

3.01 STAFFING POLICY

3.01.1 Vetting of staff and visitors

Recruitment of all staff (including ancillary staff and those employed on a contractual/seasonal basis) and volunteers who work with children at North Lakes Children's Services includes checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (at the Enhanced level regardless of their role), with a satisfactory outcome. There is a sound recruitment process recorded in writing.

▪ Pre-employment checks

The Recruitment Team will request a post-16 form from the candidate to gather details of the appointee's educational, voluntary, employment and unemployed activity from the age of 16. The form largely replicates the application form but allows for closer scrutiny of the latter document to ensure there are no inconsistencies, and where there are, an opportunity to explore further. The appointee is expected to return this document within three working days of receiving it so as not to cause any unnecessary delays to the onboarding process. A seven-year reference history will be sought for all appointees, which should include at least two references. We retain the right to request additional references if we deem it necessary including where:

- A reference/s is not of sufficient detail or quality
- The applicant has not worked with children within the last 7 years but did so in a previous role
- References received do not cover the last 5 years of continuous employment or a 5-year working history if not continuously employed. All written references will be verbally verified by the HR department.
 - Proof of identity including a recent photograph, proof of address, and proof of eligibility to work will be requested if not among the documents already collected.
 - A DBS of appropriate level will be sought for all appointees unless the appointee already has a valid DBS and subscribes to the update service allowing us to check its status. A risk assessment may be needed in addition depending on the result of the DBS check.
 - A medical questionnaire will be requested.
 - A valid driving licence,

Staff members cannot begin work that involves any unsupervised contact with the children until the DBS checks are completed. NLCS also need to be in receipt of references stating suitability of candidates working with children.

Any agency staff used will be from reputable agencies who have confirmed that their recruitment procedures are in line with those contained in the Children's Home Regulations 2015. The Registered Manager will also satisfy themselves of the individuals' suitability by viewing all relevant documentation before the individual begins work. Agency staff will be required to carry out a basic induction. No more than half the staff on duty at any one time, by day or night, will be from an external agency. The use of Agency staff will be carefully monitored to ensure that children are not adversely impacted and receive continuity of care. Any staff who have lived outside the United Kingdom but hold a EU passport have to follow the same recruitment procedures. Additional checks such as obtaining certification of good conduct from relevant Embassies or Police Forces are necessary before employment.

Any foreign nationals that are prospective employees of NLCS must produce the relevant documentation and permissions to work in the UK. If there is uncertainty about whether an individual needs permission then NLCS will contact Work Permits UK, Visa Enquires at Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Croydon.

Recruitment

- Job opportunities will normally be advertised on the staff notice boards concurrently with external advertising (not all positions will be externally advertised)
- NLCS reserves the right to accept or reject internal applications
- All new employees (whether intended to be permanent, temporary or part-time) and all appointments as a result of internal applications will be engaged on the basis of a 12 month trial period, , unless a different period has been specifically stated.
- The organisation will determine the standard of performance, which is required, and whether or not the employee has attained that standard.
- NLCS will check references and to terminate the offer of employment should the references be considered unsatisfactory.
- All positions within our homes have clear job descriptions and specific contracts to the appointed specific role

3.1.2. Adequate staffing of the establishment

North Lakes Children's Homes are staffed at all times of the day and night; in line with the individual homes statement of purpose. Records of staff actually working in the home demonstrate achievement of this staffing level and are available for inspection at all times.

During the day there will be two shift rotas in place, with each shift consisting of a manager and four – five care staff. In the evening and overnight there will be two waking watches, working on a rota system, which will be supported by two sleep-in staff

Care staff receive:

- All new staff employed after April 2011 will undertake the Children's work force development council induction this should begin after 7 working days of employment and be completed within 6 months
- All Care staff will be working towards the level 3 Children & Young Peoples Workforce Diploma within 3 months of confirmation of employment
- Internal Induction
- Certificated induction training (including training on child protection)
- Supervision
- Guidance on accountability and reporting lines
- Procedures for emergencies, health and safety, child protection and notification of incidents
- Access to continuous post qualification training

Subject to need – staff may have access to the following training:

- Child development
- Residential child care skills and team working
- Specific child care approaches and skills appropriate to the home's purpose and function

- Exercising appropriate positive means of control over children in the interests of their own welfare and the protection of others
- Permitted and prohibited sanctions
- Use of physical intervention
- Issues of race, ethnicity, religion and culture
- Dealing with sexuality, sex education and relationships
- Health education relevant to growing children including diet and nutrition
- The implications of HIV and AIDS when looking after children
- Communicating with children, including those with disabilities
- Health and safety at work, including lifting and handling and fire precautions
- Food hygiene
- First aid and safety with medicines
- The Children Act 2004, the quality standards and other related legislation, government guidance and guidance from the NCSC
- The provision of purposeful and enjoyable activities outside class time
- Staff supervision
- Interview techniques
- Complaints and representation procedures
- Working with families

Training

- It is a condition of employment that all employees undertake training or re-training and attend lectures or courses as required by the organisation
- The above is in respect of existing equipment, technology or practices and new equipment, technology or practices
- Employees may be required to undertake such training on site or off site
- Employees may be required as part of their normal job functions to be involved in the training or re-training of new or existing employees
- In all cases the individual employee's contractual rates of pay will be maintained and all necessary out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed on production of receipts.

Each staff member has a personal development plan. Staff receive training appropriate to their role, including appropriate responses to and management of the children and any special means of communication used by each child.

Staff have up to date written guidance of procedures and policies. Policies to be accessible to all staff:

Administration of finance (petty cash) and security
Admission and reception of children
Anti bullying
Arrangements for regulation, accompanying and vetting visitors at the home
Care practices towards children of the opposite sex
Case recording and access to records
Child protection and responding to allegations of suspicions of abuse
Confidentiality
Countering risks identified through the home's risk assessments
Dealing with sexuality and personal relationships

Delegated authority and notifications to senior staff
Equal Opportunities
Extent to which all or part of premises may be locked as a security measure
First aid and administration and storage of medication
Gift giving and receiving
Health and safety including fire precautions and emergency procedures
HIV/AIDS awareness, confidentiality and infection control
Local Safeguarding Children's Board
Logbooks and daily recording
Methods of care and control
Permissible sanctions
Physical contact with children and spending one to one time alone with children
Placement
Planning, using and amending placement or other plans
Practices within the organisation to combat racism
Repairs and maintenance
Reviews
Risk taking
Rostering and shift handovers
Sleeping-in, bed-time and night supervision
Staff disciplinary and grievance procedures
The alcohol policy
The complaints and representation procedures
The particular care needs of children from minority ethnic groups
The smoking policy
Treatment of children who have been abused
Use of physical intervention and dealing with aggression and violence
Whistle blowing' by staff
Working with parents/carers

3.01.3. Staff supervision and support

All staff, including domestic staff and ancillary staff, are properly accountable and supported. This is by the line manager in all cases apart from the registered manager and the head teacher who will be supported by the provider

Whilst recognising that planned one to one meetings of the frequency a minimum of one & half hours per month and at least two supervision a month for newly appointed staff over six month period, required by the policy will be the major form of supervision agreements can also include the following as valid and important

- De –briefing
- Immediate planning
- Legal decision making
- Personal support
- Joint supervision (two or more workers working within the same team with the same pupils, two or more workers from the same team working on the same issue or group work)

Principles

- Every staff member will have a named supervisor who will normally be their line manager

- There will be clear arrangements made about consultation and advice in the supervisor's absence
- Acknowledgement of the power relationship and its implications for supervision
- Supervision will be confidential with the exception of the registered provider, social services and the care consultant (all of whom may wish to see the records for monitoring purposes).
- Supervisors will be required to show sensitivity to barriers which can affect communication
- Safeguarding is a standard agenda item during staff supervisions.

Records of supervision and support sessions are kept and actions are agreed. Issues that might be raised could include:

- Roles
- Key worker role
- Responses to and methods of working with children
- Degree of personal involvement, feeling, concerns and stress
- Staff development/training
- Setting/maintaining standards
- Feedback on performance
- Guidance on current and new tasks

Appraisals

All staff within the organisation have an annual appraisal (teachers have performance management). Their line manager appraises care staff. The date and the agenda is agreed well in advance. Staff have a personal file containing records of appraisal, levels of performance, targets and agreed training needs as part of their Personal Development Plan

There are clear lines of accountability from the registered manager, head teacher to the governors or person responsible and all staff know to whom they are accountable.

All staff have written job descriptions and person specifications related to the current Statement of Purpose. These are reviewed periodically.

Rotas are organised to allow appropriate groups of staff to meet at least monthly.

Staff meetings include:

- **Caring for individual children**
- **Management of groups of children**
- **Review of learning & skills development**
- **Quality meetings**
- **Review of the home and school's practices**

Ancillary staff can attend at least part of the meeting on a regular basis and the minutes of meetings are recorded. Educational staff have a staff meeting every two weeks, Care staff have a Monthly meeting and the Senior Management Team have a Meeting every two weeks all the above meeting are minuted. All meeting minutes will be displayed on the appropriate notice board and all staff are required to read them and sign a copy.

Staff do not smoke while with the children, nor consume alcohol while on duty (including during breaks in their working day)

3.01.4. Role of the key worker

The role of the key worker is a vital one within the organisation as you are required to establish a trusting therapeutic relation with the child's place in your care so that for the period of time they will be in the care of NLCS they have someone who they know they can trust to look after their needs without prejudice.

Key Tasks:

- Home visit – you will be required to go on a home visit to see your prospective client, gather information about the child's needs and begin to build the foundation for a trusting partnership with the child and their parents or guardians
- Set up the pupil's file – The key worker will be responsible for the child's care file, which will be kept in the care staff office. It will contain information such as point's sheet, key worker records, which the key worker will keep, updated weekly.
- Key worker sessions – there will be a key worker session with the individual child every two weeks which will last for approximately 40minutes depending on the needs of the child at the time. Each session will be documented on the key worker report which individual topic which must be has covered with the child for example targets set for behaviour, relationships with other children, views on the organisation etc.
- Contact with parents / guardians - you will be required to contact the child's parent once a week to give a progress update, sharing of information and sustaining trusting relationships. These conversations will be logged in the key worker report and filed in the child's file.
- Reviews – as the key worker you will play an integral role in ensuring the needs of the child is passed on to all those involved in their care, therefore the key worker will be required to act as a point of contact and to produce reports to be used in conjunction with contributions from other professionals involved in the child care. These include: initial placement 6 week review, LAC reviews – 6 monthly Annual reviews – once a year

The registered manager will regularly audit all key worker documentation weekly.