



# Statement of Purpose

## The Old Vicarage Stillington

**Registered Manager**  
Amy Redfern

May 2018

The Old Vicarage  
Morrison Street  
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## The Old Vicarage Mission Statement

The Old Vicarage aims to provide a safe, nurturing, caring and homely environment where children and young people feel a sense of belonging.

Much of the focus of our work lies within setting small, achievable targets leading towards a bigger objective. All children and young people in our care are involved in planning and decision making based on what is important from their own perspective.

We focus on core values of being open, honest and reflective in all that we do. We aim to provide a fun and warm home to live in. We recognise that in order to provide a high level of care for our children and young people, we must accept them as individuals to allow them to flourish and grow in confidence.

The Old Vicarage staff team are directly involved in providing opportunities for the children and young people that develop a sense of worth and self-esteem. Such opportunities promote a level of independence to prepare children and young people for the future when the time comes to leave our care.

## **1. Contact Details**

### **Registered Home Details**

#### **The Old Vicarage**

Morrison Street  
Stillington  
TS21 1JD  
Tel 01740 631393

#### **Registered Manager:**

Amy Redfern

The Old Vicarage  
Morrison Street  
Stillington  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS21 1JD  
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#### **Responsible Individual:**

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#### **Registered Provider**

#### **Spark of Genius North East**

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Pegasus Avenue  
Business Park  
Paisley  
PA1 2BH  
Tel No 0141 5872710

## 2. Caring for Children

### a) Spark of Genius North East Services ~ Aims and Objectives

We aim to function as one coherent residential child care system; with consistent policies, practices, procedures and management across all of our homes. As part of this system, we will aim to deliver outstanding care in line with and striving to exceed the standards as set out in the Quality Standards April 2015.

We can provide care for a group of up to five young people, on a medium or long term basis.

In all cases, our overall **Aim** is to provide care which:

- Helps a young person to make sense of past experiences and to develop coping strategies to deal with these.
- Provides young people with positive, stimulating and enjoyable experiences.
- Helps young people (and wherever possible their families/networks) to plan towards and achieve a positive and successful future.

Our **Objectives** are:

- To provide each individual young person with the highest quality of care and support achievable.
- To promote young people's self-confidence and self-esteem within a framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, recognising their individual potential and needs.
- To safeguard young people and promote their welfare, including positive health care and health education.
- To promote educational opportunities and achievement.
- To promote young people's contact with their families, unless this is clearly and explicitly determined not to be in their best interests.
- To promote young people's integration with the wider community/supportive networks.
- To assist with the preparation for all young people for an independent and fulfilling adult life.
- To work effectively as part of a multi-disciplinary helping team to ensure that the best interests of the young people and their families are met.
- To advocate on behalf of young people to assist them in reaching their full potential
- All staff will demonstrate that our children and young people are valued as individuals

We are able to offer a truly integrated and holistic approach to service delivery and we are fully committed to:

- Adapting new and emerging practice models and assessment frameworks.
- The implementation of best practice and learning from research, theory and developments in the field of residential child care and education.
- Safer recruitment practices.
- Specialist training and continual professional development of staff teams.

Spark of Genius offers fundamental core services:

- Residential Care
- Education
- Crisis Intervention

Each core service is fully integrated so that a young person is able to transition smoothly between services at different points and developmental stages in their lives. Our model of child care offers a unique opportunity in our ability to completely personalise a package of care and education to meet the unique needs of each child being looked after at The Old Vicarage. Where possible, we endeavour to prepare the young person for integration back to their family environment and community. Over the last ten years, as an organisation, we have developed a comprehensive range of services for children who require specialist care and expertise which is unavailable within their local authority provision.

We aim to provide an optimal care setting for children in a group living environment and recognise that a key element of working with a diverse age range is to ensure robust safeguarding and in the meeting of different developmental needs.

We ensure this through:

- Expert assessment of need.
- Ensuring that all care plans and placements are appropriate for the care environment through careful placement matching on admission and ongoing review.
- Creating a culture of support within the peer group environment
- Ensuring that all practitioners are aware and respond appropriately to the needs of the different age groups and developmental stages (training is specific to the age ranges and range of needs within the home at any time). Challenging when necessary all other agencies if the needs of the young people are not being met

We have developed a staffing structure which consists of three or four staff on shift at any time on a rotational basis and two waking night staff to meet the child's needs when at full occupancy. We will increase staffing wherever required according to the needs and demands of the group.

## **b) Spark of Genius North East ~ Ethos and Philosophy**

The Quality Standards identify core values which contribute to quality care practice in all residential settings, these are:

1. Quality and purpose of care
2. Children's views, wishes and feelings
3. Education
4. Enjoyment and achievement
5. Health and well-being
6. Positive relationships
7. Protection of children

- 8. Leadership and management
- 9. Care planning

Spark of Genius North East seeks to promote all of these values at all times, by way of the following examples of good practice:

#### Privacy

- Every young person has their own bedroom.
- All young people will receive sensitivity in practice, especially when dealing with personal issues.
- Information about all young people will remain confidential; information about one young person will not therefore be disclosed to another, or to any inappropriate source without permission.
- Care is taken to ensure that a homely environment is maintained, and the house does not develop an overtly institutional feel.

#### Dignity

- Staff have an active awareness of each young person's child's racial, cultural, religious and dietary needs, enabling the celebration of difference for all.
- Spark of Genius North East provides a living environment and operational culture which places the needs of the young people as paramount, above all others.
- Spark of Genius North East uses techniques for managing young person's behaviour based principally on positive reinforcement and reward, avoiding punitive measures in reaction to negative behaviour(s), so that young people can learn from their mistakes and from the pro social modelling of staff and the adults around them.

#### Realising Potential

- Spark of Genius North East provides a living environment and operational culture which encourages the development of self-confidence and resilience and allows young people appropriate opportunities to take some calculated risks within their learning journey.
- At Spark of Genius North East, each young person is able to access and record in their own personal file.
- Spark of Genius North East has developed an independent living skills programme, for young people to use in their learning journey towards independent living and all staff will assist in the pathway planning.
- The provision of clear information about how to complain or to resolve minor issues is available, to all young people, at all times.
- All young people have access to an independent advocacy service including the provision of a free-phone telephone service.

#### Choice

- Each young person is encouraged to personalise their own bedroom within reason.
- New young people (following initial settling-in) will be encouraged to personalise their own room.
- Young people are actively encouraged to share and influence (age appropriately) the day-to-day routines and practices within the house through a variety of means, including attending residents' meetings, undertaking Young Inspector role and one to one discussions.
- Young people are encouraged to exercise their own religious and cultural preferences.
- Young people are actively encouraged to partake in a wide variety of leisure activities.

## Rights

- Spark of Genius North East supports, promotes and complies with the European Convention: Rights of the Child.
- Spark of Genius North East provides a safe physical environment.
- Spark of Genius North East actively promotes social learning, so that all young people can learn to understand their rights and responsibilities within the home, within the community and towards others.
- All young people are made aware of how they should expect staff to behave, and what they should do if this is not their experience.
- All young people are provided with guidance and support, which informs them about how to influence decisions about their future.
- All young people are provided with information about the independent advocacy service and of how they can pursue a complaint (both formal and informal).
- A system of care planning and reviews (LAC system) is used throughout to ensure that service provision most appropriately meets health, education and social needs in order to maximise the future life chances for each young person.
- Spark of Genius North East actively promotes family contact, as appropriate and as agreed in the Care Plan for each young person.
- Each young person is given the opportunity to actively engage in, and influence the planning and delivery of services for them.

## **c) Aims, Objectives and Ethos of The Old Vicarage**

The Old Vicarage is a residential children's home owned and is managed by Spark of Genius North East; this is one of 13 residential houses throughout England and Scotland. Spark of Genius North East offers residential care for no more than five young people, houses are located within semi-rural areas. Our houses are selected on the basis that we ourselves would be happy to live in them and they are of a very high quality and specification. We firmly believe that residential care should be viewed as a positive choice for those young people who have to live away from home.

The Old Vicarage is a residential service for children with primarily emotional and behavioural difficulties or some learning difficulties / disabilities who need medium or long term specialist care. Education can be provided at our learning centre located nearby and our young people travel to school and back every day; we also support our young people in attending mainstream or alternative education, training or work placements wherever possible.

We are able to provide an innovative range of services to meet the individual needs of children and young people and we strive to:

- Create a warm, family environment without the emotional intensity of the original family home. To achieve this each young person's opinions are central to the house's operation and we endeavour to democratically agree any changes. Young people are regularly consulted during daily discussions (house meetings) in 1:1 key time and during Regulation 44 and Quality Assurance visits.
- De-institutionalise the house by creatively challenging the legislative requirements for children's homes (minimising signs and instructions, avoiding jargon and terminology, limiting 'official visitors' to the house and by applying a parental perspective to all aspects of care).
- Maintain close links with sporting and leisure clubs, community projects and encouraging each child to participate.
- Support each young person in maintaining cultural and religious beliefs through the many links we have created in the local community. Our diverse group of staff will encourage each young person to observe, celebrate and share their beliefs and

- heritage through educational projects, group discussions and creative arts.
- Offer a fair gender balance within the staff team in order to promote appropriate pro-social modelling and good role models of both sexes.
  - Support each young person in the development of adaptive coping strategies and self-care.
  - Consistently train all our staff in knowledge and skills to improve and support the development of resilience in young people.
  - Ensure that The Old Vicarage provides an experience which is caring, structured, holds high expectations for children's behaviour and encourages participation and empowerment throughout the home.
  - Adhere to robust pre-admission planning and initial assessment processes.
  - Provide intensive, bespoke packages of support – this can be enhanced if a placement appears to be at risk.
  - 24 hour supervision with waking night staff
  - On-call system to ensure 24 hour safeguarding support

We do this by:

- Empowering young people to participate in the operational management of the house (house meetings and feedback during key work sessions).
- Spending time playing and sharing fun activities.
- Seeking opportunities to show young people we care and they matter by being affectionate in as many appropriate ways as possible.
- Being consistent in our behaviour and our expectations.
- Providing comfort during difficult times.
- Encouraging relatives and friends to visit the house to promote the development of external relationships.
- Endeavouring to create relationships with children's families (care plan permitting) so that we can facilitate, support, monitor, report and assess family contact.
- The house has ample rooms which allow for privacy to facilitate family visits and reviews, without impinging on other residents.

We place great value on collaborative working and we have strong links with Social Work, Psychological Services, CAMHS, Health professionals and many other external agencies. Working with the parents and carers of young people in our care can positively affect outcomes for the young people therefore we are committed to the promotion of home contact if this is appropriate. We agree contact arrangements with the case holding Social Worker and the arrangements for managing contact are clearly set out in the child's care plan. Our aim is to support the child, significant others and the placing authority with contact arrangements; and this can be done by providing transport, making space available within the house or by supervising contact if deemed necessary. Our staff team will write up and provide feedback of any observations noted during periods of contact and we will raise any issues which may have arisen, as well as offering advice on adapting and supporting contact arrangements which leads to enhanced and positive experiences for the young person.

The Old Vicarage will not tolerate any form of discrimination, injustice or inequality. Staff are committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and to creating equality of opportunity for everyone, regardless of their gender, race, disadvantage, disability, culture, religious beliefs, age, sexuality or social class. Staff will receive training and support to raise awareness of discriminatory practice and the house has a robust Equal Opportunities policy

which all staff will be familiar and confident with. Staff will attempt to build an in-depth understanding and knowledge of each young person so that their insights can be employed in subtle and thoughtful ways to ensure that the child is getting feedback which ensures that they feel valued.

#### **d) The Old Vicarage Service Outcomes**

The outcomes we aim to achieve for our young people are:

- To feel safe and valued within a warm and nurturing environment.
- To be looked after by an appropriately skilled and caring staff team.
- To have continuity of care
- To actively learn according to their age and stage of development.
- To be encouraged to develop their own identity, enjoy new experiences and to develop a wider social network.
- To participate in local and wider community based leisure activities.
- To participate in a wide range of activities which promote self-esteem and confidence.
- To develop independent daily living skills such as cooking, personal care and safety.
- To sustain and develop new skills to improve their quality of life.
- To engage and develop new friendships.
- To eat healthily and enjoy a wide range of activities which promote good health and wellbeing.
- To have the opportunity to influence decisions which affect them.
- To participate in an active role in the planning and delivery of the service.
- To participate in educational sessions which support the 24 hour curriculum.

#### **e) How the Service Meets these Outcomes**

At all times, we aim to provide a safe and stimulating environment for all of the children and young people placed in our care. The service will focus on delivering realistic and achievable outcomes for children and young people and will follow the Children's Homes Quality Standards. The Registered Manager and staff team will ensure that safeguarding activities are embedded in the service and health & safety legislation are adhered to.

The service is regularly inspected and monitored by:

- Regulation 45 reports completed by the Registered Manager
- Monthly Regulation 44 inspections carried out by an independent person currently commissioned by Spark of Genius North East
- Full and Interim Ofsted inspections
- Health and Safety inspections
- Food Hygiene inspections
- Regular, statutory service of equipment inspections

#### **f) About The Old Vicarage, Facilities and Recreational Activities**

The Old Vicarage is a large, detached, 7 bedrooms, attractive period family home set in its own self-contained grounds. It is situated in a desirable village within Stockton Borough. The grounds themselves consist of approximately half an acre of land comprising of two large gardens which allow for considerable space for play, gardening, outdoor activities and relaxation.

The house is exceptionally well maintained, fully equipped, warm and homely throughout. Within the house, there are very spacious communal areas and seven large double bedrooms.

On the ground floor of the house

- 3 Reception rooms
- 1 of these rooms is used as an office and administration area.
- Management Office
- A large kitchen / dining area
- Utility Room with Laundry Facilities
- Toilet and shower

#### First Floor

- 3 Bedrooms -2 with en-suite facilities
- Bathroom
- Separate toilet
- Computer room

#### Second Floor

- Further 2 bedrooms
- Snug tv room
- Bathroom

There are many opportunities for participation in a wide range of recreational and leisure activities in the geographical area surrounding The Old Vicarage. There are numerous amenities close by including access to shopping, local parks, youth club, cafes/restaurants, swimming, bowling, cinema, libraries, horse riding and go-karting; these activities are all within a short travelling distance and staff will support young people in their chosen recreational activities. We will also encourage our young people to visit places of interest, to go for nature walks in the local countryside, and to join clubs and groups according to their personal preferences and interests. The Old Vicarage staff team will encourage all of our young people to try out new activities and to experience new challenges, learning across a 24 hour curriculum, broadening their own expectations and to successfully achieve.

### **g) About the Children who will live at The Old Vicarage**

#### **Admission Criteria:**

<b>Age Range</b>	8 to 18 years
<b>Gender</b>	Mixed Gender
<b>Numbers</b>	Up to five young people
<b>Range of Needs Able to Accommodate</b>	Primarily Emotional, Behavioural Difficulties some learning difficulties / disabilities.

### **h) Admission Procedures and Transition Planning**

#### **Referrals and Admissions**

Once referrals are received the manager of the service will follow Spark of Genius NE Admissions policy & procedure in ensuring that all referrals are managed appropriately in

conjunction with the aforementioned policy

We accept placements for children and young people aged between 8 -18 years who will benefit from living within a residential group living environment. The risks and needs of these children are not at a level where an individual placement is required, and there are no critical issues which would illustrate unmanageable risks to other children/young people already in placement.

Admissions are undertaken following an in-depth assessment of needs and risks. Where any risks are identified, these are not seen as inhibitors for placement, but are considered on the basis of the ability to safely manage risk and to put appropriate support plans in place. However, of paramount importance is the safeguarding of children and young people in our care, and therefore we would not accept a child into placement who may pose an unmanageable risk to themselves or others (e.g. active, ongoing suicidal ideation and behaviours where the child requires to access tier 4 CAMHS).

Spark of Genius NE believes in developing child-centred, bespoke packages of care and education and therefore we ensure that we can meet the needs of the child being placed with us and also the needs of the young people already in placement.

We accept same day placements if it is felt appropriate and that a quick transition will benefit the child; providing the objectives of the placement are aligned with the house's purpose, and where appropriate planning can take place. We will also ensure that this does not impact on the current group of young people.

Once a placement has been agreed the process of 'joining' the house is carefully managed in line with attachment informed practice as we fully recognise the importance of pre-placement planning to minimise any possible anxiety and trauma. The young person is very much involved in the planning of his/her transition alongside the local authority and this is carried out at their own pace, in line with their own individual needs.

This process will routinely involve visits to the house, having lunches/dinner, seeing their room, making choices about their own furnishings and décor and spending time with other children/young people and the staff team. This 'positive claiming' process helps the young person to feel that they 'belong' to the house and that their choices and views are firmly valued.

Whenever possible; a house visit will be arranged by the Registered Manager and/or key worker to visit the child/young person in their family home or previous placement, to prepare them for the transition. In addition, a 'Young People's Guide' will be forwarded to the young person; and contact will be established with the current carers; this will enable any questions that the young person may have to be answered, to provide reassurance and for any concerns which they may have to be resolved.

We will work very closely with the referring Social Worker to gain all of the information required to enable a comprehensive, formal assessment of risk to be completed and to devise an initial 'Care Plan' which will clearly outline the purpose and aims of the placement beforehand. A designated key worker will be carefully matched with the child; they will meet with professionals, previous carers and any other significant adults to obtain as much information as possible about the child in order to create an accurate assessment of current levels of understanding and functioning. A young person profile will be written which details daily routines, strategies for behaviour management, likes and dislikes and any potential risks and this will ensure consistency of approach by the staff team following admission.

A pre-admission planning meeting will always take place prior to admission, in exceptional

circumstances, this will take place at the time of admission, or will be arranged to be held within the following 72 hours.

### **Emergency Admissions**

We understand that it is not always possible to plan placements when a crisis situation develops. The need to act quickly in order to meet the young person's need is paramount and therefore we are able to accommodate situations like this as quickly and as smoothly as possible if necessary. Emergency placements are available within Spark of Genius North East, however we would always like to be notified at the earliest opportunity so that we can manage the transition as effectively as possible whilst minimising any stress for the young person.

In addition to the aims, philosophy and remit of the home and focus of practitioners, transition and exit planning is discussed from the onset of the placement. Our role is to support all children and young people where possible to attain a positive transition to:

**Prepare for Independence:** All staff are aware of the requirements of pathway planning and this is an integrated part of staff training at The Old Vicarage. Staff will ensure good multi-agency working and attainment of a young person's goals in this area and this is integrated throughout our work in respect of vocational training, social and life skills work.

**Return Home:** Staff will work closely and sensitively in supporting children to return to their family and community and to provide outreach support services where required.

### **i) Care Planning and Outcomes Measurement**

Each young person will have their own individual residential care plan, which addresses their particular needs with regards to health, education, emotional and behavioural development, identity, religious and cultural beliefs, family and social relationships, social presentation, communication profile and self-care.

Identifying and improving the outcomes for each young person is a priority area and primary task within The Old Vicarage.

We maintain this focus by utilising:

- Group discussion, case studies and consultation.
- The young person's views, wishes and aspirations.
- Individual placement aims, key tasks, objectives and timescales. These are updated as the child develops and their progress is evaluated.
- Educational attainment.
- Health checks and specialist assessments.
- Structured assessments to chart progress and highlight areas for development.

This data will be reviewed on a regular basis by the house's management team and this will then inform updates to the care plan, statutory reviews and practice. The child's progress within their care plan will be informally reviewed through internal auditing and also discussed formally at regularly arranged reviews and professional meetings. This is an opportunity to look at the existing plans in place for a young person and the service which they are receiving. Following these reviews, the care plan can be amended to take into account any changes in circumstances, concerns or issues.

### **Access to Records**

Except for information/material held in the confidential section of their files, children will be actively encouraged to take an interest in records held on them; to be involved in the personalisation and writing of their files and to read and comment on them. Any information held on a child's file which has been written by a third party or does not have the permission

of the author to share will not be shared with the child, and will be held confidentially. Before records or files are shown to children, consideration will be given to the likely effect of sharing the information. However, all information contained outside the confidential section is normally accessible. If in doubt or if there are concerns about the likely effect on the child, the supervisor or manager will be consulted.

Should staff need to share information provided by previous carers or third parties they will:

- Read the records/reports beforehand;
- Speak to the authors if possible;
- Collate the records in chronological order;
- Give thought to what questions the young person may ask;
- And/or what other information may be required;
- A note should be placed on the Daily Records each time a child has access to records or his/her file.

### **j) Safeguarding Children and Young People**

All staff will endeavour to build warm relationships to create emotional security in the belief that children are more inclined to seek understanding of past experiences from a secure position.

We will we do this by:

- Spending time playing and sharing in fun activities.
- Seeking opportunities to show children that we care and that they matter by being affectionate in as many appropriate ways as possible.
- Being consistent in our behaviour and our expectations.
- Providing comfort during difficult times.
- Modelling and promoting appropriate physical contact; this will be 'prescribed contact' which will entail hugs, handshakes and tactile gestures to convey warmth and sincerity.

The key worker will ensure that:

- The child is registered with local health services and attends all appointments.
- The child is supported in attending any prescribed therapeutic services.
- The social worker maintains regular contact and ensures statutory reviews are upheld.
- The care plan and individual risk assessment is kept up to date and adhered to.
- That an individual health plan is maintained which will chart medical history, monitor personal care and raise awareness of physical, emotional and sexual health issues.

All staff in the house will receive training in the dispensing of medication. We maintain close links with the Local Safeguarding Board which provides both training and support to staff and the home has a comprehensive Safeguarding policy which all staff will be familiar with. The reporting protocol is displayed in offices with clear guidance. Young people are provided with information on reporting concerns when taking up placement at the The Old Vicarage. This is reinforced during group discussions, 1:1 key time and on notice boards. This encourages secure attachments and helps to build warm and nurturing relationships with staff. At The Old Vicarage a register is maintained of all visitors; anyone who is unknown to the staff team is required to provide official identification.

We will ensure that we protect each young person from teasing or bullying by assessing the potential risks and by challenging **all** occurrences. Every incidents and complaint will be recorded, investigated and reported to the placing authority. Support will be given to both the victim and the young person who may have caused the distress. **The home has**

**comprehensive ‘Safeguarding’, ‘Suggestions and Complaints’ and ‘Anti-Bullying’ Policies which all staff are familiar with.** The Registered Manager is responsible for the child’s day to day health and well being.

All staff; receive training to cover these areas.

- Safeguarding
- How to deal with a Child Protection disclosure
- Multi-agency commitment
- Internet Safety Policy – monitoring and support and awareness raising
- Promoting awareness of personal safety via discussion, learning resources, role modelling, guidance and encouragement
- Aim to reduce absences/missing young people
- Risk assessment compilation
- Adequate staffing levels
- Staff training and development
- Monitoring of visitors and home contact supervision

Staff always listen to children and young people and take seriously any concern or allegation which is made. They are careful to avoid leading questions or promises of confidentiality. The Manager will maintain regular contact with the Independent Reviewing Officers and will discuss any relative issues with regards to home with them. Any significant event will be reported to Ofsted. The Manager will maintain contact with the Child Protection Officer (CPO) Jackie Blair and Local authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to any issues or allegations related to staff.

### **Managing Allegations**

The Registered Manager is responsible for coordinating any Child Protection referrals, concerns and allegations. Spark of Genius North East has a comprehensive policy which is referred to by all staff and which contains the necessary guidance and instruction. Once a concern or allegation has been made or raised – the Registered Manager will inform the organisation’s Child Protection Officer (CPO) and then will notify and co-operate with the Local Authority Designated Officer in the area where the allegation/concern is suspected. The Local Authority Designated Officer will advise on the actions/measures that must be taken including notifications to the following:

- The Child(ren)’s Social Worker, and come to a decision about notifying parents and any actions that need to be taken to protect the child(ren) e.g. whether it is necessary to change placements;
- The Regulatory Authority, if a Child Protection Enquiry is initiated;
- Referring the member of Staff to the Independent Safeguarding Authority

In consultation with all of the agencies (e.g. the Children’s Services/LADO, relevant Social Workers and the Regulatory Authority), decisions will need to be taken about the ongoing safety/placement arrangements of the Child(ren) and the alleged perpetrators e.g. it may be necessary to move/ or suspend staff or move/transfer children to another house or placement. If such a decision is made, the Independent Safeguarding Authority will be notified, in consultation with the LADO.

Staff are trained within mandatory safeguarding and child protection training on how to respond to allegations made by children in their care and this includes how to respond verbally, how to record and the reporting structures they need to operate within. The placing authority of each child placed will be made aware of the need for such procedures and enter into this agreement with the Registered Manager when the child is placed.

The Old Vicarage is also required to be formally inspected every month by means of Regulation 44 visits which are carried out by an independent person currently commissioned by Spark of Genius North East. The Registered Manager will also complete a six monthly Regulation 45 monitoring report in respect of the operation of the home. As part of these processes, young people, families and other professionals will be consulted regarding the quality of care being received by the children and young people who live there.

### **Sexual Exploitation of Young People**

With regards to sexual exploitation, we are very proactive and will focus on early identification and intervention strategies in working with young people who may be deemed to be at risk. We are aware that all vulnerable young people, both male and female, are at risk of sexual exploitation, therefore we will raise awareness and protection of all of our young people will be our main aim.

We will ensure that all staff are up to date with legislation and guidance, and ensure that they are trained to recognise the warning signs and risk factors involved in the sexual exploitation of young people by engaging Designated Officer and Specialist Service Projects to deliver training. We will ensure that our Policies and Procedures are in line with up to date legislation such as HM Government, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013, Reviewed March 2015'. Spark of Genius NE will work with, and ensure information is shared as a matter of good practice, with other agencies including Local Authorities, Police, Safeguarding Partners, Education, YOT, Health and Specialist Services working with sexual exploitation, to ensure a Multi-Agency approach/response. Spark of Genius NE should also receive regular updates from the local authority VEMT panel who share intelligence regarding possible/known "hotspots" and information regarding exploitation of young people.

### **Gang Activity**

Spark of Genius North East are aware that when a young person goes missing they may become involved or associate with 'gangs'; and we will work with the young person to raise their awareness of the dangers of becoming involved in 'gang cultures'. We will support all young people who are already associated or a member of a gang, to protect them from the associated risks of gang activity. Spark of Genius North East recognise that friendships within groups are a normal part of growing up, and these groups must be distinguished from 'street gangs'.

We will:

- Make a return home a positive experience for the young person
- Take time to listen to young people
- Raise awareness of 'risky' behaviours
- Educate young people about 'healthy relationships'
- Find ways to work with the 'push-pull factor' for going missing by listening and talking to young people when they have been missing from placement.
- Support building self-esteem in young people
- Address any issues of bullying of young people
- We will with a restorative justice approach
- Give young people a voice and to support them in feeling safe, to enable them to speak out, and to disclose if they are being sexually exploited
- Ensure that all the young person's medical needs are attended to
- Be aware of the difference between young people gathering together to socialise and gang membership.

### **k) Consultation with Young People, Families and External Agencies**

Each young person will have a designated key worker who will be carefully selected due to their similar interests and proven ability in establishing a positive and strong relationship with their keychild. They will use attachment informed practice to make connections and create bonds of attachment with the young person.

They will be supportive, work closely with the social worker and family, familiarise themselves with the child's likes and dislikes, organise their medical and health appointments, be responsible for the upkeep of case files and schedule regular emotional well being and one to one keytime sessions to devise strategies to ensure that the young person is progressing, content, making progress and achieving the goals within their care plan.

We have daily informal opportunities to meet as a group over meal times to enable everyone to talk about their day, resolve any issues which may be around and to discuss plans and events. This is complemented by formal opportunities such as children's meetings with an agenda, part of which is set to address things such as choosing menus, activities etc., and also to address any points which the young people may wish to add, the agenda is coordinated by the nominated house representative.

We carry out annual stakeholder surveys which includes employee surveys, young people questionnaires and surveys sent to all parents/carers, external agencies and professionals.

There is a formal complaints and suggestions system that the young people and their families may use if they wish to address a particular concern or make a suggestion for improvement. This is usually addressed by the Manager but can be referred to an external complaints person if the young person is not satisfied with the outcome. The external complaint officer for Spark of Genius North East is The Managing Director, Zak McIlhargey and the children can also have independent access to this person.

### **l) Anti Bullying Procedures**

Bullying at The Old Vicarage will not be tolerated; and within the home we have a clear 'Anti-Bullying' Policy. A copy of this is available for young people to access at any time and the ethos of the house is such that an open and honest culture is promoted. If bullying does occur, our focus is upon educating young people on what bullying behaviour is; how their behaviour was; or could be perceived as being bullying; and giving the young people different strategies to try and to address their presenting behaviour and responses to others. At times bullying behaviour can be resolved as a group through house meetings or restorative meetings may need to be arranged between the young people involved. At times consequences are given and, or, reparation work can be undertaken, bullying is also addressed in weekly key work sessions in collaborative working with education colleagues.

### **m) Promoting Cultural, Linguistic and Religious Needs**

As part of the implementation of our 'Equality and Diversity' policy, young people resident at the house are encouraged and supported to pursue any religious practice of their choice. Information about local centres of worship including Mosques, Temples and Churches of different denominations will be provided by staff, and young people wishing to participate in their respective religious practice will be fully supported by staff to a place of worship. Within the house, young people are given privacy and space to follow their religious beliefs e.g. private time to pray is made available as well as the provision of relevant literature about different faiths. The quiet room in the house can be used as an area for meditation and prayer as well used for recreation and other necessary meetings. Staff will ensure that food and cooking arrangements are sensitive to different cultures and belief

### **n) Anti-Discriminatory Practice**

Staff will provide assurance to all young people in our care about our commitment to challenge and to remove any forms of individual, institutional or structured discrimination, whilst promoting an awareness of anti-discriminatory practice through ongoing training and support. Set out below are principles which we aim to adopt, communicate and implement in the house:

Principles:

- Within Spark of Genius North East, young people should not be discriminated against for any reason.
- Racist behaviour will not be tolerated and any such behaviour will be challenged and dealt with appropriately.
- Sexist attitudes will be challenged and discussed.
- No pornographic material will be allowed within the house, and no books or pictures deemed offensive to women or men will be displayed.
- No young person will be excluded from a house because they are disabled, unless the layout of the building precludes them from physical access.
- Staff will not discriminate in their treatment of young people on the grounds of their disability or any other reasons.
- Staff will promote an awareness and understanding of disability in young people in their care and therefore work towards ensuring the best positive outcomes for individuals and others.
- Stigmatisation of any young person and for any reason is totally unacceptable.

#### **o) Children Missing from the Home**

We work very closely with the local police to utilise 'MISPER' protocols and policies. Our procedures clearly interface with children's individual care plans to set clear expectations for each and every child in care. Spark of Genius North East is aware that when a young person goes missing or runs away regularly from the home or school; this could be an indicator that the young person may be becoming involved in sexual exploitation or gang activities. Spark of Genius North East will work with the Local Authority, Safeguarding Partners's and Police to address this immediately, sharing information to ensure that we find a way to encourage the young person to make alternatives decisions.

Above all, we will:

- Support the young person in building trust and making positive 'attachments'.
- Make time to listen and understand each young person's self-perception and seek to empower them in their lives (internal focus of control).
- Encourage young people to make safe choices and to minimise any potential risks.
- Promote the experience of success by setting attainable targets and celebrating achievements.
- Ensure each young person has a clear understanding of the need to maintain behavioural boundaries.
- Maintain contact with the young person, where possible, via phone or text.
- Actively search for the young people, where appropriate alongside the Police.
- Engage in a one-to-one discussion with the young person about their whereabouts, and let them know that we are concerned about them.
- Regularly review risk assessments and Care Plans.

Robust risk assessments are in place for all young people to minimise risk and good staffing ratios are observed. There is a clear procedure which is to be followed in the event of a child going missing. Staff are familiar with this procedure and a copy may be made available to parents/carers if they wish. When the child returns to the house, staff will notify the Police, the social worker, team manager, on call manager and any other significant adults.

## **p) Suggestions and Complaints**

The Old Vicarage has a clear and detailed policy regarding suggestions and compliments, and all staff and young people are familiar with these processes. There are child friendly suggestions and complaints leaflets designed by our young people themselves and information on these processes is detailed in the Young Person's Guide. We have an 'open door' policy in which young people are given the opportunity to air grievances with management and staff, in group discussions, during 1:1 key time and through their social worker, advocates, regulators and child protection agencies. Young people also have access to a telephone at all times (independent advocates and helpline numbers are prominently displayed). There is also a free text helpline for young people to use if they wish to make contact with external management.

The Old Vicarage will be visited by an independent person once a month to undertake a Regulation 44 visit and Ofsted inspectors visit twice yearly. Parents may also contact Ofsted directly if they wish to make a complaint.

Children or young person who live away from home or who receive social care, who need advice or assistance, can call the children's commissioner on free phone number 0800 528 0731 or email to [advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk). Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.

Stockton Borough Council have recently introduced a new application. Young people can register and access this service to share their views. This can either be a complaint, suggestion or positive statement about where they live and people who care for them, as follows;

### **What is it?**

MOMO (Mind Of My Own) is an award-winning 'APP' that helps 8-25 year olds in contact with social care services to express their views, get more involved in meetings and make better decisions. It delivers to IROs, Social Workers and Rights Officers a verbatim statement of their views, saving time, improving engagement and increasing attendance at meetings. MOMO works on nearly any device – mobile or computer. Young people can register via [www.mindofmyown.org.uk/support](http://www.mindofmyown.org.uk/support).

The Old Vicarage have promoted the aforementioned service to encourage our young people to share their views. All our young people will receive training on how to access this service. Two members of staff will be trained shortly in the use of this service and will be MOMO Champions.

## **q) Emergency Procedures**

Health and Safety issues are given the highest priority. Whilst all care is taken with regard to health and safety, unforeseen emergencies can occur. If this should happen, staff will remain calm and follow procedure. Staff are clear about how to contact emergency services and how to contact senior and emergency support staff out of hours. Any emergency situation will be notified to Ofsted.

The building is equipped with a fire alarm system, there are clearly identified escape routes and all fire fighting equipment is checked in accordance with regulatory requirements.

In addition

- Fire instruction is given to all regular staff quarterly.
- Any sessional or agency staff are given fire instruction upon commencing employment.
- All children are given fire instruction quarterly.

- Any new child admitted is given fire instruction on admission
- Visitors to the house are given fire instruction as appropriate to the length of the visit
- Fire drills are held quarterly at varying times of the day, across all shifts.
- Weekly fire alarm test are completed to ensure that the alarm system and all fire safety equipment (excluding fire extinguishers) are in working order E.G. self closing doors.

A fire drill is conducted within the first week whenever a new child has been admitted to test and assess their understanding of instruction, and response to an emergency evacuation. There will be illuminated, clearly signed fire exits and the signage within the house indicates the route to be followed. There is emergency lighting which is inspected and tested in accordance with regulatory guidelines. All staff are trained fire wardens and are responsible for fire procedures identified on each shift.

If for any reason the building has to be evacuated, the young people will be moved immediately to the King Edwin School and staff will have a set of keys and access to the code in the event of this being necessary.

### **3. Promoting Positive Behaviour**

All of our work is underpinned by best practice and available guidance and as an organisation we feel it is imperative to maintain a progressive knowledge of informed behavioural management practice models; we have therefore adopted Team Teach (The Institute of Conflict Management approved) as our behaviour management model. To support each young person in developing adaptive coping and self-management skills all staff are trained in this accredited and advanced training programme. The core of this training is to provide care workers with the skills and knowledge to support and teach young people positive responses to any difficult situations and environments.

This training teaches staff to:

- Prevent and/or de-escalate a potential crisis situation involving a young person
- Safely and therapeutically manage a crisis situation
- Be able to help children and young people improve their coping strategies
- Initial training over two days and then refresher training in line with policy
- Competency checks will be carried out and assessed through practice observation and in debriefing/post crisis sessions following any incidents.

The main focus of this training is on teaching staff to de-escalate potentially volatile and violent situations using their relationship with the young person and the behaviour support techniques taught on the training. The framework highlights to staff the most important tool they have when working with young people is themselves and treating young people sensitively, consistently and in a caring way is the single most important contribution we make.

The framework puts huge emphasis on de-escalating situations in the early stages of crisis however in cases of extreme behaviour which may result in physical harm or serious damage to property, and when all efforts to exert control have been exhausted, adults are taught in the training to 'safely hold' a young person as a last resort to keep them safe. Physical restraint will only be used if it forms part of the care plan and has been agreed by the placing authority and has been discussed with the young person on admission.

The Individual Crisis Management Plan (ICMP) will detail the best intervention strategies to employ in order to avoid physical intervention and to defuse any challenging behaviour; this

is updated every three months as a minimum and always following any serious incident or change in circumstances. The ICMP will indicate whether a young person would need to be prevented from leaving the home, this would be based on clear risk assessment that they or others would be placed at significant risk. This will be agreed with the placing authority as part of the care plan for the child. This may include the local authority, placing authority, family members, transport and local police. If a young person leaves the house without permission then an individual reporting protocol is in place which reflects their individual risk assessment and care plan goals.

Our positive behaviour reinforcement reward systems are key in managing and promoting positive behaviour and are based on the sound understanding of the needs of our children, this is continually reinforced and good behaviour is always highlighted and praised. Every child has a bespoke plan developed based on their own areas of difficulties and strengths which we wish to continue to develop; any consequences and rewards are reviewed by the Registered Manager to ensure that they are age and stage appropriate.

## 4. Education

Education, in all of its forms, is one of the cornerstones of personal growth and development therefore all young people are actively encouraged to participate in educational opportunities appropriate to their need(s). Some of our young people may have an 'Individual Education Health Care plan (EHCP) which outlines all plans for the young person's care and education. Each young person has a Personal Education Plan (PEP). There is a minimum requirement for the PEP to be reviewed once every six months. Fairview recognises that this is beneficial to do before the child or young person's Statutory (LAC) Review in relation access to pupil premium in terms of education progression. However, good practice suggests that where there are concerns regarding learning or progress they should be reviewed more regularly such as each term. Fairview promote this good practise and work with our education providers to ensure that reviews are taken place where appropriate or if we have any areas on concern to consider.

Spark of Genius recognises that each young person is an individual, is unique and will respond differently to various stimuli. It is imperative that any learning issues are addressed, with plans agreed for resolution prior to the admission of any young person. Spark of Genius can offer an appropriate education package designed to meet the needs of each young person living in Spark of Genius within their independent learning centres. Spark of Genius houses have a dedicated 'study' areas for use by young people, appropriate learning equipment, a computer with Internet facilities and books.

Young people will always be supported during any educational transition at both school and college and we will also work with local LEA's to secure an appropriate educational placement for the young person based on recommendations of any statements and risk assessments.

We aim to equip each young person with the ability to manage life events so that they can deal with adversities, recognise opportunities and ultimately shape their own future for the better. To achieve this we feel educational attainment is a key factor. Therefore we will:

- Ensure stability and continuity of care through supportive corporate parenting and the development of secure attachment patterns in order to raise self-esteem.
- Provide 1:1 professional teaching support (with the support of our King Edwin School) to fill gaps in learning, and to coordinate integration into any other educational placements or mainstream schooling.

- There is no time limit on this process and it is accepted that for some young people a return to mainstream may not happen; we will work with the LA to ascertain if these young people would be better suited to our King Edwin School. In these cases our specialist teaching staff from the school will provide a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure each young person reaches their full potential.
- Liaise with school and provide support by encouraging regular attendance, assisting with homework and promoting after school activities through a 24 hour curriculum.
- Ensure each young person has access to a computer and a quiet space in which to study. All bedrooms can be equipped with desks and chairs should the young people wish to have these.

## 5. Health

At The Old Vicarage, we understand the value of good health and wellbeing and support our young people intensively within this focus area. Keyworkers will ensure that all young people are registered with local medical services such as a GP, Dentist and Optician within 48 hours of arriving at the home and that check-up appointments are made as part of the admission process. We promote healthy lifestyle choices on a day to day basis through a well-balanced diet and ample opportunities for physical activity. We support young people to attend health appointments and record the outcomes of appointments, acting upon any which require a follow up. We access local external services when required including sexual health clinics, drug support services, CAMHS and hospitals. Medical consent forms are completed upon a young person's admission to the home. Young people are educated through key working sessions, residents meetings and informal discussion regarding the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

All medication at The Old Vicarage is securely stored within the staff office in a secure medical cabinet, in line with Royal Pharmaceutical Society; these are maintained by staff and are checked against written records for accuracy. Weekly balance checks ensure that all medication is checked and accounted for.

### Emotional Wellbeing (therapeutic intervention)

#### Aspire Clinical Psychological Services

SoGNE have commissioned a Consultant Psychologist to provide therapeutic support for our young people. Clinical Psychologist Louise Harrison visits Fairview once a week as a minimum and can offer our young people the option to have one to one therapy to help support their emotional needs. We have also used Louise in staff debrief sessions with the staff team when we experienced a traumatic time with one of our young people, this can be extended to upskilling the team with strategies to deal with issues presented in the home with specific children and young people. Louise has provided training for the staff team, the sessions have been tailored to the needs of our young people when working with their trauma, as follows;

- Impact of Sexual Abuse
- Attachment & Child development
- Managing Trauma, Crisis Management, Shield of Shame (connection before correction)
- Professional Information Sharing (Safeguarding)

## **6. Staffing Matters**

### **Staff Team Structure**

Registered Manager

Assistant Manager

Team of 10 staff for Day shifts

4 Waking Night staff

1 Ancillary staff member for cooking and cleaning

### **Staff Team Supervision, Training and Development**

All The Old Vicarage personnel are subject to a vigorous screening process prior to commencing employment in line with Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding processes. This includes verification from the Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS), interview, a minimum of 3 references are required, however, we request references from all workplaces where an individual has worked in child care. We also require confirmation that they are not disqualified from working with children.

Staff must complete a comprehensive induction and a six month probation period. They are supervised on a monthly basis and appraised annually.

We have a robust training programme to prepare staff to work with children and young people aged 8 - 18yrs which includes:

- Child Protection and Dealing with Disclosure.
- Health & Safety, Fire Safety and First Aid.
- Safe Food Handling.
- Team Teach
- Combating Bullying.
- Managing Challenging Behaviour.
- Understanding Attachment Disorders.
- Child Development (a key focus to understand different needs).
- Risk Assessment and Risk Management.
- Policies and Procedures e.g. Whistleblowing.

Staff also attend regular supervision and support with their line manager which covers any practice issues and identification of any necessary training required for personal development.

Each member of staff is required to complete induction training within 6 months of appointment and register for QCF Level 3 in Child Care and Young People. Spark of Genius will encourage and support staff members to gain further social care qualifications.

### **Qualifications and Experience of Management Team**

## **Responsible Individual**

### **Zak McIlhargey**

Zak has been with Spark of Genius since 2007. He has 24 years experience working with vulnerable children and young people in a variety of settings across the public, private and voluntary sectors, eighteen years of which have been in a managerial role. He is a qualified Social Worker and Residential Worker with a BA Degree in Social Work and a Diploma in Residential Child Care, After several years working as a Residential Child Care Worker with Strathclyde Regional Council and North Lanarkshire, Zak progressed to a residential manager's role before moving to Quarriers where he spent six years at Seafield Residential School in a managerial capacity, initially as a Residential Manager but most of his time at Seafield School was spent managing and developing their provision for day pupils. As Head of the Day School, Zak worked towards returning pupils to mainstream education. Zak then returned to North Lanarkshire Council as a Senior Officer in Social Work Headquarters where his responsibilities included the modernisation of local authority children's homes, improving outcomes for care leavers, reviewing and improving services for children and young people including foster care and transitional planning for children with disabilities.

## **Service Manager**

### **Steve McGill**

Steve has worked for Spark of Genius North East since June 2015, initially seconded from Stockton Borough Council. He has extensive knowledge and experience in residential child care spanning a 23 year period, he has worked primarily in local authority children's homes where he has spent the last 15 years in a management role. Steve holds NVQ4 in Children and young people, a CIPD management certificate, IOSH certificate as well as being a qualified brief therapy counsellor. Steve has managed short term , emergency assessment children's homes, long term children's homes as well as having knowledge and experience of setting up brand new children's homes. Steve has carried out the role of Placements Officer for the local authority and has been responsible for the monitoring and inspection of external children's home provision, he has also had management responsibility for the local authorities leaving care team.

## **Registered Manager**

### **Amy Redfern**

Amy has 12 years experience of working with children and young people. She has worked as a Teaching Assistant in a BESD school and more recently in another Children's Home as a Residential Childcare Officer. Amy holds the QCF Level 3 qualification. She will be registered for QCF Level 5 in due course.

## **Deputy Manager**

### **Position Vacant**

## **Senior Residential Child Care Workers**

### **Jon Brodie**

Jon has worked as a Youth Worker and an Outreach Youth Worker in disadvantaged areas of Stockton for over 12 years. Jon has a BA HONS Degree in Community and Youth Work. Jon continues to work with local youth clubs and is a qualified football coach. Jon has completed his QCF level 3 and will be working towards his QCF Level 5 Management and Leadership Award

## **Roxanne Yare**

Roxanne has worked for the National Citizen Service providing young people with strong

skills for life, work, and adulthood. She has also worked as an enabler, supporting adults with disabilities to live independently. Roxanne has obtained her QCF Level 3 in Health and Social Care (children and young people) and a BSc Degree in Criminology and Sociology. Roxanne has completed her QCF3.

## **Residential Child Care Workers**

### **Angela Barr**

Angela has experience of working in another Spark of Genius North East children's home as a Housekeeper. Angela played an active role with the young people and assisted them with daily tasks engaging them with regard to healthy choice and menus. Prior to this, Angela worked in schools in a catering role. Angela completed the QCF Level 3.

### **Fatima Brown**

Fatima has worked in the care environment for 15 years both with children and adults with brain injuries. Fatima has been registered on the QCF Level 3 qualification and is underway with this.

### **Daniel Lincoln**

Daniel's background is primarily in the leisure services. He also has considerable youth work experience, often working with hard to reach youngsters. Daniel is working toward his QCF Level 3.

### **Brian Cole**

Brian is new to residential child care and has previously worked with young people via being a sports coach. He has been registered on the QCF Level 3 and is working his way through this..

### **Malcolm Mohun**

Malcolm is new to residential childcare. He has previously worked with young people whilst running a Youth Club, as a Community Warden for 6 years and has worked with the Youth Offending Service. Malcolm is working toward his QCF Level 3

### **Rose McDougal**

Rose has worked with young people for 5 years in a youth club setting. She has a degree in Youth Studies with Criminology and is working toward her QCF Level 3

### **Lauren Campbell**

Lauren has previously worked with Stockton Borough Council Family Support Team and was on the bank list with another Children's Home previously. Lauren has a degree in Health, Care and Wellbeing and is working toward her QCF Level 3

### **Karl McArthur**

Karl is new to Residential Childcare, he has previously worked overseas with a diverse range of people. He will be registered for the QCF Level 3 in due course.

### **Wendy Morgan**

Wendy has previously worked in residential childcare before commencing employment

supporting young people in an education support unit. Wendy was in this role for 17 years and gained a wealth of experience. Wendy has a Degree in Education and Training , a Foundation Degree in Working with Children and Young people and a Diploma in Childcare and Education.

### **Jordan Jackson-Bailey**

Jordan is new to Residential Childcare, he has previously worked in both mainstream education and alternative education provisions. He has an NVQ Level 3 in Specialist Support in teaching and learning.. He will be registered for the QCF Level 3 in due course.

### **Sarah Kay**

Sarah is new to Residential Childcare, but has extensive experience in the care sector as a support worker in a range of settings including mental health, housing projects and learning difficulties. Sarah will be registered for her QCF in due course.

### **Ancillary staff member for cooking and cleaning**

#### **Andrea Peacock**

Andrea is new to the residential setting but does have experience in youth work. She has previously worked in cafes where she was responsible for developing menus, cooking and cleaning.