

Ref: 2



The Shires Stretton Children's Home

Statement of Purpose



Contents

Reviewed and revised by Kirsty Truesdale Updated December 2021

1. Quality and purpose of care standard - A statement of the range of needs of the children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation.
2. Details of the children's home's ethos, and the outcomes that the children's home seeks to achieve and its approach to achieving them.
3. A description of the accommodation offered by the children's home.
4. A description of the home's location.
5. The arrangements for supporting the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of children.
6. Details of who to contact if a person has a complaint about the home and how that person can access the home's complaint policy.
7. Details of how a person, body or organisation involved in the care or protection of a child can access the home's child protection policies or behaviour management policy.
8. A description of the home's policy and approach in relation to anti-discriminatory practice in respect of children and their families.
9. Education - Details of provision to support children with special educational needs.
10. Dual registration information
11. Arrangements to attend local schools
12. Enjoyment and achievement - The arrangements for enabling children to take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills.
13. Health - Details of any healthcare or therapy.
14. Positive relationships - The arrangements for promoting contact between children and their family and friends.
15. Protection of children - A description of the home's approach to the monitoring and surveillance of children.
16. The home's approach to behavioural support.
17. Leadership and management – details of the registered provider Responsible Individual and Registered Manager.
18. Details of the experience and qualifications of staff, including any staff commissioned to provide education and health care.
19. Details of the management and staffing structure of the home, covering arrangements for professional supervision of staff, including staff that provide education or health care.
20. If staff are all of one sex, or mainly of one sex, a description of how the home promotes appropriate role models of both sexes.
21. Care planning - Any criteria used for the admission of children to the home, including any policies and procedures for emergency admission.
22. Fire precautions adopted by The Shires.

Introduction

The Statement of Purpose (SOP) is a requirement under Regulation 16 of the Children's Home Regulations 2015 Schedule 1 – 'Matters to be included in the Statement of Purpose'. It is provided to HMCI as part of the home's registration process and is available on request by any person working at the home, any child accommodated at the home, the parent of any child accommodated at the home and the placing authority of any child placed at the home.

Quality and purpose of care

1. A statement of the range of needs of the children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation

The Shires at Stretton is a children's home, which also has an onsite school at the same location and in the same building. The home is for 14 Children with learning difficulties. Additionally, the children who live at The Shires may have learning difficulties, such as Autism, global developmental delay, challenging behaviour and other conditions such as ADHD, epilepsy and dyspraxia. The Children at The Shires may also have other associated medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma or allergies.

Children placed at The Shires all have Education, Health and Care Plans (statement of special educational needs) that set out their specific needs and the strategies that should be employed in order for their needs to be met.

The Children are likely to have learning difficulties, although the extent to which this hampers them in their daily lives will vary from child to child. Nevertheless, the Children at The Shires are recognised as being vulnerable in terms of their autism and learning difficulties and so there are high staff ratios to reflect the needs identified for each individual young person.

2. Details of the children's home's ethos, and the outcomes that the children's home seeks to achieve and its approach to achieving them.

The Shires at Stretton home are committed to providing care to children/Children who have a learning disability on a long/medium/short-term basis depending on the needs of the young person. The Shires provides a holistic, safe, stimulating and supporting family environment where children/Children cared for can live, learn and develop.

The staff team at The Shires are highly committed to working intensively providing care and support to all Children who come to live here.

The home endeavors to avoid the negative aspects usually associated with institutional residential living and create an environment and atmosphere that reflects many of the positive aspects of a normal family home. Due to the size and nature of the home, there are some elements of security within the site that can appear institutional, but these are in place to ensure Children are safeguarded at all times. These are discussed later in this SOP.

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

- a) To return to live with their family,
- b) To live with foster carers,
- c) To move into supported, semi-independent living accommodation,
- d) To move into fully independent living accommodation,
- e) To move into another form of residential placement.

Prior to admission, every effort is made to establish the long-term plans for each young person and a care plan is prepared which clearly focuses on his or her individual needs. If necessary, the care plan can encompass access to counselling, behaviour support, and development of life skills, semi/full-independent living packages and communication method.

The ethos of The Shires at Stretton is very much characterized by a 'can do' attitude. Staff share the value of creating a home for Children that is free from discriminatory views and reflects a family nurturing atmosphere.

Staff at The Shires are experienced in supporting Children with autism and understand how and when the environment needs to be adapted in order to maximize the potential of each individual. The Shires' approach is firmly based on a therapeutic model, supporting staff to help the youngsters make sense of the world in which they live.

Staff are well trained in working with children with autism and understand the need for the Children to have clearly identified routines and continuity. Therefore, life at The Shires is predictable but challenging for the Children concerned, and eminently rewarding. Good planning is fundamental to the success of the home. The adherence to schedules, and the identification of key people who work in the same way, and who understand the impact of change on the Children, characterise policy and practice.

Each young person has a key worker allocated to them who ensures that the young person's care plan and targets reflect their changing needs and the progress they are making. Key workers work with a nominated colleague on the teaching staff to ensure consistency.

At The Shires, a strong focus is placed on helping the children to become independent and to respond flexibly to the demands of the wider world. The child's voice is very important and staff are keen to involve the children in the day-to-day running of the home.

All of the Children have very different communication difficulties, so programs to support their learning are individual to them. Routines, symbols and signs support communication, and all contact staff are familiar with PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), and Makaton. We also use iPads with communication apps on them for some of our Children. The children in the home are supported by our own Speech and Language Therapist.

The ultimate goal of The Shires is to create a centre of excellence that provides the best care and education possible in the best environment that can be achieved. The Shires uses a highly individualised child-centred approach in all aspects of care and education.

The aims of The Shires at Stretton's children's home are to:-

- ❖ provide a safe, caring and healthy environment where children can thrive and develop independence;
- ❖ ensure that the children are involved in as many aspects of their care as possible;
- ❖ encourage the children to 'have a voice' and to make their views and ideas known so that they can be taken on board;
- ❖ ensure that each child is treated as an individual so that they have a clear sense of their own identity;
- ❖ promote and celebrate diversity, and;
- ❖ Provide a wide range of exciting and challenging opportunities that meet the individual needs of the children.

The objectives for the children in The Shires at Stretton are that they will:

- ❖ achieve their best in terms of physical, emotional, social and academic development;
- ❖ feel that they are part of a home that is characterised by a warm and child-centered ethos;
- ❖ know and understand what is expected of them;
- ❖ understand the role they play in helping the home to run effectively;
- ❖ be willing to challenge themselves to achieve greater levels of independence within the constraints of their autism, and;
- ❖ Know that their views are important and that staff listen to them.

3. A description of the accommodation offered by the children's home including

a. how accommodation has been adapted to the needs of children cared for by the children's home

The Shires provides comfortable purpose designed residential accommodation for up to 14 children. The main building provides accommodation for nine children. Additionally, three bedrooms are provided in the cottage adjacent to the main building and a further two bedrooms are located at Stowe Court, a house in the local village. All areas of the children's home are decorated and furnished attractively. The furniture, flooring and soft furnishings have been thoughtfully selected and designed to provide robust and safe surroundings that retain a homely, domestic character.



The Cottage



Stowe Court House

Everything down to the bedding and linens is chosen to provide each child with the same kind of living environment they might have at home. Individual tastes can be accommodated and children can decorate their rooms as they wish. The choice of furnishings and equipment is informed and guided by what staff and managers would choose for their own children. If they would not have something in their own homes, it is not good enough for the children who live at The Shires.

In the main building, cottage and at Stowe Court House the children can relax and eat in pleasant and spacious lounge and dining areas. The lounges are equipped with TV and DVD players and have a good selection of toys, books and traditional and electronic games that are regularly renewed and added to. The furniture is colourful, attractive and provides plenty of varied seating options for the children, enabling them to enjoy some personal space or join with others as they wish. Therapy and quiet spaces are provided within the home and there are areas in all buildings for children to spend calm time. In the main building, there are two

adjoining relaxation rooms; one is equipped with a sensory bubble tube and fibre optic lighting. The areas have soft furnishing and soft lighting where children can elect to spend calm time either alone or with staff. In the relaxation rooms, the children can choose the colour of lighting that matches their mood at the time.



In the main building, there is a large dining area and fully equipped kitchen this includes all appliances and domestic style, dining tables and chairs; with enough separate tables for the children to maintain the space they require to eat comfortably. At the cottage and at Stowe Court house there is also ample dining space for Children to have their meals in the kitchen/dining area. The cottage kitchen is currently keypad coded to prevent young people gaining access and hurting themselves. 5This is required due to the complex needs of the children currently residing there.

There are facilities for children to independently choose snacks and drinks from the fridge and freezer and use the microwave and toaster to make snacks whenever they want.

The bathrooms provide plenty of showers, baths, basins and toilets to meet the needs of the children and afford the children privacy when they need it. In the main building three rooms have an en-suite bathroom while the other rooms share three toilet areas with three toilets, two baths and two shower/wet rooms. There are additional toilet areas with one wheelchair accessible toilet in the annex area, which includes shower facilities and two toilets (one male and one female) on the first floor of the main building. In the cottage, one room has an en-suite bathroom while the other two bedrooms share a large bathroom, which allows space for more supported personal care. At Stowe Court house, there is a large bathroom, which is a shared between the two bedrooms, in additional there is a further toilet and washbasin situated upstairs

The main building has a life skills kitchen that is fitted out with domestic appliances and



designed so that children can be encouraged to acquire independent skills. This facility is used by the home for children to prepare their own snacks and drinks and to learn to do their own laundry, and by the school for lifelong learning lessons. The cottage and Stowe Court house also have kitchens that are fitted out with domestic appliances so Children can prepare their own snacks, drinks, meals and learn how to do their own laundry and gain other domestic skills

During the waking day, at least one member of staff supports each child in the home at all times. During the school day support staff come to class with the children and work with them under the direction of the teacher. After school, the same support staff go back with the children to continue their evening activities with them. At night, a team of five waking night staff supervises children in the main building and cottage. At Stowe Court house, one waking night staff support the children. Teams of therapists providing speech and language, occupational and emotional therapy, art therapy and music therapy support the children and the staff teams in school as well as in the home. The Shires main building has one cooks who prepare wholesome and nutritious meals to suit the individual dietary preferences of each child. All children are encouraged and supported to shop for ingredients to prepare and cook their own evening meals.

The main building, cottage and Stowe Court house have all been refurbished, and extended to meet the highest health and safety and environmental standards. This includes a spacious, brand new commercial kitchen in the main building, and a state of the art fire alarm system and electronically controlled doors throughout the main building and cottage including electronic fire door stops. Stowe Court house also has a state of the art fire alarm system including electronic doorstops. The continuous refurbishment and decoration programme ensures that the accommodation is always maintained to an excellent standard.

b. the age, range, number and sex of children for whom it is intended that accommodation is to be provided

The Shires is registered as both children's home and a school. The children's home can accommodate up to 14 children and Children who may be male or female between the ages of 11 and 19 years. The school can admit up to additional 6-day pupils who may be male or female. The day pupils attend school on a daily basis only. The children's home is open for 52 weeks per year, and Children may board on a weekly, termly or annual basis.

c. the type of accommodation including sleeping accommodation

The Shires children's home comprises of three buildings designed to provide accommodation for 14 children with all the bedrooms on the ground floor at the main building and cottage. Stowe Court house is organised over three floors with one bedroom being located on the ground floor and the other on the third floor.

The main building has nine bedrooms, all of which are single occupancy and three rooms have en-suite bathrooms. In the cottage, there are three single bedrooms,



one of which has an en-suite bathroom. Stowe Court house has two bedrooms, which share a large bathroom.

All children sleep in single or double beds and each bedroom has sufficient storage space for clothes and personal effects. Each bedroom has soft furnishings of an individual design. Curtains and bedding are of domestic style and quality. Children can decorate their walls with paint, posters or pictures of their own choosing. Each bedroom has a desk and chair and children are encouraged to complete homework tasks in their bedrooms. Additionally, if they have large projects to work on they can access the large breakfast bar or life skills kitchen table.

The home has professionally managed broadband with age appropriate filters and child-protection and the children are able to access Wi-Fi to support them in their learning and for leisure activities.

The children accommodated at The Shires are provided with all of their bedroom furniture, bedding and towels. If children are placed on 52-weeks, CLA (Child Looked After) basis they are also provided with clothes and shoes. Furniture in bedrooms and shared areas such as the lounge, dining and kitchen, whilst sturdy and practical, is chosen to ensure that the house has a homely feel to it.

The Shires children's home has 14 bedrooms between the main building, cottage and Stowe Court house, designed to accommodate a maximum of 14 children and Children. There is a medical room in the main building.

All windows have restrictor on them to prevent the young people exiting through them or falling through them.

Children in the home are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and family and have access to several phones. They are able to make and take phone calls in privacy.

The children are provided with all of their meals and snacks. Meals are balanced, attractively prepared and designed to take account of the choices and preferences of the children.

4. A description of the location of the home

The Shires main building and cottage are located in a rural setting close to the village of Stretton in Rutland, off a slip road to the southbound side of the A1. The Shires sits in 3 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds. On a phased basis, areas of the grounds were securely fenced and then landscaped or 'adventure-scaped' to provide a number of play and adventure spaces each of which offers a different experience for the children. The cottage has its own large garden and patio area within the grounds. Stowe Court house is a semi-detached house situated in a small cul-de-sac in a rural location close to the village of Stretton; it has a large garden which is fenced all around and which is accessed through French windows that lead onto a paved patio area

The children are encouraged to spend time outdoors exploring the grounds and making use of the outdoor play equipment.

The Shires main building has in its grounds a sensory garden, which contains many different features such as mounds, a willow igloo and a range of flowers and shrubs, which encourage wildlife and biodiversity. There is a large fence around the grounds and gates, which are pad locked to prevent children exiting the grounds without our supervision and to ensure their safety at all times.



The Shires main building, cottage and Stowe Court house are all within easy walking distance of a local shop. The neighbours are very comfortable about the position of the children's home and supportive. The Shires has its own vehicles, with access to Grantham and Peterborough mainline railway stations for longer journeys.

The Registered Manager carries out a regular review of the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the children's home in line with "The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 [Regulation 46] ("the Children's Homes Regulations") taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c)(the protections of children standard). The location review's purpose is to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place to identify any risk or potential risks to the children. The location review is carried out in consultation with, as well as taking into account the views of, each relevant person including the local police and the local safeguarding children's board (LSCB).

5. The arrangements for supporting the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of children.

The Shires welcomes children from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds. It is non-denominational, and staff show respect for all religions and cultures. Cultural differences are celebrated and shared where possible and appropriate.

Some of the children who live at The Shires come from homes where English is not the main spoken language. Staff come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and are often able to converse with a child or his/her parents in their own language. Where there is a barrier to communication because of a child's linguistic difficulties, augmented communication is promoted at a level appropriate to the individual child. For example, symbols might be used to support communication or applications on an iPad.

As part of the pre-admission process, the Registered Manager ensures that information is provided about the child's religious needs. Careful discussions with parents allow the staff to ensure that customs and practices from home are, wherever possible, continued and valued within The Shires. Where parents/carers would like their children to attend a place of worship on a regular basis, staff make appropriate arrangements to facilitate this.

6. Details of who to contact if a person has a complaint about the home and how that person can access the home's complaint policy

A formal procedure exists for making complaints and on admission, children's families are made aware of the complaints policy.

The Shires takes all complaints seriously and treats them confidentially. All complaints are treated impartially and in accordance with the policy and no complaint results in a child or their family being treated unfavorably.

All complaints are recorded and senior managers monitor the complaints log. Anyone wishing to make a complaint about the home can direct their complaint in writing to the Register Manager. The Registered Manager will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days with a copy of the complaint procedure attached. The Registered Manager will investigate the complaint and provide a written response within 20 days. Anyone wishing to make a complaint can also write to the Registered Manager requesting a copy of the complaints policy.

On admission the complaints procedure is gone through with Children. This is done verbally, in writing and in pecs dependent on the child's needs. The key carer and manager will regularly meet with Children to ensure they are happy using their communicator and pecs boards to see if they are unhappy about anything.

Part of the key worker role is to help Children understand the difference between right and wrong. It is not acceptable for Children to be hurt and the keyworker supports their ability to know when and how to raise a concern. If a young person raises a concern this is treated and managed the same way as all complaints.

Complaints Procedures

Each young person in the home has access to:

- A child friendly format of The Shires Internal Complaints Procedures and the services of an independent representative;
- The Complaints Procedure of the responsible local authority;
- Contact details of their social worker, independent reviewing officer and child line;
- Ofsted Tel: 0300 123 1231;
- Write to Ofsted (NBU) Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD, and;
- Organisations representing the interests of Children being looked after, e.g. Child-line and Voice for the Child in Care.

Additionally, all Children are actively encouraged to express their concerns regarding the quality of care they are receiving or any other issue. These can be raised during individual meetings with their key worker, during the weekly house meetings or directly to a senior manager on duty.

We promote advocacy and Children are made aware of advocacy services available to them through their Local authority. The home will also request an advocate for Children when required or requested.

7. Details of how a person, body or organisation involved in the care or protection of a child can access the home's child protection policies or behaviour management policy

Our head office is located at:

1 Merchants Place |
River Street |

The Shires is part of Autism Options (Outcomes first 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 child and young person 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.

The staff at The Shires are proactive in promoting the welfare of the children and understand the importance of safeguarding the children for whom they provide care.

The following guidelines form part of the Safeguarding Policy and all staff are made aware of these at induction, and reminded about them when they start working with the Children through supervision.

- All staff have a duty of care and a duty to respond to, and report, any suspicion of abuse, or any child who may be at risk of any significant harm or abuse;
- No member of staff will ask leading questions;
- All information will be passed on immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- All staff receive annual training in Safeguarding Children;
- Managers receive Safeguarding Children training up to level 3 (now known as Inter-Agency Working in Partnership);
- All safeguarding issues are monitored by the Responsible Individual; Katie Harrison (pending registration)
- When a referral is made to the local safeguarding team it will be sent within 24 hours of receipt of information;
- Information will be sent to the Local Authority, the Local Authority Designated Officer(LADO) and Ofsted within 24 hours;
- All information will be dated and signed and kept in a locked drawer, and:
- The staff recognize the Charter of Children's Rights (Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Designated Safeguarding Leads	
DSL	Registered Manager, Kirsty Truesdale Head of Service and Responsible Individual: Charlotte Niekerk. Deputy Manager, Munya Sachikonye Team Manager, Phil Staples Team Manager, Jessica Wong
Organisational DSL	Group head of safeguarding – Ann-Marie Delaney

Children at The Shires are very well supervised at all times. Bullying is not a feature of the way in which children who live at The Shires interact with one another, largely because their autism often means that they do not intend to hurt their housemates.

The children who live in The Shires home all have autism and have at least 1:1 staffing during the day. They generally do not choose to absent themselves from the home.

Nonetheless The Shires has in place a Missing Child Policy which states that The Shires adheres to the Joint Protocol 2017 - Children and Children who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care produced by Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Leicestershire Police. The Shires Missing Child Policy sets out the steps the home will take in case a child is absent without permission. The policy also sets out details of staff roles and responsibilities in case a child goes missing.

On occasions, children enjoy home visits. Parents who are unable to return the children on the agreed day are expected to contact The Shires to explain the circumstances that are preventing their child from returning at the planned time. If a child does not return as planned, and no communication is received from parents, staff follow this up and inform the appropriate authorities.

The Registered Manager may call for the placing authority to review a child's care plan where the child has been persistently absent from the home, or if the child is considered to be at risk of harm. The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 places a duty on local authority to react to this request. Likewise, the host authority may request additional care review if they consider a child to be at risk of harm.

8. A description of the home's policy and approach in relation to -

(a) Anti-discriminatory practice in respect of children and their families

The promotion of partisan political views within the children's home by members of staff is strictly prohibited. Children and Children however are free to have their own political views.

The staff and managers at The Shires do not tolerate any discrimination against children or their families on any issue including racial identity, physical appearance, sexuality, age, religion and disability. It is the responsibility of staff and management to challenge discrimination when it is apparent.

The following principles apply:

- The Shires provides placements to children and Children based on whether the child meets the admissions criteria, and; whether the home can meet the child's needs.
- All staff are recruited purely on merit and their ability to do the job.
- Those responsible for arranging placements and recruiting staff are aware of both positive and negative discrimination and act accordingly.
- All staff are required to be aware of and challenge discriminatory actions whatever their source, including those of their colleagues and Children living at The Shires.
- Tackling discrimination is a process of education, not punishment.
- Children at The Shires are supported to practice the faith of their, or their families, choice and where necessary appropriate support and advice is provided by staff or from recognised sources within the child's chosen faith group

(b) Children's rights

Recognising the rights of the children is central to the ethos of The Shires. Staff receive training in ensuring that the rights of the children are met, and that if the child cannot take the responsibility that affords him/her those rights, the staff act on the child's behalf. The Shires staff recognise the Charter of Children's Rights (Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Education

9. Details of provision to support children with special educational needs

All of the children who live at The Shires have statements of special educational needs (or an Educational Health Care Plan) and all have autism. Some of the Children need help with their communication as they have difficulty in verbalising their ideas and thoughts and augmented communication systems are in place, such as PECS, to support them. Children living in The Shires are highly reliant on structures and routines because of their autism. To support them TEACCH type schedules are in place and are designed around the needs of the individual child. For example, some children need picture prompts, others word prompts. Children living at The Shires are vulnerable because of their autism, and are highly staffed to enable them to access the community, develop independence, and to live full and active lives.

10. If the home is registered as a school, details of the curriculum provided by the home and the management and structure of the arrangements for education

The Shires is registered as children's home and a school. The Shires school is registered with the DfE to provide education for up to 20 pupils. Children at the home attend school from 09.00 to 14.30 Monday to Friday. The school is staffed with qualified teachers and support staff. The school curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and P Levels, which are adapted to individual student's cognitive ability and stated needs to ensure that every child achieves the highest level of educational attainment possible. The Shires operates a 24-hours curriculum, which cuts across the school and children's home.

The staff in the home work closely with the teaching staff to ensure that learning and skills from one setting are developed and practised in the other. Teaching staff spend time with students in the home practising home management skills, for example, whilst care staff support the children in class when required. Resources are shared and children can access class-based resources outside school hours.

11. If the home is not registered as a school, the arrangements for children to attend local schools and the provision made by the home to promote children's educational achievement

The Shires' children's home is dually registered as a children's home and a school for up to 20 (14 boarders and 6 day) children and Children of mixed genders.

All Children that live at the home can attend the school and the home and school work closely together with support from occupational therapy, play therapy and run the same behaviour management and therapeutic model to allow consistency and positive outcomes.

The school runs a 38-week curriculum and is registered for 20 Children, 14 from the home and 6-day pupils. Day pupils can be increased if the number of Children from the home reduces.

Enjoyment and achievement

12. The arrangements for enabling children to take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills

The Shires' leisure curriculum provides the children with a range of interesting and engaging activities outside the time spent in the classroom. Staff in the home follow the 24 hour curriculum planning provided by the school and ensure that children are offered a wide range of experiences which may include visits to:-

- ❖ places of interest, including historic buildings, nature reserves and parks;
- ❖ leisure facilities which provide activities such as ice skating, horse riding, sailing, swimming;
- ❖ adventure playgrounds and recreational and sports facilities for PE, games and other activities such as ten pin bowling;
- ❖ country parks and the seaside, and;
- ❖ Local sites of interest such as farms, shops and garages.



During holiday periods, children's activity weeks are organised where special activities are arranged. These special activities may include canoeing, kayaking, climbing, camping and other outdoor adventure activities, as well as trips further afield.

Children are encouraged to join local groups such as youth clubs and are given the support they need to enable them to access these activities. They also share events with the local community such as having a stall in the village fete and planting trees in the local area.

Strong emphasis is placed on the children developing their own cultural heritage and identity, and widening their understanding of other cultures. Arrangements are made for children to attend church or mosque services where they or their families wish. Food can be a great motivator for children with autism and provides a very easy and enjoyable way of helping children to learn about the way in which people from other cultures and countries share mealtimes and to sample the type of food they prepare. The children are regularly taken out for a meal in a local café or restaurant so that they can observe and learn the social skills associated with such occasions.

Close links are maintained between the school and the home and children are encouraged to carry out any homework tasks they have been set.

Some of the children who live at The Shires have difficulty in organising and managing their own leisure time because they have severe learning difficulties and are only working at a low cognitive level. Staff support these children by playing games with them and taking them out on walks and visits within the local and wider communities. Most of the children enjoy playing on computers and whilst this is encouraged, staff monitor usage carefully to ensure that the children do not become over-obsessed to the extent that they exclude all of the other activities on offer. Children have internet access but this is regulated in line with The Shires' e-safety policy.

Health

13. Details of any healthcare or therapy provided including -

(a) Details of the qualifications and professional supervision of the staff involved in providing any healthcare or therapy; and

Children in the home receive support through CAMHS psychiatrist, clinical/educational psychologist, communication speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and music therapist.

Children only receive therapy where it is specified within their placement plans (EHCP or Statement of Educational needs) and agreed with the child's parents and placing authority. Only a licensed or registered practitioner carries out any therapy provision and all registrations are checked against the appropriate professional registers. All therapists employed to work at The Shires have current enhanced DBS clearance and they work as consultants. No member of staff will provide therapy for which they are not trained and supervised.

A team of therapists providing speech and language, occupational therapy and music therapy support the Children and the staff team in school as well as in the home.

(b) Information about how the effectiveness of any healthcare or therapy provided is measured, the evidence demonstrating its effectiveness and details of how the information or the evidence can be accessed

Regular informal meetings take place between the therapists and management. Formal multi-disciplinary team meetings take place on a termly basis and provide an excellent forum for sharing approaches, assessing the effectiveness of approaches and monitoring the progress of individual children. Therapists have input into monthly primary care meetings so that staff are continuously updated about ongoing therapies and programmes.

All therapists produce regular termly reports of children's progress. Any issues arising from one therapy session are shared at the regular Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings and all therapists support the child in dealing with these issues. All therapy reports are stored securely both electronically and in children's files.

All information about the work of the therapists with the children are mostly stored electronically on a secure server as well as in secure files in dedicated offices in the children's

home and school. These are accessible only to authorised personnel. This information is made available to parents, guardians and placing authority on request and in line with regulations.

Some of the Children will be open to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Staff have a good working relationship with local services and can arrange regular medication reviews to support Children's progress

Positive relationships

14. The arrangements for promoting contact between children and their family and friends

Children in the home are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and family and have access to several phones. They are able to make and take phone calls in private.

Except in circumstances that have been specified by a court order, or agreed as part of the care plan, every effort is made to enable children to maintain contact with their family and friends.

When a child is joins The Shires, arrangements are made for, them to maintain contact with their parents and other significant people in their lives in the most appropriate way for the child and his/her family. The arrangements, which will cover home visits, contact by phone, email or post, and visits from parents to the home are written into the child's care plan and the staff support the child in managing and preparing for the contact according to their needs.

Where appropriate children have a personal email address, and items of post or emails are passed to the child by care staff immediately. The home makes regular contact with the child's parents to keep them informed about how their child is getting on and school sends home regular updates of activities and progress.

Protection of children

15. A description of the home's approach to the monitoring and surveillance of children

There is no electronic or mechanical surveillance equipment used within area of The Shires children's home that are accessed by children. However, there is CCTV around the outside of the main building and school, which is pointed outwards towards anyone approaching the building. There is a clear sign on the front entrance informing anyone approaching the front door that CCTV system is operational at the front entrance. The CCTV was installed as an added level of security to keep the children at The Shires safer by monitoring whoever comes in or goes out of the building at all times.

16. Details of the home's approach to behavioural support, including information about -

(a) The home's approach to restraint in relation to children; and

Staff in The Shires have full regard for Regulation 20 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, which clearly states the circumstances under which restraint might be considered and used. Staff are fully conversant with The Shires' Behaviour Management Policy and subscribe to the notion of positive management of behaviours.

Staff are trained in the use of CPI safety intervention, This method of behaviour management was chosen by The Shires because it focuses on de-escalating situations and redirecting children rather than using Restrictive physical interventions. Restraint at any level is used only when there is no other alternative. All staff are made aware that restraint, when used, in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate in line with Regulation 20(2) of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

The CPI safety intervention principles centre on the management of behaviour at different levels – low, medium and high. Low interventions are largely defined as 'touch' usually on the upper arm and usually for reassurance for the child. Medium interventions include light pressure on a child's arms to guide them somewhere safe or safer. High-level interventions include restricting a child's movements when to avoid doing so might lead to them causing themselves or others harm. Technically any of these interventions are deemed to be restricting a child's liberty and as such are to be recorded in relevant logs. The level of CPI safety intervention holding used is always recorded on Sleuth, which is an online recording system to monitor behaviours and the effectiveness of behaviour management.

The Shires has two in house Certified CPI safety intention trainers, this means that restraints in the home are closely monitored for appropriateness. CPI safety intervention trainers are also able to offer support and clear guidance to staff on an individual basis for each young person in order to ensure each child is managed in an individualised way that supports them to calm and settle quickly.

(b) How persons working in the home are trained in restraint and how their competence is assessed

Staff are trained in the use of CPI safety intervention. All CPI safety intervention trained staff receive a refresher training every year to ensure they remain competent. Staff are fully up to date with new legislation and any new techniques introduced by CPI safety intervention. The Registered Manager monitors staff on a regular basis to ensure they are working to agreed CPI techniques and is easily available to staff if they have any questions about restraint or other physical interventions.

Leadership and management

17. The name and work address of:-

The registered provider for the home is-

Hopscotch Solutions Ltd
The Shires,
Shires Lane,
Stretton,
Rutland,
LE15 7GT
01780 411944.

Hopscotch Solutions Ltd is owned by NFA and their head office is-
1 Merchant Place,
River Street,
Bolton,
B12 1BX

1204 38.

The Head of Care and Responsible Individual for the children's home is Katie Harrison

The Shires,
Shires Lane,
Stretton,
Rutland,
LE15 7GT
01780 411944

The Registered Manager for the children's home is:

Kirsty Truesdale
The Shires,
Shires Lane,
Stretton,
Rutland,
LE15 7GT
01780 411944

18. Details of the experience and qualifications of staff, including any staff commissioned to provide education and health care

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 Children and their voice being heard as well as ensuring a high quality of care is provided to all our stakeholders

Regional Director: Graham Norris

Graham has spent over 25 years working in residential schools for Children with Autism, Learning Difficulties and Challenging behaviour. Graham qualified as a Social Worker and spent 7 years as a Registered Manager, both in the voluntary and private sector, followed by 11 years as Head of service overseeing 2 residential schools, leading the development of both services. For the past 10 months Graham has worked for Outcomes First in the Adult division as the Regional Director for the East of the country, responsible for 12 services across the country. Throughout his career Graham has been passionate about ensuring that Multidisciplinary teams work cohesively to deliver Autism Specific Care and education incorporating Therapeutic approaches.

National Care Manager: Fay Shelton

Fay has worked in residential childcare since 2010, gaining a level 3 in Childcare and Education, a level 3 in Children and Children's Workforce and a level 5 in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care. Fay was previously the Registered Manager of a large residential children's home with six homes on site, caring for 35 children and Children. Fay's background is mainly with EBD and SEMH children.

Fay led a team who were able to achieve Ofsted Outstanding for four consecutive inspections and was part of achieving great outcomes for the children and Children in her care. Fay has a passion for providing children and Children with new experiences and opportunities and providing them with the chance to have a childhood they may not have had the chance to enjoy previously."

Head of Service and Responsible Individual: Charlotte Niekerk.

Charlotte has worked within children's services for over 15 years. She is a qualified social worker, working within assessment, child protection, fostering and disability services. Charlotte has managed residential services; most recently moving a service from requires improvement to Outstanding.

During her career, Charlotte has provided safe and nurturing environments for many children and young people with a range of social, emotional, and behavioural needs, as well as those with Learning disabilities and an Autism diagnosis. Charlotte's ethos is to create a safe, nurturing environment, where children and young people can feel loved and cared for. An environment, which supports the repair of childhood trauma and provides many opportunities for positive life experiences and recognising each child as the unique individual they are.

Registered Manager, Kirsty Truesdale and Deputy Manager Munya Sachikonye manage the home.

Kirsty and Munya are experienced Care Workers and Managers with 20 years' experience between them of achieving outstanding outcomes for Children, Adolescents and Young Adults in Residential Care and Education. Kirsty and Munya have worked extensively in a social care and an educational setting with Children who have; Autism, learning difficulties, experienced psychological trauma and exhibit challenging behaviour.



Kirsty's qualifications include-

- Level 5 Diploma (Foundation Degree) in Leadership and Management
- NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care in Children and Children
- NVQ Level 2 in Health and Social Care in Children and Children

Munya's qualifications include-

- Level 5 Diploma (Foundation Degree) in Leadership and Management
- NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care in Children and Children
- NVQ Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care in adults

Care staff hold (Level 3 Diploma) and more senior staff hold or are working towards the Level 5 Diploma. Teaching staff hold either a qualified teacher status (QTS) or teaching assistant level 3 training along with relevant university degrees. There is always a senior member of staff on site with one of Head of Care, Registered Manager, Deputy Manager or Team Manager providing senior cover every day of the week.

There is always an adequate level of first aid trained staff on shift every day to meet the basic health care needs of the children in the home. All other major health care and medical needs of the children are referred to the local GP and hospitals.

Regular training takes place for staff for CPI, safeguarding and autism. The training record is held centrally by the HR department of The Shires and highlights when training needs revisiting or refreshing. The majority of staff working at The Shires have a very good understanding of the needs of children with autism and are experienced in helping them to manage their difficulties.

19. Details of the management and staffing structure of the home, including arrangements for professional supervision of staff, including staff that provide education or health care.

The Children's home and school is headed by the Registered Manager and Head of School. In addition, the staff at The Shires includes three team managers who manage the care staff teams and support the night care staff team. The day and night care staff are a mix of Care Workers at Grades 1, 2, 3, 4. There is also the teaching staff team line managed by the Head of School.

The staff team increases and decreases according to the needs of the children living in the home as defined by their Education Care and Health plan (statement). As a minimum, an adequate number of staff to ensure every child present in the home has access to at least a 1:1 staff support staffs the home. In which case, if all fourteen children are present in the home there would be at least fifteen staff (fourteen staff plus a Team Manager) present on shift. There will be maximum of six waking night staff, but this may decrease depending on the number of children in the home. Crossover between the day and night staff teams allows good handover of information. It also allows for day staff staying on longer if the Children are not settling easily.

The home on occasion does require the use of agency staff; the home works hard to ensure that we have consistent agency staff.

All staff employed at The Shires have regular supervisions with their line managers.

20. If staff are all of one sex, or mainly of one sex, a description of how the home promotes appropriate role models of both sexes

The staff group working with the children in The Shires is diverse, reflecting the strong equal opportunities policy that guides practice. The Children work with both male and female staff and staff avoid setting stereotypical gender roles that undermine the notion of equality.

Care planning

21. Any criteria used for the admission of children to the home, including any policies and procedures for emergency admission

The Shires has a very strong policy of inclusion, and welcomes Children from all backgrounds. The home accepts both boys and girls from any geographical area, and is non-denominational.

To be eligible for consideration for a place at The Shires, Children must fulfil the following admission criteria:-

- be of secondary school age;
- have Autism, and;
- Attend The Shires School on a full or part time basis.

In addition to meeting the above criteria, Children must also satisfy The Shires of their suitability for placement by means of an initial assessment. Referrals for places are usually received directly from a placing authority. Parents may also apply for a place for their child at The Shires.

The Shires' assessment team, which may include a member of the Therapy Team, considers each referral. Each child is Assessed through discussion with parents/carers and placing authorities and observation of the child in his/her home and education setting where possible.

Most of the children in the home find change to routine very difficult and it is crucial that admissions to the home are carefully managed to ensure that the new child and the children already living in the home are fully prepared for the change that is to take place. For this reason, The Shires does not usually accept children on emergency placements.

Arrangements for reviews

Internal Placement Review Arrangements

In consultation with the child, his or her social workers and all significant others, a Placement Plan is formulated within 72 hours of the child's admission. Within 20 days, the Plan is agreed and adopted.

The meetings are generally held every three then six months thereafter.

Who can attend an internal Placement Review?

- The child/young person. Reviews are child focused and led by the respective young person.
- The Parents (unless they are prevented from doing so by any court orders).
- The Reviewing Officer from the young person's area office.

- The young person is Social Worker.
- The young person's keyworker.
- A Senior Manager.
- Teachers, Doctors, & Psychologists.
- Independent visitor, race advisor, interpreter.
- Advocates and Transition Worker/s
- Other family members

External Care Plan Reviews

In addition to the arrangements at The Shires for internal reviews, there will be arrangements led by the child's social worker for external reviews.

23. Fire precautions adopted within The Shires

The Shires home is subject to Fire Officer Inspections and any recommendations are implemented with the utmost priority.

Fire precautions are conducted within the appropriate regulations of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO). The Shires has appropriate fire equipment, smoke alarms and heat detectors, which are regularly tested and serviced by a designated Fire and Safety Officer.

All staff and children (subject to level of learning disability) at The Shires are familiar with all aspects of the fire policy and procedures and the Home's Fire Risk assessment. Regular fire drills are conducted within The Shires, with the outcome and results monitored and recorded within a logbook, in accordance with the Shire's policies and procedure. Such drills are undertaken to identify, clarify and resolve any issues or problems about the fire safety policy.

Children are encouraged to attend fire awareness training, which takes place within the home. Due to the nature of some residents, we have to give consideration around the way fire drills are planned, discussed with Children via pecs boards so noise protection can be used to prevent anxiety.

Appendix A

The Shires at Stretton Staff Structure

If the children's home were at full capacity with 14 Children in residence with all Children on at least 1:1 staffing ratio, then besides the Registered Manager, each day team on shift would consist of

One x Team manager (TM) – with qualifications L5 Diploma or working towards, NVQ 3 or equivalent

One x Shift leader – with qualifications and minimum of 2 years' service CW4

14 x Care Worker (CW) – at various level. All care worker have or are working towards L3 Diploma or NVQ 3 or equivalent. 1 staff for each young, this could be increased dependent on risk assessment staffing ratios.

The number of staff on shift at any given time depends on the number of Children in residence but there are always enough staff to allow every young person in residence to have at least 1:1 supervision. The number of staff on shift increases in cases where any particular young person is

assessed to require higher levels of staffing. Besides the adequate number of staff required, there is always an extra staff available to shift-lead and to support other staff. Where staffing levels fall below those required a daily risk, assessment is carried out.

At night, there are six waking night staff on shift to look after the 14 Children in residence. The number can be increased or decreased temporary if the needs arises. All night staff are also required to complete at Level 3 Diploma or NVQ 3 or equivalent.