admission to hospital during their stay at Furze House, a residential worker will accompany the child and stay with them until the child's parent or carer arrives. If parents are not able to reach the hospital before nightfall a decision will be taken as to whether a member of staff needs to be at the hospital all night.

In conjunction with schools, we have a policy of non - admission within 48 hours of starting a course of antibiotics. This is to reduce the risk of cross infection. Likewise, if a child has diarrhoea and or sickness, they should be clear of symptoms for 48 hours before visiting Furze House.

As part of the planning process for admission, physiotherapists and occupational therapists will be asked to undertake assessments to ensure all relevant equipment is available for individual children. We will undertake a risk assessment to identify whether your child can be supported to administer their own medication. Self-medication will only be undertaken with parental support, following a thorough risk assessment.

If your child has a specific medical condition which requires specific medical intervention, we will seek advice from health colleagues. We will require processes, specific training and assessing of competence to ensure we can safely provide care for your child. Furze House will endeavour to help all children adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle which includes responding to individual health needs, a healthy diet, and healthy activities. We will help your child understand how to take responsibility for their health where appropriate and support them to advocate for themselves or with the support of another person.

Furze House will provide a diet, which is nutritious and considers individual likes and dislikes, special dietary requirements and cultural needs. We will also encourage children to try different foods, make healthier choices and take part in activities and outings which promote physical and emotional well-being.

Personal and intimate care needs will be provided with dignity and respect. Most children will need assistance with personal care and many need assistance with incontinence. All shift leaders are required to undertake an emergency First Aid course within their first year and update their skills within the timescale required.

All workers are required to follow training and in accordance with written plans, residential workers will follow individual programmes which have been devised by nurses and therapists to meet health needs and maintain posture and mobility.

Shift Leaders have special responsibilities for the administration of medication and will be required to complete in-house training and the Certificate in the Safe Handling of Medicines. Residential workers may be allocated medication to give to a named child under supervision once it has been dispensed.

We will keep a record of all the medicines and first aid administered to your child whilst at Furze House. When sending in medication for your child, we will need the medication to have the correct prescription label with your child's name and dose of medication. We will need to have the correct packaging for the medication that clearly shows the expiry date of the medication. The shift leader will check the expiry date and batch numbers to ensure these match with the box description. We will also ask for a medication consent form which will need to match the information on the prescription label. If this does not match, we will need a copy of the Doctor's letter to confirm. It is important that this is all correct or we may need to either not give the medication or send your child home.

8 PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

8.1 Keeping Children Safe

Furze House is required to work within Milton Keynes City Council Safeguarding Policy. In addition, Furze House has their own policy focusing on the specific needs and risks of the children using the service. You can request a copy of this policy from your link worker or the manager.

We recognise that we work with one of the most vulnerable groups of children, therefore, our focus is to ensure we do all we can to keep children safe. We also recognise that all children using Furze House will have some impairment of communication. We work hard to ensure that we can understand how your child communicates and what their communication says about their emotional state. If there is someone who is not allowed to make contact with your child, you must make sure we have all the details so we can add this to your child's care plan.

Workers are required to undertake formal safeguarding courses and then attend regular updates to refresh skills and knowledge. Early on in their career, workers are made aware of their responsibility to protect and promote your child's safety and raise any concerns, including any concerns they may have about colleagues. We have clear processes explaining how concerns can be raised and the action taken.

All local authorities must have a person to act as the Local Authority Designated Person (LADO). There are two LADO's in Milton Keynes, and they are contactable on lado@milton-keynes.gov.uk. This is the contact point for anyone who has a concern regarding staff and volunteers of those working with vulnerable children and adults.

If we have any concerns about your child, we will speak to you. If our concerns are sufficiently serious, we will liaise with the children with disabilities social work team to discuss our concerns.

Whilst your child is at Furze House, we will undertake relevant risk assessments to ensure we are mindful of their safety. This will begin when the first care plan is written and will remain be subject to review on a regular basis. We will ask for parent and social worker/short break practitioner feedback and ask that you confirm you are happy with any risk assessments and care plans at every review. We may also ask for feedback between reviews if there are significant changes to your child's care plan. Where possible, we will seek feedback from each child regarding how they would like to be cared for. Staff will sit with your child to

discuss anything they would like to take out or add in, or we will use our observation to interpret their preferences.

We will work with your child to enable them to develop an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. We understand that this is a broad area and will work on the things which are most important to you and the things which will be most useful for your child. All children can have private access to a phone during their stay. A cordless phone is provided to enable children to make calls from anywhere in the building.

All workers have responsibility to ensure that Furze House is a safe place for children to play and learn. All workers undergo formal Health and Safety training as well as courses specific to the children using Furze House.

Electronic monitoring devices may be used at specific times of the day and at night to monitor your child. The system was designed specifically to meet the needs of the children using Furze House and allows us to monitor epilepsy, the emotional wellbeing of your child and the whereabouts of children at night. Our monitoring system consists of microphones placed in each bedroom ceiling and specifically Sunflower lounge. All bedroom doors have electronic contacts which will trigger an alert if activated. Microphones are usually used at night and are switched on when a child goes to bed. The sound they pick up can be either relayed to a speaker or activate an alert to a pager carried by workers. Once activated, electronic door contacts will send an alert to the pager if the door is opened. We will discuss with you whether either of these devices need to be in use for your child. We need to find the balance between keeping your child safe, respecting their right to privacy and not being too intrusive. Your social worker/short breaks practitioner will also be part of this discussion. We are able to set the system to meet the requirements of each child and will write the action we have agreed into a risk assessment and their individual detailed care plan.

In addition to individual risk assessments, we also risk assess various aspects of the work undertaken at Furze House, including outings and activities. High handles are used on doors at key points throughout the building to ensure the safety and whereabouts of the children. They are not used to restrict liberty but to ensure that we are able to keep the children safe. We will support a child who wants to move into other areas of the house if it is safe to do so.

If a person unknown to the service is collecting a child at the end of their stay, prior notice must be given to staff with sufficient description to ensure clear identification is made. We will ask the person to produce identification in these circumstances. We reserve the right to keep a child here if we are suspicious of the

person collecting them. The Residential Manager and the Emergency Social Work Team would be contacted to confirm the action taken.

We undertake a health and safety check of the building once a month, however, staff are required to raise any concerns immediately as they arise. We undertake weekly fire safety checks and will undertake a risk assessment for each child to identify whether it is appropriate for them to take part in planned fire evacuations.

8.2 Preventing Bullying

Whilst all would acknowledge that bullying is unacceptable, it does happen in all areas of life. Workers are alert to the fact that bullying can happen and that it can take many different forms.

All children are expected to value and respect each other and will be supported by workers to develop the accompanying social skills. Workers will intervene should they suspect bullying and ensure support and time is offered to all parties. Workers will support children to develop appropriate behaviours and a constructive approach towards their peers. Workers are alert to the potential for bullying and will intervene if relationships between children are not constructive. We have a range of tools we can use to help develop appropriate social skills and will record and review what actions we take.

All accidents and incidents are recorded and subject to monitoring. One aspect of the monitoring focuses on the nature of incidents, frequency, and the relationships between individuals. Where difficulties are identified, arrangements will be made to support the individuals involved. All workers will undergo training in the identification of bullying and be required to develop the skills to intervene if they suspect bullying occurs.

8.3 Incidents where a child goes missing

All children using Furze House can be regarded as vulnerable without adequate support and supervision. The level and nature of supervision is dictated by individual care plans and risk assessments. Milton Keynes City Council has developed a joint protocol with Thames Valley Police for Children Missing from Care. Furze House's Missing Children Procedure and Guidance has been written to include national definitions and requirements and local protocols.

Furze House is protected by keypad locks on all external doors and gates. Children are prevented from knowing the code. Children are not allowed to leave Furze House without supervision and then only with

parental consent, a thorough risk assessment and information clearly written into their care plan. If a child tries to abscond in the presence of a residential worker, they will act to ensure the child's safety. If a child does go missing, we will contact you and the police immediately, senior management will be contacted once police action is underway. A full report of the incident will be written and shared with relevant parties. Ofsted will also be contacted. Analysis will be made to ensure any required action is taken. Any incident of absconding will be reviewed as part of our accident and incident monitoring process.

8.4 Ligature Risk

A ligature can be defined as anything a person can use to hang, strangle, or restrict their breathing themselves. It can be tied or fastened around the neck, which could be utilised when, tied to an object as a tie or noose for the purpose of self-harming by strangulation or hanging. It can be made from anything that can be used to form a noose that may be used for self-strangulation and not necessarily able to support body weight.

While it is often assumed that children with learning disabilities and additional needs are unlikely or unable to attempt self-harm, it is important to acknowledge that there is a level of risk. We support children who have cognitive impairments, sensory needs, and behaviour's that may lead to self-injury. This self-injury may be unintentional; for example, a child with additional sensory needs may frequently climb on objects, which could result in accidental strangulation.

The homes management will ensure the environments within which the children occupy or have access to are as safe as reasonably practicable and that risks associated with ligatures and anchor points are identified and appropriate action taken to mitigate the risks.

More information to be found in the ligature policy.

9 MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

9.1 The Staffing Structure of the home

The Registered Manager has overall responsibility for Furze House. There is a Deputy Manager who takes responsibility for the home in the absence of the manager. Milton Keynes City Council own another children's home in Milton Keynes (Westminster House). We work as a close-knit management team, meeting

regularly to ensure we are up to date on recent matters. Outside of office hours, a member of the wider management team will provide on call cover.

Shift leaders have designated responsibilities, often acting as the most senior worker on shift. Shift leaders will have at least one year experience in the role before progressing to a senior level. They also undertake link working and direct work with children. Residential workers undertake link working and direct work with children. Most workers undertake a range of shifts including waking nights, so you may never meet the whole team. We have a small pool of Relief Residential Support Workers who are employed to undertake shifts when we need to cover annual leave, training, and staff sickness. We are looking to increase the number of people undertaking this role as they provide vital continuity and consistency when needed. These workers have access to the same training and support as permanent staff. Each child is assessed as needing an individual staffing ratio when at Furze House. Duty rotas are planned to take this into account to ensure we have the right number of staff on duty at any one time.

9.2 Recruitment and Induction Process

All workers are subject to a rigorous recruitment process which includes a visit to Furze House, a craft-based exercise with some of the children, a written exercise, and a formal interview. All new workers to Furze House will have been interviewed using the 'Safer Recruitment' process.

The managers involved in the recruitment process will have undergone thorough training in both Milton Keynes City Council procedures and nationally recognised processes. This training must be updated regularly.

All relevant checks are carried and completed before new recruits are allowed to begin working at Furze House. These are carried out by Milton Keynes City Council recruitment team. Each new team member will be linked to a more experienced member of the team. The experienced member of staff acts as a mentor and is shadowed by the new team member for at least the first two weeks of employment.

All team members undergo an intensive induction programme within the first few months of employment to ensure they learn necessary processes and develop the required skills. All new members of staff will be provided with a copy of the home's Statement of Purpose, and this will be discussed as part of their induction and supervision process. Safeguarding children is an important part of the initial induction process. It will begin with the opportunity to read and discuss in-house guidance with a senior member of the team followed by formal training, within the first three months of employment.

Supervision is offered weekly in the initial stages of employment and then follows the regular monthly pattern.

9.3 Qualifications and Training

Furze House offers numerous opportunities for workers to enhance and develop their skills. We encourage staff to view learning as an ongoing occurrence not just related to formal training.

The Registered Manager is required to hold the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership in Health and Social Care, Children and Young People's Services, Residential Management Pathway or an equivalent qualification. Deputy Managers are also given the opportunity to complete this qualification.

All new residential workers must begin the Children and Young Peoples Workforce Level 3 Diploma within six months of the confirmation of employment, and complete by the end of their second year of employment. We offer several courses which must be completed within the first year of employment some of which need to be updated on a regular basis. We also undertake training as a team, whether it is in a team meeting or on whole and half day courses.

There is a clear career path for those who choose to continue professional development within the residential field or the wider field of social care. Milton Keynes City Council offers a wide range of in house and external courses. Distance learning courses and e-learning courses are also used to meet individual development needs.

9.4 Supervision

Supervision occurs on a planned monthly basis. Supervision aims to cover a variety of issues including case review, practice issues, team working, personal development and performance management. Staff should be able to reflect on their feelings and behaviour and how that filters into the work with the children. A formal template has been devised to ensure all required areas are discussed. Supervision is viewed as a two-way process which enables personal time for discussion and reflection.

Target and training plans are discussed during each supervision session for each member of staff. Supervision is subject to a degree of confidentiality. Both the supervisor and supervisee should feel comfortable that issues raised will not be discussed freely with colleagues. However, there may be occasions when issues raised must be passed onto senior management, e.g., Safeguarding concerns. Items raised in supervision may also be discussed by the management team of the home to ensure issues raised are being dealt with. Workers also have a duty to share any practice concerns with their supervisor or senior manager.

Appraisals take place in the service annually. Staff members have the opportunity to reflect on the year and then look to the year ahead, planning in any progression or performance targets. It is an extremely reflective session with the worker's supervisor.