

# Elm House

## Statement of Purpose

Long, Medium and Short term Placements for children  
up to 18 years

[www.acorneducationandcare.co.uk](http://www.acorneducationandcare.co.uk)



# Acorn Education And Care

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Updates:

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National Care Manager updated – 20.03.24

National Care Manager updated to have a blurb about experience and history - 09.04.24

## 1. QUALITY AND PURPOSE OF CARE

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Acorn Education and Care is part of the Outcomes First Group and the NFA Group, the largest combined children's services group in the UK. Our operating businesses successfully deliver frontline fostering, educational and care services to children, their families and local authority customers.

Our purpose is to provide outstanding care and education to the UK's most vulnerable and difficult to place children and children whether with specialist foster parents, within education or in a supportive and understanding environment of residential care.

We offer each and every child and child courtesy and respect, and work in conjunction with local authorities to deliver a range of care, education and other specialist services which offer best value whilst ensuring the best possible outcomes for each child.

As a group, we benefit from a wealth of experience allowing children the opportunity to thrive and develop by realising their potential whilst being happy and feeling valued.

Acorn Education and Care is an organisation who are committed to providing high quality care and delivering positive outcomes for children via a truly multidisciplinary team approach within an open but emotionally secure domestic style environment. As a transparent organisation, we recognise that every child and the care they receive matters.

Elm House is an Acorn Education and Care children's residential care home committed to providing care to children on a long/medium/short-term basis depending on the needs of the child. Elm House provides a holistic, safe, stimulating, and supportive family environment where children cared for can live, learn, and develop.

The home provides a high standard of care, educational support, and accommodation for up to three children aged up to eighteen. We work in partnership with relevant Children's Services departments, and other agencies within a clear and comprehensive policy framework, in line with company policies.

The staff team at Elm House are highly committed to working intensively providing care and support to all children.

The home endeavours to avoid the negative aspects usually associated with institutional residential living and to create an environment and atmosphere, which reflects many of the positive aspects of a normal family home. All team members at Elm House deliver their care based upon the principles of the PACE model. PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating, and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe and form secure attachments. It enables the staff team to see the strengths and positive features that lie underneath more negative and challenging behaviour, and therefore offer each child unconditional acceptance.

The aims of the home are to work towards the following for each child (depending on their identified individual needs)

- To return to live with their family
- To live with foster carers

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- To move into supported semi-independent living accommodation
- To move into fully independent living accommodation
- To move into another form of residential placement.

Prior to admission, every effort is made to establish the long-term plans for each child and a Placement Plan is prepared which clearly focuses on his or her individual needs.

If necessary, the Placement Plan can encompass access to counselling, behaviour management, the development of life skills and semi/full independent living packages and anger management.

Typically, the objectives of the Placement Plan will concern:

Helping the child to come to terms with any traumatic events in their past

Modifying those behaviours, which are unacceptable for the child and/or others.

Developing those life skills which have been inadequately developed in the past.

Assisting the child to form, maintain and build relationships with other children and adults and to integrate into social groups.

Progress by the child towards achieving the main objectives of his/her Placement Plan is monitored at formal reviews with representatives of the responsible local authority and others significantly involved in the care and development of the child concerned. Should there be a marked decline in the child's behaviour their Social Worker would be contacted immediately.

At Elm House, we see as very important the role performed by the keyworker. Soon after arrival each child will be allocated one, together with a co-keyworker who can act on the keyworker's behalf when they are not available. The role of the keyworker will include responsibility for:

- Promoting the child's participation in and the ownership of their care programme or semi/full independent package
- Actively putting the care plan as well as any independent package into action
- Ensuring the care plan or independent package is reviewed at appropriate intervals
- Ensuring the main aims of the placement are kept on target
- Ensuring that the child's file is kept in order and up to date
- Ensuring that all necessary appointments are arranged, and social workers, parents or significant others are kept well informed
- Being a contact person for the child to approach if they have any concerns, worries or aspirations they want to discuss
- Being responsible for promoting personal health and hygiene, active participation in all individual or group activities and the attendance at the resident's meetings and discussions relating to planning the weekly menus and activities
- Assisting the child to establish, promote and maintain positive links with school, family members (or significant others) and other professionals involved in their care.

## 2. ENGAGING WITH THE WIDER SYSTEM

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Elm House work with external agencies, bodies, and establishments, in the spirit of partnership with a view to:

- Maintaining, supporting, and actively encouraging regular and consistent contact with the child's family, friends, as well as significant others. This is achieved through telephone calls, letters; home visits in addition to visits to see the child within Elm House.

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- Maintaining and encouraging regular access to, and contact with, the child's Social Worker, ensuring any issues, or concerns, can be discussed between the child and his or her social worker.
  - To actively promote co-operation and dialogue with relevant educational establishments through attendance at appropriate school functions, continuous discussions, and dialogue regarding the needs of the child. Particular attention is paid to the attendance levels.
  - Also, staff will look to actively promote action programmes to help the child to overcome any specific educational difficulties they encounter.
  - To develop and maintain links with venues for recreational, religious, cultural, and social activities, particularly those within the Elm House locality ensuring a balanced and structured programme geared toward the ongoing development of the child.
  - To maintain regular contact and co-operation with other psychologists, psychiatrists, professional associations, and workers when it is appropriate. This will ensure that our core philosophy, which is that the welfare and support of the child is central to all aspects of related care policies, is maintained.
  - Working collaboratively with commissioning social workers to achieve the best outcomes for the children and children in our care.
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Elm House is able to accommodate:

- Four children
- Male or Female
- Aged up to 18
- Children with socio-emotional / behavioural difficulties and associated additional needs.

In accordance with Acorn Education and Care Equal Opportunities Policy, children of any gender or ethnic origin may be referred.

Acorn Education and Care carefully considers all referrals as part of a caring and responsible approach to Admissions. However, in recognition of the extreme pressures faced by Case Managers, our decision-making processes are fast and effective.

The layout and design of Elm House is such, that the home is able to accommodate a child with mild mobility difficulties. It would not however be suited for children with severe mobility difficulties.

## Internal Placement Review Arrangements

In consultation with the child, his or her, they / them social workers, and all significant others, a Placement Plan is formulated within three days of admission. Internal reviews are held monthly to ensure the Plan remains up to date and relevant. Also, the Plan is reviewed at all other case review meetings, most notably, LAC Statutory Reviews.

Who can attend an internal Placement Review?

- The Child.
- The Parents [unless they are prevented from doing so by any court orders or Safeguarding arrangements].
- The Independent Reviewing Officer / The resident's Social Worker.
- The resident's keyworker.

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- Teachers, Doctors, & Psychologists.
- Independent visitor, race advisor, interpreter, and other family members.

## External Care Plan Reviews

In addition to the arrangements at Elm House for internal reviews, there are arrangements led by the child's social worker for external reviews. Typically, arrangements for external reviews will comprise:

- Core Group Meetings
- Statutory [Looked After Child] Reviews
- Inter-agency meetings

Staff at Elm House will co-operate with, and support, all arrangements for external reviews. We will provide written reports in advance of all review meetings to aid and assist discussion and will provide meeting facilities when required to do so.

## 3. VIEWS, WISHES AND FEELINGS

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Children have the right to complain to their social workers, any Acorn Education and Care staff member, OFSTED, NYAS Advocacy Services, Child Line, or the Police.

Children have the right to complain about anything that is of concern to them.

Children who are assaulted have the right to inform the Police and instigate criminal/Safeguarding proceedings.

In the interests of maintaining the balanced development of the child and in keeping with Equality and Diversity good practice, all Elm House staff ensure that every child will be given the opportunity to uphold their cultural identity, and religious beliefs. All staff will be responsible for ensuring that opportunities for religious observance are understood, and respected, by themselves and other children within the home.

Each child at Elm House has an individual equality & diversity plan that essentially sets out the child's equality & diversity profile and ensure plans are in place to ensure all respective needs are met in a planned, reviewable, and sensitive manner.

## 4. EDUCATION

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Outcomes First Group believes that education should be individually tailored and delivered in a variety of environments with a curriculum that encourages the development of communication, social and life skills as well as academic achievement.

The alignment of our education services geographically to our residential and foster care services allows us to help children and children to achieve positive outcomes within a school-based environment, while simultaneously receiving high-quality care within a home setting.

Each student and resident's individual learning abilities, requirements and academic progression is consistently monitored to ensure that support remains proactive, learning opportunities are maximised and every singular achievement is celebrated.

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This approach is further supported by our in-house clinical teams, recognising each person we support as an individual and tailoring our care plans to meet specific needs from the point of admission and throughout their journey with us.

Our aim is simple; to work with the vulnerable people entrusted to us, step-by-step, day-by-day, to help them achieve their potential.

Our expert teachers and care specialists work in tailored environments to help them make progressive, incremental improvements. We monitor the progress of each of our students and residents very carefully, adjusting their individual development plans as necessary.

We take the lead in liaising with carers and families and involving the relevant agencies and authorities to build the appropriate care around the particular needs of those we look after.

“We deliver an integrated Education and Care service supported by therapy, which provides much stronger outcomes for the people in our care. Seeing progress and building incredible futures is what drives us. We deliver a bespoke service best suited to that individual.”

Richard Power, Managing Director of Education

Acorn Education and Care believes that all children have the right to an education suited to their needs, ability, and personal aspirations. We acknowledge research suggesting that children within the care system are potentially at risk of poor educational achievement due, in part, to many extrinsic factors.

Therefore, we believe that we have an Absolute Duty to ensure that children in our care achieve generally, and educationally, to their highest potential. Elm House staff are all involved in proactively implementing the provision of each child’s Personal Education Plan [PEP] and EHC plans. Key Workers/Children Home Managers oversee the implementation of PEPs and EHPs and monitor progress against objectives.

Elm House creates a positive culture and environment for valuing education with adequate space and facilities for children to do their homework, including quiet, well equipped study areas, educational resources, and personal computers etc.

Mainstream education at comprehensive and junior schools within the catchment areas.

In order to maximize educational inclusion and attainment, Elm House will work in a supportive and collaborative manner with all local schools and schools in the surrounding areas [mainstream and special educational]. Also, we will work with our partners in Nottinghamshire County Council Children’s Services and City of Nottingham Children’s Services in maintaining continuity of education.

For children and children in between or excluded from Education, Acorn Education and Care also partner with R.E.A.L and other educational providers. The R.E.A.L and other educational providers staff support model includes training in the management of behaviour, safeguarding, knowledge of special educational needs and risk management as well as access to specialists such as psychologists and advisory teachers.

This approach means R.E.A.L and other educational providers are in contrast to many alternative providers as they address personal development and emotional wellbeing in tandem with re-engagement in learning. They do not simply offer one approach; we provide a continuum of opportunities that enable progress towards re-inclusion

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## 5. ENJOYMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

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Nottingham is a vibrant and friendly city that is a centre of excellence in many fields, with a unique combination of strong historical roots, coupled with a fast-expanding business and retail sector. This cosmopolitan city offers unrivalled state of the art leisure and entertainment opportunities, as well as excellent health and education facilities.

Based within the pleasant, highly sought-after residential area of Nottingham and conveniently situated near to Nottingham City Centre, Elm House is ideally suited for children. It affords easy access transportation routes to schools, colleges, and key locations across the city of Nottingham.

Elm House is a large property with many attractive and practical features, including large sized rooms and creative enclosed gardens. The garden to the rear of the property is large and enclosed to provide a safe and visible recreation area for residents. The garden contains a 10ft trampoline, swing set, messy kitchen, sandpit, basketball hoop and punch bag along with other outdoor games apparatus such as a badminton net and swing ball.

All bedrooms are furnished and equipped to a good standard and decorated in consultation with the children in the room at the time. Children at Elm House do not share bedrooms unless the placing authority stipulates this as a planned care requirement.

The sitting room includes a T.V. room equipped with a range of TV subscriptions and large French doors which can open up onto a terrace area. There is also a second sitting room which is able to be turned into a sensory space if required and allows a comfortable relaxing space for the children to play a large range of games we have available as well, also including a variety books.

The home has a kitchen diner, which provides for a homely, friendly atmosphere conducive in size for preparation and consumption of meals by both staff and children. There are adequate laundry facilities. There are also cellar rooms located beneath the house.

There are a wide range of leisure, recreational, and social activities that are available for the children residing at Elm House. The home is deliberately located in close proximity to key community resources. Our staff team ensures that every child is encouraged to participate in communal and group activities of their choice.

All Elm House staff recognise the benefit to children of participation in leisure, recreational, and social activities and will, seek to ensure that residents have a range of activities and pursuits from which to choose. Notwithstanding the above, we recognize that a child is entitled to time when she/he/they/them is doing nothing in particular.

Within Greater Nottingham, there are a number of leisure, recreational, and social activities available, including access to and use of fitness gyms, youth clubs, tennis, badminton, cinemas, football, cookery, billiards/snooker, bowling, indoor cricket, ab-sailing, fishing, ice skating and many more.

Each child at Elm House can be involved in completing a weekly Personal Activity Planner that sets out the child's 'plan' for the week ahead. This ensures that all children and staff are able to form a picture of the week ahead ensuring balance and variety.

## 6. HEALTH

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Elm House adopts, and follows, Acorn Education and Care policy & procedural guidelines on the provision of Health Care for every child. This ensures a consistent and proactive approach to health and health education by both staff and children. The central focus of our Health Policy is to empower the child and to provide them with the tools and information to make informed decisions about their health.

Upon admission to Elm House, every child has a new patient health check at the GP surgery unless they remain at their previous surgery. All children within our care are registered with a local GP and have access to a range of other health care facilities, which may include:

- Dentists
- Chiropractors
- Counsellors
- Opticians
- Social-Psychological Services if applicable
- Other Therapeutic services as appropriate

Health Education is promoted via structured individual key working or group sessions, whichever is thought to be more appropriate in accordance with the feelings of the children.

The Acorn Education and Care Health Care Policy includes providing information on physical, emotional & sexual health. Our philosophy and approach is that good health is achieved through paying attention to basic needs such as nutrition, adequate sleep, regard for safety and appropriate medical attention when required.

## 7. POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

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At Elm House, Children are encouraged and supported in self-expression. They are encouraged and helped to recognise their rights and responsibilities. In support of the above, children are encouraged to participate in regular House Meetings. House Meetings are convened to encourage children to express their views and concerns and to celebrate things that they like or make them happy. Also, children are supported and encouraged to take part in the reviews of their Care, Placement and Risk Management Plans.

For children that struggle to participate to engage in group processes [although they will receive ongoing support and encouragement], regular one-to-one Key Work sessions allow them to feed into the Home's decision-making processes. Through whatever channel, Elm House staff are encouraged, and expected, to elicit the views of our children and to ensure these are considered in the day to day running of the home.

Elm House takes seriously all representations and complaints and manages them sensitively and as close as possible to the originating point, ensuring that the child's best interests are kept centre stage. We endeavour to ensure that all children, staff, and parents are aware of, and understand Acorn Education and Care's written policy and procedures on Representations and Complaints. Furthermore, Acorn Education and Care operates a transparent complaints procedure, which is clearly visible on notice boards and other appropriate locations.

Elm House is committed to the operation of an effective Complaints & Compliments procedure, designed to keep paramount the needs of all, irrespective of age, race, gender and disability.

Any complaints received will be taken seriously, with particular attention paid to the needs, feelings and sensitivities of the child/children concerned.

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All children at Elm House are able, and have the absolute right, to complain over the service and/or treatment they receive.

Others who are able to invoke the Complaints policy include:

- Children's Services staff
- Parents
- Persons with parental responsibility
- Foster Carers
- Any person that has a sufficient interest in the welfare of the child

The address and telephone numbers of our local Children's Services, relevant advocacy services and Ofsted are included in the Elm House Children's Welcome Pack.

Upon Admission, Elm House staff will ensure that the child is made aware of how to make complaints and compliments.

Also, Elm House staff will:

- Upon admission, provide the child with a Complaints Booklet.
- Ensure the child has free access to a supply of Complaints Forms.
- Ensure that if the child has difficulty in reading, writing, or understanding the form, he / she, they/ them has the procedures verbally explained by an appropriate adult.
- Ensure the child's Social Worker has given him/her the respective Children's Services Complaints Leaflet.
- Upon Admission, the child is given OFSTED's contact details and advised of how to make an external complaint.
- Ensure Parents / Carer's / Social Services staff are informed about the Acorn Education and Care Complaints Procedure.
- Ensure complaints are recorded on the home's Central Complaints Record, which is routinely inspected by OFSTED and available to social care workers. A copy of the complaint will be placed on the child's file and sent to social worker.

## 8. THE PROTECTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

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Acorn Education and Care believes that all children have the right to be protected from ALL forms of abuse, whether this be physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect. Our approach to all aspects of care delivery is Child-centred. With regard to Child Protection, we firmly believe that the blame for abuse will rest solely on the abuser and that the welfare of the child will always remain centre-stage.

Concerns over the safety, or well-being of a child will never be ignored. Our Safeguarding procedures are consistent with the local policies and procedures agreed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board [LCSB]

Acorn Education and Care is a Section 11 Children Act 2004 compliant service.

To define abuse, Acorn Education and Care has adopted the definition provided by the National Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Child Abuse, 'Childhood Matters':

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“Anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood”

Policy objectives:

Our Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy aims to:

- Provide clear and specific guidelines to enable staff to deal with child protection issues effectively.
- Set high internal standards to ensure that the children cared for by Acorn Education and Care are well protected
- Ensure Acorn Education and Care credibility, as a professional care organization, remains high and seeks to ensure that commissioning officers feel assured that Acorn Education and Care is a ‘safe’ organisation
- Ensure that every individual working for Acorn Education and Care knows what to do in a Child Protection Emergency.

Safeguarding / Child protection policy:

At Elm House, everything we do is geared to the protection, happiness, and development of children. Our Safeguarding policy [hereafter referred to as ‘the policy’] is detailed, extensive and child centred.

The policy provides detailed definitions of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, mental cruelty and neglect.

Also, the policy sets out clearly, and in considerable detail, who is responsible for dealing with suspected, or actual, incidents of abuse, defines how matters of abuse should be dealt with and provides supportive guidance to officers who may be involved in dealing with such matters.

Other aspects covered under the policy include:

- Positive behaviour management.
- Direct Work with Children – Protecting Staff
- Whistle Blowing
- Confidentiality
- The duty of care and public liability insurance
- Records and Record Keeping
- Computer Safety
- Working with Social Workers

The Acorn Education and Care policy framework and management approach is designed to minimise the risk of child abuse. However, we recognise that there is always a chance that a child located in the safest of environments may fall victim to abuse. At Acorn Education and Care, no child protection issue is ignored. Our response to any allegation, or suspicion, is child-centred, transparent, swift, and affirmative.

Copies of the Acorn Education and Care Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy are available upon request.

Bullying:

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Elm House is committed to providing a residential environment where children can live safely, without the fear of oppressive behaviour from staff or peers through any form of bullying or intimidation.

Acorn Education and Care provides all staff and children in its homes with clear definitions of Bullying. We believe bullying can take many forms from verbal, emotional, sexual or racial abuse to actual physical assault.

In all cases Acorn Education and Care staff will:

- Investigate fully any indication of bullying.
- Support the victim to prevent any further oppressive behaviour from others.
- Re-assure the victim that being bullied is not acceptable and that it is not their fault they are bullied
- Minimise any further opportunities for bullying to occur by whatever strategies are realistic and achievable.
- Confront the bully with their actions so their oppressive behaviour is not condoned by inertia.
- Pursue legal action should the nature of bullying indicate the need for this.
- Arrange for an urgent review to include all involved parties to agree an action plan to deal with the bullying; this may include reviewing the appropriateness, and compatibility, of placements.
- Identify, and action, positive alternatives for both victim and perpetrator to develop those skills necessary for positive relationships.
- Keep a written record of all incidents and actions taken.

Acorn Education and Care believes bullying and oppressive behaviour has no place within its homes, in any shape or form. We are committed to an equality of service that demands a safe and caring environment for all service users.

Elm House provides all Residential staff and children with written procedures, which are clearly followed when a child is Absent Without Permission. The application of the Absence procedures is consistent but at the same time take account of the individual child's needs which are clearly set out in his, or her, they / them Placement Plan and Risk Assessment.

Any child that is away from an

Acorn Education and Care home is made welcome upon return – the principal aim will be to work with child to find out why he, or she, they/them felt the need to leave the home without consulting or seeking permission from staff. It is expected that the child will be seen by his or her, they / them social worker or a person who is independent of the home following their return and where appropriate, changes to Placement / Risk Assessment are recommended and agreed with appropriate people, including the child.

Any reports from a child that indicates he or she, they / them went missing in response to being abused will be immediately reported to the appropriate Social Worker, commissioning authority and OFSTED. Appropriate measures will be made to protect the child/children.

Elm House observes / follow missing from care protocols developed and implemented jointly by Nottinghamshire County Council Children and Children's Department, City of Nottingham Children's Service and Nottinghamshire Police.

Also, we will work with the local Police in progressive and collaborative to ensure an effective and balanced approach to managing matters pertaining to unauthorised absence and missing from care

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episodes, with particular regard to the proper and sensitive use of Police resources and positive relationships.

Our approach to managing incidents involving children considered to be Missing from Care is guided by our Missing from Care policy, a copy of which can be obtained upon request.

All Acorn Education and Care homes are subject to Fire Officer Inspections and any recommendations are implemented with priority.

Fire precautions are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Children's Homes Regulations 1991 – No 1506. Elm House has appropriate fire equipment, smoke alarms and heat detectors, which are regularly tested and serviced by a designated Fire Safety Officer.

All staff and children at Elm House are familiar with all aspects of the fire policy and procedures. Regular fire drills are conducted at the home, with the outcome and results continuously monitored and recorded within a logbook. Fire drills are undertaken to identify, clarify and resolve any issues or problems with regard to the fire safety policy. The Fire Safety procedure is clearly located at key locations within the home.

## 9. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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The Responsible body and the Director for Acorn Education and Care is located at our Head Offices at:

Acorn Education and Care

Atria  
Spa Road  
Bolton  
BL1 4AG  
Tel: 01204 956899

Managing Director: Daniel Cooke

National Care Director: Alison Blyth-Bishop

Alison has worked in the care sector since 2001 in both local authority and private organisations in a variety of settings from secure accommodation, specialist therapeutic residential care, step down mental health and complex learning difficulties. Alison has a variety of qualifications including a BSC honours psychology, L4 qualification in children and young people and L4 and L5 Leadership and management. Alison is passionate about the work that she does and is a strong advocate for the rights of young people and their voice being heard as well as ensuring a high quality of care is provided to all our stakeholders.

National Care Manager: Rob Hewston

My name is Rob Hewston and the new national care manager for Outcomes for young people. Have worked in social care for over 44 years. Started as a RSW in a children's home then gradually making my way up to manager. Worked with all types of homes such as EBD, learning disabilities, specialised in young people with trauma from being sexually abused. Then moved into the regulation field. NCSC through to ten years as a regulatory inspector with Ofsted. Completing compliance work, Ofsted inspections and registration of new children's homes. Before coming into this role, I worked as a

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compliance manager for a big organisation completing audits, investigations, safeguarding investigations etc.

My role as the National care manager takes me to all the homes offering support and guidance within the homes and ensuring the standard of care is outstanding.

Regional manager & Responsible Individual and Head of Care: Donna Carlin

Donna has been with Acorn Education and Care since 2004.

Prior to working for Acorn Education and Care Donna worked as a child and family's social worker for Nottinghamshire and is DIPSW qualified.

This compliments her DIP 5 in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care [ 2013].

Registered Manager: Tina Dilley

Tina has gained extensive experience in the 20 + years she has worked within the organisation developing a broad set of skills, knowledge and understanding of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties by working in a range of different homes. Tina started as a residential worker and worked herself up throughout the years to assistant manager and then to children's home manager. Before working for Acorn Tina was a residential care worker in Birmingham and during that time Elm House was being set up so Elm House is where my career started in residential care in Nottingham. Tina has gained a great deal of experience throughout the years working alongside professional from all sectors. Tina has completed NVQ Level 3 for the Children's and Children's Workforce. Level 3 in Management Level 5 in leadership and management and has attended all types of training in relation to the care sector. Tina has also now become credited as a CPI trainer.

Where a member of staff receives a complaint, they will adhere to the following procedure:

Where the complaint is about abuse this MUST be immediately referred to the home's manager and the Acorn Education and Care designated Safeguarding Lead. The Acorn Education and Care Safeguarding procedure MUST be followed.

Where a member of staff receives a complaint, they must record the complaint on a Complaints Form and place a copy on the child's file – this must happen on the same day the complaint is made.

Any written complaint from the child must be attached to the complaints form.

A copy of the complaints form should be sent to Acorn Education and Care Head and an additional copy should be sent to the child's social worker.

The Children's Home Manager should seek to resolve the complaint by way of an informal investigation.

Details of the investigation, resolution, or the decision to refer the matter to the Corporate Team for formal investigation due to seriousness, should be recorded on the Complaints Form.

The complaint should be investigated within 7 days and the complainant should receive written notification of the outcome within 10 days.

Parents, the child's social worker and the home's staff must also be made aware of the outcome.

All complaints should be recorded in the home's central Complaints Log and the Acorn Education and Care central log, which is located at Acorn Education and Care's Head office.

Where a complaint remains unresolved and as a result is referred to the Corporate Team, the following should be observed:

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- The Registered Manager will forward details of the complaint to the child's parent/carers and where appropriate, OFSTED.
- The Registered Manager will seek the support of the child's social worker to resolve the complaint.
- The Manager in consultation with their line Manager may appoint an independent person to consider the complaint.
- The Registered Manager will acknowledge the complaint by sending the complainant an explanation of the procedure and offer him/her assistance and guidance on where further guidance can be obtained.
- The Registered Manager will accept and record any oral complaints in writing.
- The independent person and/or Registered Manager, will consider the complaint and respond within 14 days of receipt of the complaint.
- The response will be addressed to the person making the complaint, and where different, the person on whose behalf the complaint was being made. The response will, inter alia, set out what options are available to the complainant should s/he remain dissatisfied.
- Arrangements will be made so that where a complainant remains dissatisfied and requests within 28 days that the complaint be reviewed, a panel is constituted by the responsible authority.
- Parents, social workers, and care staff will be informed of the outcome of the complaint.

The Acorn Education and Care Team is responsible for overall operation and resourcing of Elm House and ensures that the company's core values are adhered to on a day-to-day basis.

All Elm House staff have been, or will be, trained in the following:

- Health & Safety
- Equality and Diversity
- Food Hygiene
- Safeguarding / Child Protection /CSE/Terrorism Act
- First Aid
- Control & Restraint [Safety Intervention]
- Autism including associated courses in relation to autism.
- Trauma Informed Practice
- Therapeutic parenting course
- Training is constantly under review and will be implemented in line with the needs of the child.

All staff receive supervision and training and are required to hold or be pursuing NVQ Level 3 Caring for Children and Children or Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Children's Workforce [as a minimum]. Managers must hold or be pursuing the Diploma in Social Work or NVQ level 4 or Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Children's Services (England) [ which is the replacement qualification for NVQ level 4 in Children's Care, Learning and Development and NVQ L4 Leadership and Management for Care Services (LMCS). This qualification confers occupational competence to work in a management role.

Our group now operates in a regional structure that enables education and residential care services to work closely - as well as creating locally resilient operational networks by connecting groups of services. These services are managed by skilled operational leaders from a variety of backgrounds.

We recognize that the complexity of residential care services and the challenges we face on a day to basis - 365 days per year - means we also need to provide an increased level of expertise, support, and leadership around these services. In the same way children in our homes require appropriate levels of a high structure and high nurture approach to their care, our services also share this need.

# Acorn Education And Care

Our residential services are managed by a Registered Manager and a Head of Care (Responsible Individual). Heads of Care are line managed by Heads of Service or Regional Directors' who manage both education and care settings. We then provide a centralized specialist residential care team of National Care Managers who report to the National Care Director, to work alongside and within the operating regions in a planned way, providing consistent supportive relationships and a structured system of improvement and development work. The National Care Team also help build relationships with regulators, local authorities and outside agencies who can help us be more effective in our work as well as delivering strategic improvement projects across the group.

Outcomes First Group operates a clearly defined improvement strategy, setting out our standards within an operational performance framework and improvement planning process that services work to collaboratively with senior leaders.

Heads of Care are accountable for quality performance and improvement to the National Care Team. The performance quality and improvement process underpin the residential governance process in which Registered Managers and Heads of Care represent their services locally to an accountable group of governors, chaired by the National Care Manager. This information is reviewed as part of the National Performance Board chaired by the National Care Director and finally at a board level Safeguarding & Quality Committee. This allows the group to challenge, understand and focus resource on residential services that need support to deliver the best possible outcomes for our children.

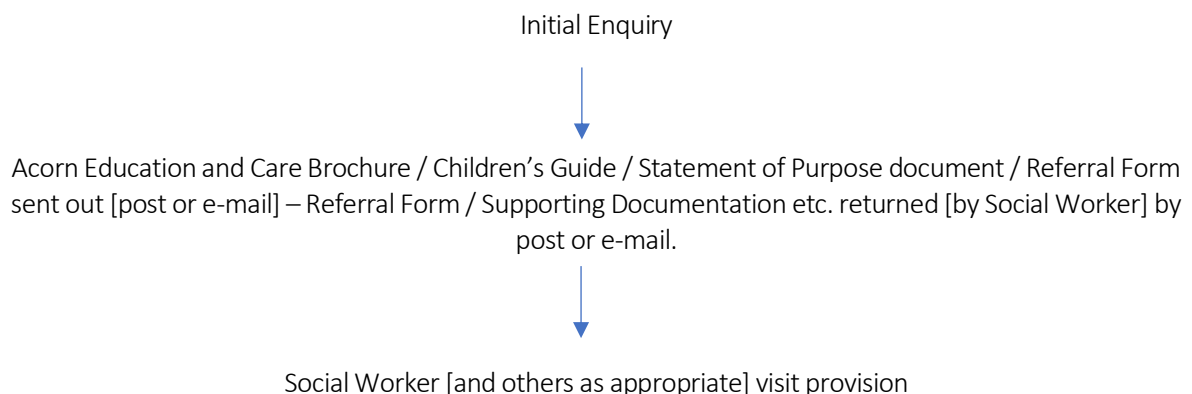
## 10. CARE PLANNING

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We always aim to ensure the admission process is as speedy and straight forward as possible.

Preferably, placements should be planned, providing for as smooth a transition as possible for the child concerned,

The flow chart below shows the normal Referral/Admissions Process. The process can be adjusted to accommodate individual referral circumstances.





# Acorn Education And Care

Completed Referral Form forwarded to Acorn Education and Care  
Informal discussions take place



Placement/Financial Agreement sent to SSD  
Social Worker/Placements Section confirms or rejects Agreements



Referral formally accepted  
Placement/Financial Agreement Signed  
Child introduced to home [visits, overnight stays]  
Key Worker introduced  
Care/Placement Planning Meeting: aims, objectives, timescales etc.



Internal Preparatory Work  
Admission followed by 72-hour Statutory Review

Elm House adopts a holistic approach to care and development, addressing the emotional, social, cultural, physical, and educational needs of the children.

We believe that our children should be cared for in a positive, non-discriminatory environment. Shortly after admission, each resident has a Placement Plan [where behaviour constitutes a key issue the Placement Plan may incorporate a Behaviour Management Plan], Health Plan and Risk Assessment formulated for them which aims to develop the child, keep him or her safe and foster a relationship based on equality, trust, equal value, dignity, and respect.

Wherever possible Risk Assessments are formulated ahead of admission and reviewed as soon as possible thereafter. Where appropriate, plans are shared with the child concerned. All plans are shared with and rectified by Case Managers.

We will complete a matching matrix to ensure that the children can be placed within the same home.

Elm House seeks to provide a safe and accepting environment where issues of loss and separation will be addressed, and expression of feelings encouraged in a positive and appropriate manner. In line with Acorn Education and Care policy, Elm House aims to deal with issues and meet needs associated with:

- Education & Leisure
- Health, Hygiene and Self Care
- Behavioural Issues
- Child Protection Issues
- Sex Education
- Interpersonal Skills & Socially acceptable behaviour
- Family contact
- Self Esteem/Confidence
- Skills/Emotional maturity
- Eating Disorders, substance abuse, self-harm.

Key day-to-day living arrangements include:

# Acorn Education And Care

- Main meals are taken together, in a family style atmosphere, and special dietary needs are catered for.
- Children have their own bedroom key with lockable spaces for personal possessions.
- Communal, as well as individual leisure/recreational activities, are made available and actively encouraged.
- Elm House is well equipped with a variety of games and equipment, e.g., games, DVDs, books, music, crafts, and other resources.

Whilst living at Elm House all children receive the following allowances:

- Pocket money/ savings
- Clothing and toiletries Money
- Personal allowances for activities/interests
- Birthday and Christmas Money

Each child has a designated keyworker. Elm House is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All Acorn Education and Care staff are committed to providing for the children in our care high quality, user-friendly care & support services. Children benefit from Acorn Education and Care's commitment to a 'small homes' policy, and a high staff to child ratio: this ensures that children get the focused care and attention they need and deserve.

Elm House's Residential Childcare Workers are responsible for providing, and promoting, the provision of various developmental aspects in the life of the child, which includes their health, physical needs, emotional security, social experience, sleep, clothing, and diet. Furthermore, all Residential Childcare Workers, and supporting residential staff, will ensure that they:

- Develop, and sustain, a manner of living, which encourages within each child a sense of stability, security, worth and responsibility.
- Positively promote and encourage awareness within each child of intellectual, religious, and cultural matters.
- Develop and maintain a sound professional and nurturing relationship with the child, based on the principals of mutual respect, and regular/meaningful consultation. RCCWs will ensure that this principle is maintained even though there may be specific periods where the behaviour of the child may be deemed as unacceptable.
- Promote and encourage the understanding, acceptance, and practice of acceptable forms of behaviour among ALL children residing at the home.
- Develop an understanding of the individual needs of each child, whilst encouraging the exchange of views and opinions between the staff and child.

## Appendix A - Wellbeing and Clinical Service

### Who Supports the Home and Young People

Wellbeing and Clinical Service support is available for all of our young people, residential teams and school teams, and is provided by a team of clinicians which serve a 'hub' of residential care homes and schools, and includes a range of clinical professionals. Each residential setting's designated clinical support will reflect the strengths and needs of the young people that live within the setting, however additional support can also be accessed from other specialists within the wider clinical services across the group where required. This enables us to be responsive to the needs of an individual throughout their placement with us.

Please find below a list of clinical members of the Robin hub, together with their professional qualifications. These clinicians may support any of the residential settings within the Westbourne hub:

Athena Hub Wellbeing and Clinical Service		
Clinical Employee Name	Job title	Qualifications
Heather Rigby	Wellbeing and Clinical Locality Lead Highly specialist Speech and Language Therapist	BSc (Hons) Human communication, Speech and Language Therapy HCPC Registered RCSLT registered
Rebekha Childs	Wellbeing and Clinical Services Coordinator Occupational Therapist	BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy HCPC Registered RCSLT registered
Elizabeth Crooks-Corr	Psychodynamic Psychotherapist	Ms Forensic Psychology BSc Psychology Clinical Diploma in Integrative Psychodynamic Counselling Registered with BACP
Dieter Jansons	Assistant Psychologist	MS Psychology Registered with BPS
<i>NB. list is live as of December 2023</i>		

## Appendix B – Wellbeing Model

### How The Home and Young People Are Supported

Our therapeutic offer is informed by the OFG Wellbeing Rainbow; this strategy places wellbeing at the core of everything we do. The rainbow represents a tiered approach to wellbeing support at a multi-professional level:



The overarching red and orange stripes apply to every OFG employee

### Wellbeing and Clinical Approach

The yellow stripe represents our core care and education teams, and how they ensure a young person's wellbeing through their nurturing and compassionate approach during every hour of a young person's day. The teams around each young person are trained to have the knowledge and skills to create inclusive communities and cultures which:-

- 1) Consistently deliver trauma informed practice (please see TIP leaflet available at request)
- 2) Use a Neurodivergent Affirmative approach (please see AAD leaflet available at request)
- 3) Adhere to each young person's individual support plan.

Our goal is to create inclusive communities within our residential settings to ensure young people are engaged in their development and increasing independence and have a sense of belonging in their home that will have either a primary focus based in the neurodivergent affirmative approach (Options Autism) or Trauma Informed Practice (Acorn Education and Care). These approaches are seamlessly blended to meet the specific needs of each home's individuals. As part of meeting the needs of individuals, we have developed two core clinically informed strategies – one focused on Autistic/Neurodiverse individuals (Ask, Accept, Develop) and the other focused on those with lived experience of trauma (Trauma Informed Practice)

# Acorn Education And Care

principles of Co-reflect, Connect, Co-regulate). Both strategies are based on clinically informed, evidence-based practice and the most up to date research base.

Our homes embed, implement and take ownership of the concepts of AAD and CCC through training and the accreditation process. This allows us to plan, consistently deliver training and monitor best-practice in collaboration with care governance processes. The homes will self-review to identify areas for development. Homes are able to achieve a quality standard assurance rating of Bronze, Silver or Gold according to their current level of delivery. Further information on the AAD and CCC strategies are available on request.

## Universal Offer

The green stripe reflects the OFG Universal Offer. This is where the clinical service can support further around the creation and maintenance of a therapeutic environment and staff approach.

The clinical service will facilitate regular 'reflective practice' for the whole care team. These sessions recognise the emotional impact that living with traumatised young people can have on the team members' own sense of emotional and physical wellbeing. Colleagues are supported to express, reflect upon and process their thoughts and feelings in relation to their roles with the young people, their colleagues and of events and incidents. Processing in this way enables the team to continue to provide a milieu which can respond to a child or young person's communications and presenting needs therapeutically.

The clinical service will support residential settings to become TIP and AAD accredited: this may be via contribution to care staff training, offering of supervision to TIP and AAD champions, and monitoring to ensure that TIP and AAD are at the centre of the homes practice.

The clinical service might provide further targeted and bespoke training or resources to the care team at this level.

## Enhanced Offer

The blue stripe reflects the OFG Enhanced Offer. This is where the clinical service is involved with individual young people, primarily indirectly, through working closely with the team around the young person to develop a shared understanding their needs. The TIP and AAD approaches are used to inform thinking and practice at this level.

When a young person arrives in our residential settings, an initial assessment will be completed based on the young person's existing paperwork, discussions with, and information gathered from, key adults and the young person's views. This aids the creation of a clinical overview, which includes a formulation, recommendations and agreed targets to work towards. Following the initial clinical overview, the young person may move to the universal or specialist offer.

Multi-disciplinary team meetings, attended by the clinical, residential and education team, are held regularly for all residential young people. The meeting will review the therapeutic care plan, analyse outcome measures, identify what has worked well and consider areas that remain a barrier to the young person's quality of life and achievement. The outcomes of these meetings inform relevant goals for the young people and progress towards meeting them.

At this level of offer, clinicians may also attend other professionals' meetings e.g. 'LAC Reviews'. They will also be involved in supporting the development of that young person's communication profile and sensory profiles, all in line with AAD and TIP approaches.

The enhanced offer may also involve programme led group or individual interventions, co-delivered by supervised members of the clinical service and supporting care or education staff.

# Acorn Education And Care

The clinical service might also supervise or coach care or education staff to deliver specific interventions.

## **Specialist Offer**

The violet stripe represents the most specialist support provided to our most complex young people. This is where clinicians have identified the need for direct involvement with a young person. This will be in addition to involvement described above.

Individual or group-based evidence-based interventions are delivered by our clinicians, who are trained in disciplines which focus on increasing wellbeing through: communication (Speech and Language Therapists); enabling access to/improving independence with functional skills (Occupational Therapists); and mental health (Psychologists and Psychotherapists). Clinicians may need to work closely with clinical colleagues in our local communities and ensure that our young people also access statutory services such as CAMHS as necessary.

## Appendix C – Crisis Prevention Institute Safety

All members of the care teams within the home are trained within Crisis Prevention Institute Safety Intervention Foundation level training (CPI).

This first tier training incorporates trauma-informed and person-centred approaches integral to the application of the model. CPI focus on prevention through de-escalation techniques through to non-restrictive and restrictive intervention.

If a child in the home demonstrates increased extreme risk behaviours, the home can increase this training to the advanced and emergency training model highlighted below - this is assessed through behavioural observation and assessment of risk and tailored to the individual needs of the child. Outcomes First Group (OFG) have set a clear procedure to follow in times where a service feels there is a justified need for Advanced and Emergency Disengagements and/or Holding Skills. This procedure requires services to make an application to the Reducing Restrictive Practices (RRP) Board. CPI will then be commissioned to complete a validation visit and compile a report that is then presented to the board for authorisation.

Each level of training will then be refreshed every 12 months as part of mandatory training. Also covered as part of the training will be the law around physical interventions, including any changes/updates to legislation, (DFES & DOH) and regulations such as the Children's Homes (England) Regulations.

The CPI ethos is to ensure physical intervention is used as a last resort except in circumstances of immediate risk, threat of danger or serious harm as per company values and legislation. Care teams, where possible, are to communicate to all children before physical intervention is initiated as a possible measure to ensure they remain safe, giving an opportunity to co-regulate. After any physical intervention, this will be revisited to communicate why this was an appropriate measure – for example, to prevent serious harm to themselves or someone else. Relationships can be fractured during any incident, especially those of a physical nature, and an opportunity will be given within a reasonable amount of time for all parties to co-connect and co-reflect, re-attuning the relationship by talking through incidents, via debriefs, key working and/or mediation group work.

OFG is an affiliate member of Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), and services subscribe to either one of the below Safety Interventions (SI) packages – Foundation, Advanced or Advanced and Emergency. The arena of education also covers residential services and health/human cater to the group's adult division. The benefits of the CPI model are that it has a tiered approach based on the needs of an individual. CPI has 3 levels - this also sits in line with the organisations well-being model.

## Safety Intervention - Foundation™



Table 1: Disengagement

Name & Sequence Market	Strike	Wrist	Clothes	Hair	Neck	Body	Bite	Interventions (1 staff)			
								Low	Medium	High	
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Health/Human	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Timings (minutes)	90										

KEY
Green ✓ = Foundation Safety Interventions included
Red x = Skills not included

Table 2: Holding

Name & Sequence Market	Seated			Standing			Team Interventions (2 staff)	Transitions (2 staff)	Children Holds			
	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High			Seated (chair)	Seated (floor)	Standing	
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Health/Human	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	
Timings (minutes)	150											

As noted, CPI SI Foundation Training is our core training that all care team adults are trained within, which incorporates trauma informed and person-centred approaches. The programme has a focus on prevention, it also teaches de-escalation skills as well as non-restrictive and restrictive interventions. The programme is Restraint Reduction Network (RRN) certificated training curricula.

## Safety Intervention - Advanced™



Table 1: Disengagement

Name & Sequence Market	Strike	Wrist	Clothes	Hair	Neck	Body	Site	Interventions (1 staff)			Neck (high risk)
								Low	Medium	High	
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health/Human	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Timings (minutes)	90										15

KEY
Green ✓ = Foundation Safety Interventions included
Red x = Skills not included
Yellow ✓ = Advanced Skills included

Table 2: Holding

Name & Sequence Market	Seated			Standing			Team Interventions (2 staff)	Transitions (2 staff)	Children Holds			3 <sup>rd</sup> Person		Advanced Team Interventions (3 staff)	Transitions (3 staff)	Standing to floor transitions (Slips, Trips and Falls)		Standing to floor transitions (Slips, Trips and Falls)	
	Low	Med	High	Low	Med	High			Seated (chair)	Seated (floor)	Standing	Seated	Standing			Standing to Seated	Standing to Seated	Standing to Seated	Standing to Seated
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health/Human	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Timings (minutes)	150											30	20	15	35	35	35	35	





## Appendix D – Outcomes First Group

### Who are we?

In 2016, NFA Group combined forces with Acorn Education and Care to create the UK's leading and largest Children's care provider. With over 2 decades of experience and a positive reputation as a specialist, multi-divisional organisation, the NFA Group provided high-quality Education, Care and Fostering services to vulnerable children and young people, offering them a safe and nurturing environment in which to learn, grow and succeed.

2019 saw this position further strengthened by the alliance of the NFA Group and Outcomes First Group creating the unified Group you see today – a Group which has become a vital part of local communities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with a renowned reputation for quality and positive outcomes for the people we care for.

The children's and young people's part of the organisation is divided into 2 clear areas.

1. **Acorn education and care** – this is our universal offering of SEMH care made up of 35 children's homes, 2 residential Schools and 32 schools. Our services support young people with emotional behavioural difficulties, young people diagnosed on the ASD spectrum, emerging mental health, 12-week assessment and homes that specialise in pathway to fostering and transitions to adulthood. (These services include homes under the following legal entities Bryn Melyn Care, Pathway Care homes, Hilcrest children's services and ECS homes)
2. **Options autism** – this is our specialist services for young people with complex learning disabilities including autism and social, emotional, and mental health needs made up of 20 services. (These services include homes under the following legal options autism, underlay gardens, Acorn Park, Falklands House and Holistic Care)

Within the group we have homes that are specialists under the above bracket however we understand that young people may move in and out of higher and lower acuity need based on their behavioural responses to their trauma and attachment needs so we have developed well-being and CPI models that are able to adapt to the needs of the young people in our care.

For example, a home may sit under acorn education and care with a young person under a universal package, they may then hit a period of crisis and the needs of that child may escalate. Rather than destabilising the child further and moving the young person we are able to bolt on additional training, advanced CPI needs, and additional packages of clinical investment based on the needs of the child to support that young person.