

LARCHWOOD SHORT BREAK CHILDRENS HOME STATEMENT OF PURPOSE 2023



This document fulfils the requirements of the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 Schedule 1, the Department for Education Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations including the quality standards April 2015 and the Social Care Common Inspection Framework April 2017. Updated April 2023.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The statement of purpose is a requirement of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations, April 2015. It is not a brochure; it is a manual that is used by all those who have an interest in the service. It performs a task for those internal and external to the home:

- It connects the needs of the child with the values, aims and objectives of the setting.
- It connects the home's definition of good practice and the clear objectives through which that practice can be achieved.
- It connects policy with practice.
- It connects the quality and range of services provided.

The statement of purpose is formally reviewed and approved by Bracknell Forest Council's Executive Member for Children and the Executive Director of People Services on an annual basis.

There is a more accessible Children's Guide for children and young people.

2. QUALITY AND PURPOSE OF CARE

Statement of the range of needs

Larchwood is a short break Children's Home, providing personalised short breaks for children, whilst also enabling a break 'respite' for parents and/or carers. Larchwood supports children and young people with severe and complex needs who require coordinated health, social and education services.

The children and young people who access Larchwood require personal care, medication, behavioural and/or communication support, sleep support, and support with learning and achievements. Children who attend Larchwood will have a profound and multiple learning disability (PMLD). PMLD is when a person has a severe learning disability and other disabilities that significantly affect their ability to communicate and be independent.

Larchwood is registered with Ofsted as a five bedded short breaks children's home providing overnight care for children from the age range of 5 – 17, up to their 18th birthday.

Aim and Ethos of the home.

The Larchwood workforce are aspirational in their care of the children who attend Larchwood. The service adopts an approach which is child centred, ensuring participation through active listening to the child's 'voice' and encourages collaboration with all.

Larchwood plays an active part in delivering Bracknell Forests Council's People Directorate Vision

'People at the heart of our services

We are here to:

- *Protect you from harm if you need us*
- *Help you to get support so that you can be physically and emotionally healthy.*
- *Work with you and your community to help you to be independent and resilient.*

We'll do this by:

- *Focusing on quality practice*
- *Integrating services with partners*
- *Providing information & choice*
- *Focusing on what is most important*'.

Larchwood achieves this by ensuring children can participate in a range of fun activities and positive experiences, which promote their development, whilst delivering sustainable support to the whole family. We believe that every child is an individual with the right to enjoy life within the community, appropriate to his or her age, wants and needs. Larchwood advocates respect, dignity, and freedom of choice for all, working with the future in mind.



A welcoming environment

We create a positive environment which promotes a 'friendship matters' culture, and where children and young people are offered experiences and opportunities to assist them to identify and achieve their aspirations and goals in life.

We provide a sensitive and nurturing environment, which is homely with access to a wide range of activities that reflect the children's interests and needs.

Accommodation offered.

Larchwood is registered with Ofsted and has five bedrooms meaning that a maximum of five children or young people can stay overnight, alongside those children who attend for tea or day visits. We ensure individuals have a choice of bedding and will purchase individual preferences to ensure they feel welcomed and valued.



Larchwood is a detached home. The accommodation is all on the ground floor with all areas accessible to people with mobility difficulties including wheelchair users.



Internal facilities include an adapted bath, fixed and mobile hoisting equipment, a sensory room and fully accessible and spacious gardens which include specialist sensory and play equipment.

The lounge and playroom areas are light and spacious and contain a wide range of toys and activities for the children to access, maximising their opportunities to learn through play.



Location of Larchwood

Larchwood is based in Bracknell, Berkshire and is situated in a quiet residential area close to the town centre, local leisure resources, and two local parks. Near to the home there are two supported living houses which accommodate adults with learning disabilities, offices which accommodate provisions for young people and several private residential homes. Above the unit are flats that provide temporary housing for families. The location of the unit has been formally assessed and there are no known significant risks regarding location. There is ample parking close by, and the train station is within walking distance.

Arrangements for supporting the cultural, linguistic, and religious needs of children.

Work completed in advance of a child starting their stay at Larchwood is designed to ensure that everyone working with the child has the necessary information about a child's communication, culture, ethnicity, identity, sexual orientation, dietary and religious needs and how those will be met.

Larchwood adopts an inclusive and responsive approach to the individual needs and aspirations of children, young people, and their families. We also aim to be family orientated and culturally competent, respectful of children and young people who have a diverse range of needs and backgrounds. All the children/young people who receive a service from Larchwood are valued as individuals, with different needs and individual rights.

Larchwood has resources which recognise ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences, and support workers to enable the children and young people to explore these through play. They include books, posters, toy figures, games, multi-cultural music and cultural events. Support workers encourage children/young people to question and celebrate differences through activities, role modelling and discussions.

Being part of Bracknell Forest Council, Larchwood has access to services that can provide translation of documents into other languages, braille and audio, and interpreters to attend reviews or meetings as required.

Special dietary needs and individual preferences are recognised and are included in the menu planning process and the child's individual care plan.

Larchwood celebrates special times of the year e.g., Eid, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Easter, St Patrick's Day etc. to help us understand all religions and cultures. We refresh our knowledge of culture and diversity through regular training and monthly team meetings. We also make a special effort to celebrate children's birthdays. If a child or young person wishes to participate in any religious activities or observance, we will facilitate this within the home e.g., a quiet place to pray or read, or support to access a place of worship.

Staff who work at Larchwood have knowledge of Makaton, PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), and various electronic communication devices, to assist communication with the child or young person. If the child or young person can communicate verbally, support workers will listen and act upon what they say. Social stories, picture boards and iPads are also helpful ways for us to communicate with children and are used as necessary and in line with children's preferences. Pre-verbal children/young people's views are captured through observation and the use of alternative communication methods.

Arrangements for dealing with complaints.

We encourage children and their families to be open and honest about any concerns or worries they have, and we listen and act upon any concerns promptly.

Complaints are responded to at the earliest opportunity and by the most appropriate person in accordance with Bracknell Forest Council's complaints procedure, copies of which are available in the reception area of Larchwood, or on the Bracknell Forest Council website.

Within Larchwood we have developed various ways in which children and young people can make formal and informal comments, observations, or complaints. These include:

- An accessible Children's Guide found at the entrance to the unit, which includes information on how to make a complaint and where to find support in doing so.
- A post-box in the entrance hall and a "you said, we did" board, this allows children and young people to make a comment or raise a concern/complaint and then the board is used to show our response.



- A children and young person's consultation book, which children are supported to complete before their reviews.

- Visual complaints forms assist children/young people to identify their concern or complaint and to raise this with the team.
- Children are also visited regularly by their Social Workers which offers a further independent opportunity to feed back their views on the service they receive.
- Visits from a Reg 44 Independent reviewing officer includes the opportunity to gain the views of children and young people at Larchwood, whether by observation or direct conversation.
- Staff can record any observations of children expressing their views, including unhappiness, on the shift feedback form. This would then be reflected in the child's case note and future planning for the child.

Larchwood is committed to receiving and acting upon feedback from service users, whether this is positive or indicating dissatisfaction with the services provided. Complaints and compliments are monitored by the Regulation 44 Independent Visitor each month, and by the Council's Complaints Manager.

The unit has a separate telephone line for children and young people to access should they wish to make a complaint.

Regulatory and Independent Complaints Contacts

Children and their families are also able to make a complaint to Ofsted or to the Children's Commissioner for England, at:

Office of the Children's Commissioner
 Tel: 0800 528 0731
 Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Or

Ofsted
 Piccadilly Gate
 Store Street
 Manchester
 M1 2WD
 0300 1231231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

And /or Bracknell Forest's Children's Services Complaints Manager:

Childrens.Complaints@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk

Tel: 01344 351682

Access to the home's child protection and behaviour management policies

Larchwood adheres to the Pan Berkshire Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual, a 'live' online document which can be found at: <http://proceduresonline.com/berks/>

Alongside this Larchwood also has a bespoke safeguarding policy, which includes an easy-to-follow flow-chart. This policy is available to support workers as a paper document in the

policies and procedures folder within the unit, on a shared computer drive and is available to children, young people, families, carers, professionals, and others involved in the care and protection of a child upon request.

Larchwood also has a Behaviour Management Policy, available in the above formats and upon request.

3. VIEWS, WISHES AND FEELINGS

Consulting with Children and Young People

Regular consultation takes place with children and young people regarding their experience of Larchwood and how they would like the service to develop. Larchwood recognises that children and young people should be offered opportunities, choices and control at every appropriate opportunity.

Consultation is part of our everyday work, however the below illustrates some of the other methods we use:

- The 'Larchwood Lions' - Larchwood's Participation Group, which provides feedback to the support workers and management team about the unit on a regular basis.
- Interactive consultation board.
- Feedback box - a user friendly informal way to ascertain views.
- Choices in the meals provided.
- Children's consultation booklet – 6 monthly or when a change is observed.
- Structured / direct observations from support workers.
- Analysis of behavioural incidents.
- Children's Feedback forms
- Feedback from parents/carers and other involved professionals.

The children and young people at Larchwood are also encouraged and supported to attend Bracknell Forest Council's Council for Children with Disabilities – BOOM (Because Our Opinions Matter) to provide an opportunity to share their views about the unit and the wider services they receive.

Larchwood's policy and approach to anti-discriminatory practice and children's rights

Larchwood creates a climate that is committed to equal opportunities, inclusion and challenging barriers and discrimination. We work within the Equality Act 2010 which sits alongside the requirements in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice.

- All Larchwood employees are 'signed up to' the Council's Values and Behaviours Framework and we adopt these values and behaviours which form part of annual performance appraisals.
- Larchwood recognises that all people are unique and have a contribution to make for the benefit of all.
- Employees understand that discrimination arising from disability is treating a disabled child unfavourably because of something arising because of their disability, and work to ensure that children in their care are protected from any such experiences.

The protected characteristics as below are understood, and reasonable adjustments made as necessary to break down barriers for inclusion:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Larchwood has a policy on anti-discriminatory practice that all employees adhere to. No child or groups of children or their families will be discriminated against. Our support workers will not judge or treat children at Larchwood or their family unfairly or unequally.

Should support workers become aware that an individual or a family is experiencing discrimination they will offer immediate support and promptly address the needs of all concerned. This will then be passed on to the Unit Manager and Responsible Individual to address as necessary.

Anti-discriminatory measures in place to protect children and their families include:

- Careful observation and monitoring.
- Accurate case recording.
- Maintaining vigilance in the link worker role.
- Understanding the children and families' needs.
- Raising concerns with others.
- Whistle Blowing Policy.
- Larchwood Advocate.

Bracknell Forest Council and Larchwood are committed to the principles of the Human Rights Act 1998. Children with disabilities are vulnerable. Their needs and interests must be heard and given the utmost consideration in decision making. Larchwood use every opportunity to promote the rights of children with disabilities and to improve children's lives and social status.

Within the principle of equal opportunities, all young people have rights. At Larchwood children and young people have the right to:

- Be treated with respect.
- Be treated fairly.
- Be listened to when people are making plans about their future.
- Be able to go to school.
- Be in good health.
- Be able to complain if they are unhappy or worried about something.
- Be able to have an advocate who can advise and help sort out matters when their stay is not going well.
- Be looked after by support workers who actively promote the above rights.

4. EDUCATION

Supporting children with special educational needs

Children/young people during their stay at Larchwood continue to attend school as part of their daily routine. School transport will be consistent with the child's home to school arrangement to ensure continuity. Collaboration takes place between children's escorts and Larchwood employees to ensure that any communication from school to home or transport is fluid. We continue to work closely with the local special schools, to ensure the holistic needs of our service users are met across settings.

Schools currently attended by children attending Larchwood are: -

- Kennel Lane School (Bracknell)
- Manor Green (Maidenhead)
- Samuel Cody (Hampshire)
- Portesbery School (Surrey)
- Arbour Vale School (Slough)
- Addington School (Woodley)
- Chiltern Wood School (Buckinghamshire)

Where it is helpful or requested some children and young people have a Home/ School/ Larchwood diary to help ensure consistency of communication between all carers/settings. This enables support workers to gain an insight into the child or young person's day and help to reinforce positive achievements through praise or to enable the sharing of worries. There is always close collaboration between Larchwood, families, schools, and the Special Educational Needs Team.

The importance of education is embraced. If children and young people bring homework into the unit to complete, support workers assist with this where necessary, and they are encouraged to complete tasks. There is a wide range of books available in the unit: one iPad, a large touch-screen television with a wide range of applications, games, toys, art activities, and opportunities to access activities which support the development of independence skills, such as shopping, cooking and self-care.

Supporting education and educational achievements



Larchwood employees attend school reviews and make visits to the schools to see their link children.

The link worker will maintain good contact and work together with the teacher and young person to plan their smart star achievements in line with those educational targets set at school.

There is an achievement rewards box at Larchwood in which children and young people can choose an item/certificate when they have reached or made good progress in working towards their smart stars.

We also recognise and celebrate achievements using our 'WOW' board which is displayed in the dining area.



The Unit Manager or the child's Link Worker meets termly with a designated member of the school staff to identify areas of concern or improvement with either individual young people or services and attends the professional liaison meetings held at Kennel Lane School when required.

5. ENJOYMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

Activities within the home

An extensive variety of activities are provided which consider a young person's individual likes, choices, needs and aspirations. This includes a wide range of play activities within the home, including I.T systems (iPads), art, games, puzzles, and sensory toys. The indoor sensory room provides a space for children and young people to enjoy a range of sensory activities in a calm and relaxing environment.

A safe and secure garden which provides opportunities for enjoyment with specialist outdoor play equipment such as a wheelchair accessible swing, water play, trampoline and climbing frame with slide.

Larchwood has its own vehicle, which is used to enable children/young people to access local community facilities, and we continue to make use of our indoor facilities and garden.

A Larchwood 'On the Move' service can be provided for children or young people where there is an assessed need to have the opportunity to access and enjoy the local community either alone or with their peers with appropriate support. This is particularly valuable to young people approaching adulthood and building on their independence skills.



6. HEALTH

Health care provided within the home.

Larchwood supports children with a range of health needs. These include gastrostomy feeding, epilepsy management, asthma, and eczema. Supporting individual children's health is covered within the child/young person's care plan, and emergency procedures are in place where necessary and clearly set out. Where nursing care is required, liaison and joint commissioning takes place with our health partners to ensure this is in place.

As part of thinking for the future and reducing dependency, children are encouraged to take an interest in and, as far as is practicable, take responsibility for their own health and that of others. We aim to support children to be as independent as possible with all areas of their care and to make healthy choices.

The local community nursing team deliver specific care plan training for the Larchwood team in the administration of hormone injections, emergency epilepsy medication and procedures, competencies for gastrostomy feeds and an overview on tracheostomy care. Providing continuity, the nurses delivering this training are usually the named specialist nurse for the young person. The health care plans and support workers' child specific training sheets are in the individual care plans.

Children are always listened to, which ensures that support workers are aware of and can address any physical or emotional health needs causing concern.

Larchwood has access to the Occupational Therapist within the Children's Specialist Support Team who provides support in meeting the needs of children and young people requiring manual handling and specialist equipment. The Occupational Therapist is fully involved in the care plan and risk profiles of those children and young people.

The unit can provide a service for and assist children/young people who are prescribed medication, for which there is a 'Larchwood Safe Administration of Children's Medication Policy and Practice Guidance' document. Children and young people who have complex health needs can access the service. It is the responsibility of Berkshire Health Foundation Trust and the Unit Manager to ensure a suitably qualified nurse is available to support the young person whilst in the unit. Support workers are all aware of the need to promote healthy living, and actively assist children and young people in daily hygiene routines, dental care, food, and menu choices. Health is also explored through play, stories, and activities.



Larchwood carries out a constant cleaning programme to prevent infection. Staff continue to follow infection control guidelines and attend refresher PPE training provided by public health colleagues. The unit has signage and guidelines for hand washing and infection control and a donning and doffing area for PPE. All visitors are asked to follow the current government and the unit's guidance when attending the home.

7. POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Promoting contact between children, families, and friends

Larchwood is a Short Break Unit, therefore the aim is to provide children with enjoyable respite /short breaks whilst also giving their families a break – this assists with family relationships and resilience and supports permanency for children within their own families.

Larchwood operates an “open door” visiting policy, and, subject to any legal orders, contact or visits can be made with a child/young person at any time during their stay. As many of our activities include outings outside of Larchwood, parents and carers are advised to call / check beforehand if they are intending to visit, to ensure the child/young person is at Larchwood at the time of any planned visit.

Children and young people are able to telephone/facetime/skype/e-mail their families at any time. In certain circumstances the frequency and duration may be specifically outlined in their individual care plans. Support workers will be aware of each individual's level of support needed as outlined in their care plan and will support as necessary.

8. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN

Home's approach to monitoring and surveillance

Larchwood has no sophisticated or recordable form of surveillance of the children. For children with health needs that require a higher level of monitoring, an audio monitor or bed alarm can be used e.g., if a child has nocturnal epilepsy. Such devices are only used when this is identified as a need in the care plan and prior agreement is sought from parents/carers, wherever possible the child/ young person, and the placing authority. To ensure maximum privacy the child or young person is made aware when the monitor is switched on and off each time using words, Makaton, or symbols as appropriate for them.

In accordance with need, children and young people staying at Larchwood are provided with support that includes a level of supervision based on their assessed individual needs, as identified in their need's profiles on ratios such as group, 1:1 or 1:2. Larchwood is designed so that children and young people can have access to all shared areas of the home, enabling independence and privacy where safe to do so.

Larchwood has an electronic door alarm on all external doors and keypad exit systems on all three external doors that lead to the car park and main road. There is unrestricted access to a large garden and play area.

The external front access alarms are not to restrict children/young people from leaving, but to ensure they are safe in doing so. Young people have a variety of communication methods available to them to be able to ask a member of staff if they want to go on an outside activity or to be picked up by a parent/carer. These identified risks are reflected in the building risk assessment.

Larchwood support workers are aware of the procedures and protocols in place regarding children who go missing and who may be at risk of child sexual or criminal exploitation. A location risk assessment has been undertaken and there are no known risks associated with the location of the unit.

Behavioural support

Larchwood operates within the Bracknell Forest Council Behaviour Management Policy Statement and Guidance. All Larchwood employees receive positive behaviour management training every two years as a minimum. The children/young people's care plans/risk profiles are updated every six months, with multi-agency input, and are agreed and signed off by parents/carers.

A multi-agency approach is always used to support behavioural needs in partnership with families, and the Behaviour Support Specialist, to identify the most appropriate and helpful ways to support children and young people with a range of emotions and behaviours, and to ensure behaviour management responses are consistent across settings.

Historically Larchwood used the long established and accredited 'Team Teach' approach to managing behaviour, however in September 2023 all Larchwood staff attended training in an alternative accredited approach; PRICE, which stands for Protecting Rights in a Caring Environment. PRICE is a system that is rooted in trauma-informed practice and positive behaviour support that places human rights and the well-being of vulnerable people at its heart.

The decision to convert to PRICE was underpinned by the recognition that all behaviour is a form of communication, and the desire to ensure that practice is as trauma-informed as possible. The school attended by the majority of children attending Larchwood (Kennel Lane School) recently retrained in PRICE, so this development ensures that the strategies and techniques used are consistent across settings.

PRICE places a significant emphasis on the importance of primary, secondary and non-restrictive tertiary strategies, adopting a person-centred approach, that aims to understand and meet the needs of individuals before difficulties arise, by recognising an individual's early behavioural signs (physical, emotional, communicative). A significant emphasis is also placed on the use of non-restrictive tertiary strategies, such as de-escalation,

diversion, distraction or strategic capitulation as well as the use of breakaway techniques to safely respond to unwanted physical contact.

PRICE Aims:

- protect people's fundamental human rights
- reduce reliance on restrictive practices
- promote a person-centred and therapeutic approach
- create a safer environment for service users and staff
- improve the quality of life of those being held
- reduce placement breakdown and service exclusion

Policy and practice is about diverting the children/young people from behaviour that is unacceptable, using methods agreed in individual care plans and risk profiles, focusing on positive reinforcement, modelling appropriate behaviour and redirection/distraction strategies.

At all times workers are mindful of the need to ensure that the behaviour of one child does not harm another. A distressed young person may be supported to withdraw from the group to enable a time for calming down.

Should any child or young person need any type of physical support/intervention it is recorded in the physical interventions book, and on their electronic file which alerts their social worker. Parents/carers are notified as soon as possible. Support workers are required to record the young person's response/views in the physical intervention log, and any impact explored.

Distraction and prevention is successfully employed by the skilled team. The use of restraint at Larchwood is very rare and detailed records are monitored by the Unit Manager at Larchwood, and through the monthly Regulation 44 visits and by the Responsible Individual.

We promote positive behaviour, and our aim is to assist children and young people in restorative conciliatory responses when undesirable behaviours occur. Again rarely, it may be appropriate to use a sanction. A child/ young person should be given a warning of an impending sanction and opportunity to alter their behaviour. Sanctions will only be used where it has been clearly identified and agreed in an individual's care plan and risk profile agreeing that the child/young person has the capacity to understand consequences. The sanctions record book should be completed in full. This also contains a list of prohibited sanctions.

A copy of the Bracknell Forest Council's Behaviour Management Policy Statement and Guidance is available upon request from Larchwood.

9. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Names and work address of managers

Registered Provider

Bracknell Forest Council
Department of Children, Young People and Learning
C/O Time Square Market Street
Bracknell
RG12 1JD

Responsible Individual

Lou Richer, Head of Children's Specialist Family Safeguarding
Time Square
Market Street
Bracknell
RG12 1JD
Telephone 01344 353112
Lou.Richer@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Registered Unit Manager

Clare Turner
Larchwood
10 Portman Close
Bracknell
RG42 1NE
Telephone 01344 452315
Clare.turner@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

9.2 Support Workers Experience and Qualifications

The Registered Responsible Individual - is responsible for the supervision of the Unit Manager and the quality and delivery of a safe service. The Registered Responsible Individual is a Registered Social Worker with over 20 years' experience in Social Care.

The Registered Responsible Individual's Qualifications are:

- Diploma in Social Work
- Diploma in Learning Disability Nursing
- BA (hons) Health & Social Care Studies
- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management (CMI)

The Unit Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the unit.

The Unit Manager's Qualifications are:

- First Class BA (hons) Children's Development & Learning
- NVQ Level 3 Early Years Care and Education
- Diploma in Personality Disorders
- Diploma Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Skills for Care Diploma Work in a Person-Centred Way
- Skills for Care Diploma Management & Leadership
- Skills for Care Diploma Managing Conflict
- Level 5 Leadership for Health & Social Care and Children & Young People's Services

Experience: Extensive experience of managing a respite setting and a team with many years of working with children with disabilities and complex needs within a social care setting.

The Senior Residential Practitioner supports the Unit Manager and has the following qualifications:

- Post Graduate Certificate in Education (secondary) with QTS
- Practice Teaching Award
- Diploma in Counselling

- N.V.Q. Level 4 in Management

Experience: Extensive experience of working with both disabled and mainstream children and young people in education, respite and residential settings

The three roles above have worked together as a Leadership Team since December 2021 providing the home with stable leadership and a shared ethos of continuous improvement.

Qualifications and training within the Larchwood team include:

- ❖ N.V.Q. Level 3 Social Care
- ❖ Team Teach qualifications.
- ❖ Safeguarding
- ❖ Fire Safety
- ❖ First Aid
- ❖ Food Hygiene
- ❖ Medication
- ❖ Manual Handling
- ❖ Epilepsy
- ❖ Individual Medical Care Plans

Experience within the Larchwood team includes:

- ❖ Qualification for driving the minibus.
- ❖ Makaton
- ❖ Sleep Scotland – Sleep Counsellors
- ❖ Mental health awareness
- ❖ Knowledge of the Webster Stratton Incredible Years Parenting Programme and how to support families to implement the strategies.
- ❖ Supporting adults with learning disabilities in their own and group homes to live more independently.
- ❖ Extensive experience of working with children and adults with disabilities in a residential setting.
- ❖ Youth work.
- ❖ Experience in managing challenging behaviours within residential home/school settings.

The Larchwood team is an experienced and committed team with extensive experience in working with children with disabilities. As a service Larchwood has a proven track record evidenced through Ofsted Inspection of providing services that are of significant value to children/young people in respect of positive outcomes.

The Leadership Team recognise that supervision is an essential component of good quality services. All support workers receive supervision in accordance with the Children’s Homes Regulations 2015 and within Bracknell Forest Council’s Supervision Policy.

We use a variety of formats to enable the development of staff, most recently the introduction of Microsoft Teams virtual meetings, hybrid meetings, team supervisions, team meetings and where appropriate, learning events. Most of the recent training has taken place virtually and will continue to do so at least in part.

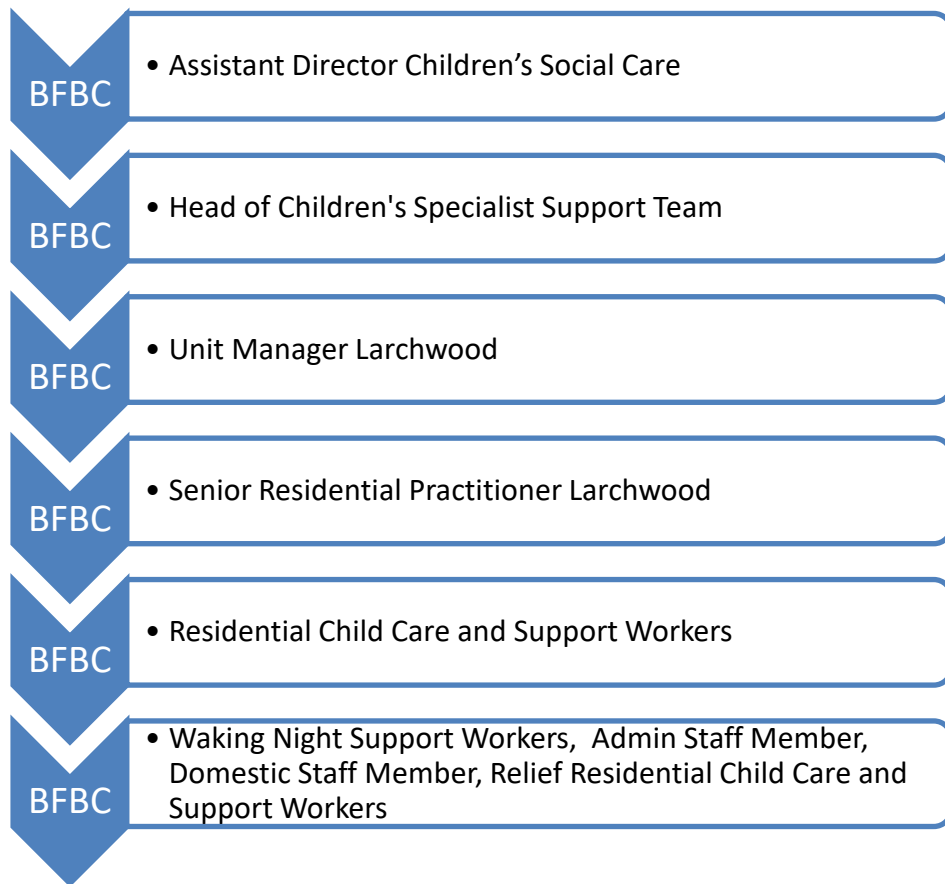
Employees are provided with individual, direct 1:1 supervision which incorporates reflective practice from the Unit Manager or the Senior Practitioner on a monthly basis. Supervisions have taken place either face to face or via Microsoft Teams.

There is an annual appraisal system in place to ensure personal and professional development. Relief support workers are supervised regularly by a full time employed Residential Child Care and Support Worker.

Alongside this, complex case discussion sessions are offered and reflective group sessions in response to specific issues.



Staffing structure



Promoting appropriate role models within the home

Larchwood has a staff team of ten female staff and one male staff member. The current team are of a mixed age, religion and sexuality which provides diversity and difference.

Larchwood has a team of experienced and reliable relief support workers, who are employed by Bracknell Forest Council. The relief support workers are used to support the team with annual leave, sickness, and gaps within the rota. We also positively engage some regular agency staff when required to provide a balance of age, ethnicity, and experience to our own team.

Our current model for management oversight includes daily management cover, mainly onsite with phone and email contact outside of office hours and an on-call rota



10. CARE PLANNING

Admissions to the home

Bracknell Forest Council is the Registered Provider of Larchwood therefore a significant number of child referrals are from BFC Children's Social Care. However, the unit has capacity to provide services to a larger population and encourages referrals from other local authorities.

All children eligible to attend Larchwood will have this identified as a need from a social work assessment. Following assessment and in co-production with the child and their family the child/young person's needs and outcomes will be identified, and a proposed support package developed which may include short breaks, 'On the Move' or day/overnight services from Larchwood.

All referrals are discussed with the Unit Manager, Children's Specialist Support Team Manager and Responsible Individual as part of the multi professional Resource Allocation System (RAS) Panel. All admissions to Larchwood must be agreed with the Unit Manager and approved by the Responsible Individual.

Alongside this the Unit Manager will assess the suitability of the referral and create a pre-admission plan to aid decision making. Once a decision has been made that the child or young person's needs can be met at Larchwood, a bespoke introduction to Larchwood will commence.

The level of service will depend upon assessed need (agreed at RAS). If the number of visits is under 75 nights per year and no more than 17 consecutive nights, Regulation 48 and either a section 17 or section 20 (4) Children's Act 1989 will apply. If it exceeds 75 night per year or more than 17 consecutive nights, full Child Looked After requirements will need to be observed. A social worker will review individual children's needs regularly.

After a referral is accepted, a link-worker is identified from the Larchwood staff team. She/he then contacts the family. The child/young person and his or her family are invited to visit the unit, and the link-worker carries out a home visit and school visit to gather the information necessary to write a care plan, risk assessment and a group impact risk assessment. Following this, a formal multi professional planning meeting will be held. The care plan, risk profile and other relevant documents are finalised at this meeting and introductory visit arranged.

A social worker will review individual children's needs regularly. Packages will be reviewed within the Child Looked After (for children who stay more than 75 nights a year or have multiple placements) or Child in Need review system on a (minimum) six monthly basis.

Larchwood is part of the Children's Specialist Support Team (CSST) and shares a commitment with others in supporting children and families known to the team who are in crisis, and require short notice stays. Providing they meet Larchwood's criteria for admission it may be possible in some circumstances to offer a service at short notice.

To enable Larchwood to consider this, the social worker must have assessed the situation and identified the need and Larchwood must be considered the most appropriate option in meeting



the child's needs. This means that options such as the child staying with other family/friends, placement with a foster carer, short break carer, or support workers working within the child's home have been explored and ruled out or are not considered to be appropriate.

Such decisions will also take account of the impact on other children/young people using the service at Larchwood and consider their needs as well, ensuring that Larchwood can continue to deliver high quality care to all those residents on any day /night. (This may include a decision to rearrange or, if unavoidable, to cancel other children's/young people's visits to help with capacity issues or group impact risk assessment).

Decisions around short notice stays will be the responsibility of the Larchwood Management Team in conjunction with the social worker and their manager. Larchwood must not be considered the first port of call when a family is in crisis but may in some circumstances offer an appropriate best interest solution if other options are not available to meet need.

Prior to any agreement to a child staying at Larchwood (admission) relevant paperwork (Care Plan including all medical information, Risk Profile and Group Impact Risk Assessments) and introductions will need to be completed/reviewed.

Depending on the nature of the crisis being experienced by the child or their family, introductions to the unit may be over more than one visit and will ideally be conducted at the child's pace unless there is good reason not to. Rapid planning for these types of short notice visits will identify and outline a plan.

It must be noted that Larchwood although registered as a Children's Home is a Short Breaks provision. Although we try to be a 'home away from home' we are geared towards children and young people regularly coming and going. As such Larchwood should not generally be considered an appropriate resource for stays that could not be considered a Short Break (i.e., no longer than 17 consecutive days).

Where a short notice visit cannot be considered a Short Break by definition of the anticipated length of time or there being no clear plan in place, a Placement Planning Meeting will take place within 5 days of admission to consider the young person's best interests. Any stay planned for or exceeding 17 days will be notified to Ofsted, alongside robust planning to move a child to a permanent placement as soon as is practicable.

NOTE: A FAMILY'S LEVEL OF NEED CAN INCREASE OR DECREASE DEPENDING ON AN ASSESSED NEED AT THAT TIME

Clare Turner, Registered Unit Manager
Lou Richer, Responsible Individual
September 2023

Larchwood's Children's Guide

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/childrens-guide-to-larchwood.pdf>

<https://youtu.be/IZvAucu2UJU>