

north east **autism** society

Statement of Purpose

Belford Terrace

October 2025



About NEAS

For 40 years we've led the way in providing autism-specific care and education for children, young people and adults across the North-east of England.

Recognised for our innovation and excellence, everything we do stems from an unswerving belief in providing bespoke person-centred support. It's at the heart of who we are to recognise the uniqueness of every human being, and to understand that no two autistic people, or in fact any humans within an understanding of neurodiversity, will have the same needs or wants.

Through the work of our Autism and Neurodiversity Think Tank we remain committed to listening to and being informed by the very people we exist to serve.

This passion for innovation, personalisation and a commitment to empowering those who work for us and for those we work alongside, has allowed us to add to and adapt our services year on year, keeping us right at the fore of autism-specific service provision in the UK.

Our services include residential homes for children and adults, and supported living services, which are specifically tailored to the individual needs of the people we care for. NEAS has 3 purpose-built specialist schools and a college, providing education services for children aged 3-19, post 16 education and social/vocational training along with supported and open employment opportunities for adult. NEAS also provides a network of family support within the community.

For more information regarding our services, head to ne-as.org.uk.

Welcome to Belford Terrace



Creating a 'home from home' environment for autistic children and those with learning difficulties.

Caring for and empowering autistic children and young people to lead happy, healthy, fulfilled lives is what we're most passionate about.

Our 24-hour bespoke support services are designed with this in mind, and specifically tailor everything to the needs of each person entrusted into our care.

Belford is a large, detached home located near to the city centre of Sunderland. Registered with Ofsted (SC416136), the home can accommodate up to 5 young people, who have been diagnosed autistic or with other neurodivergent conditions. We currently have 5 young people living at Belford.

This Statement of Purpose provides an overview of Belford. It is our statutory duty to produce this document under the Care Standards Act 2000 and Children's Homes Regulations 2015, but we hope it will also provide you with some useful information about what we do.

Further information is available on our website at www.ne-as.org.uk or from North East Autism Society's head office on 0191 410 9974.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information or would like to arrange a visit.

Welcome to Belford Terrace

Creating a 'home from home' for autistic and neurodivergent children.

Caring for and empowering autistic and neurodivergent children and young people to lead happy, healthy, fulfilled lives is what we're most passionate about. with an emphasis on giving our young people exiting person centred life experiences whilst encouraging personal development and independence at the pace of the young people.

Our 24-hour bespoke support services are designed with this in mind, and specifically tailor everything to the needs of each person entrusted into our care.

Belford is one of our children's homes providing quality care for young people. The home is in Sunderland, Tyne & Wear, In the centre of the community, a short walk away from the town centre and local amenities.

We are registered with Ofsted as a Children's Home (Unique Reference SC 416136) as well as a registered charity in the United Kingdom (No. 1028260). The home is registered for 5 young people with a diagnosis of autism and/or other neurodivergent conditions.

This Statement of Purpose provides an overview of Belford Terrace. It is our statutory duty to produce this document under the Care Standards Act 2000 and Children's Homes Regulations 2015, but we hope it will also provide you with some useful information about what we do.

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Our Vision, Values and Purpose

Mission Statement

Our mission is to work together inspiring, supporting, celebrating and equipping autistic and neurodiverse children, young people and adults.

We work in partnership to achieve outstanding personalised services.

Core Values

- To have the people we support at the heart of the organisation
- To operate a fair, respectful and honest culture
- To strive for the highest quality
- To operate with integrity

Society-Wide Strategic Aims

- To demonstrate and maintain good professional practice and effective management of resources – “be trusted”
- To demonstrate value for money
- To keep service costs competitive
- To be vigilant to opportunities and risks
- To be creative and flexible in developing new services in line with research and practice developments, public policy and legislation

Service Strategic Aims

Strategic Aim 1

Improve outcomes for autistic individuals, those with learning difficulties and / or disabilities within the North-east region contributing to economic growth and social inclusion.

Strategic Aim 2

Constantly strive to improve overall organisational performance, demonstrating greater self-regulation and self-determination.

Strategic Aim 3

Inspire highly creative and innovative learning and teaching.

Strategic Aim 4

Promote equality, equity and respect for all.

Strategic Aim 5

Enhance leadership and management for improvement, innovation and change.

Strategic Aim 6

Energising improvement through new ways of working, innovation and efficiency and further contribute to local solutions for economic and social development.

Strategic Aim 7

Develop the organisations capacity to shape and influence policy and our context, locally and nationally, working collaboratively with other leaders within the sector and across the public and private sectors. Turning policy analysis and interpretation into practice.

Our Home

All our young people are placed either under Section 20 or 31 of the Children's Act. Ownership of the home (property) belongs to the North East Autism Society and is governed by a board of Trustees.

The accommodation is registered for 5 young people. We can accommodate children and young people of any gender, aged 4 – 18 who have been diagnosed as autistic and/or diagnosed with other neurodivergent conditions, along with any co-occurring conditions such as epilepsy and significant sensory processing difficulties.

Young people who reach the age of 18 years may remain in the home until they have completed their education at 19. (Social Care, England Children and Young Persons, England—The Children's Home Regulations 2015 and Care Standards Act 2000).

The home is a short drive away from Thornhill Park School, giving our young people the option to enjoy a local school. However, if it is their wish to remain at the school they attended before moving into Belford, we will support this. Currently our young people have transport to schools they continue to attend out of the area, as it has been in their best Interest to support them to continue attending the schools they were attending before moving into Belford.

The leadership team and the staff team strive to achieve the best outcomes for our young people. We ensure everyone has access to a range of facilities within the local community including good healthcare, activities, clubs and experiences.

There are currently 5 young people living in Belford. Any referrals and admissions must be assessed and robust plans put in place to ensure the home remains as stable as possible for the young people already accommodated.

Belford has a good-sized garden to facilitate our young people relaxing in. Internally, there are 2 bedrooms on the ground floor and 3 bedrooms on the first floor. There are also many spaces in the home which can help in supporting the young people to take part in different activities in either groups or singular. These include the cinema and gaming area, the sensory and reading corner, the sensory area in the conservatory, the sensory ball pit and the large living/dining area. All these areas allow the young people to socialise together or provide ample space for the young people to use different areas.

The set-up of having several different areas of the home for our young people reduces the impact of external factors that may contribute to stress and anxiety. The facilities within these areas are instrumental in helping our children and young people develop life skills whilst supporting their sensory needs providing a smooth transition into adulthood and increase independent living whilst sharing their environment with others enabling coping strategies to develop whilst supporting socialising.



Autism Friendly Environment

Sensory issues can make up an enormous part of an autistic person's profile. This can result in sensory sensitivity affecting one or more of the five senses: *sight, sound, smell, touch* and *taste*. The senses may be hypersensitive, which means they are overly sensitive to stimuli, or hyposensitive which means they are under stimulated. These sensory differences can have a massive impact on a person. Staff have developed a good understanding of the sensory differences of the young people here at Belford and have promoted a supportive and functional environment to accommodate their needs.

One of the most effective strategies we've found to help the people we serve is to create a well-structured and supportive environment. This does not necessarily involve physically changing the environment. By making minor changes such as establishing routines and creating bespoke support strategies, is often extremely beneficial. Every approach we use is based on good autism practice.

SPELL stands for **S**tructure, **P**ositive, **E**mpathy, **L**ow arousal and **L**inks. The ***SPELL*** framework recognises the unique needs of each young person and emphasises that all planning and interventions should be organised with these needs in mind.

Structure

The main reason for incorporating structure into the daily life of a young person is to help them to predict events and avoid anxiety. We've found that many young people in our care are happier if they know what they are going to do on any given day. Sudden changes to a daily routine need to be avoided as far as possible: cancelling activities without prior warning, and changes to staffing or teaching methods may all increase anxiety.

Positive

A positive approach means encouraging the people in our care, wherever possible, to develop their skills by giving them opportunities to try new activities in a supportive and caring environment. If they can undertake tasks that can realistically be accomplished, this will help to increase their self-esteem and self-confidence. This may mean structuring their day so that they have time to reflect on their achievements while doing something they enjoy.

Empathy

This is to do with how you as a parent, carer or professional understand how an autistic person experiences the world, and also how we can best support them.

Low arousal

Some autistic people can be sensitive to noise, light, heat or smells. Therefore, it is important that lessons and activities are carried out in a calm environment, free as far as possible from disruption or noise which may make them feel anxious. It's possible that your tone of voice or

body language can cause anxiety. Speaking calmly and using slower body movements can help.

Links

Links refers to good communication between parents and carers, and teachers and other professionals. This can help to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding or confusion, and to promote learning as everyone trusted to support follows the same, consistent approaches.

Board of Trustees

Rakesh Chopra – Chair of the Board of Trustees

Rakesh is a retired GP from Ashington, Northumberland and is married with two children. His son is autistic and became a day pupil at Thornhill Park School at the age of five and has now progressed through to a placement with adult services at New Warlands Farm.

Rakesh has taken on the role of Chair of Trustees in order to help the Society take forward its excellent work with supporting autistic children, young people and adults as well as supporting their families.



Jillian Crumble – Trustee

Jillian lives in Durham and studies at New College Durham acquiring a HND in Business and a Hon's Degree in Social Work. At present Jillian is a full-time carer for her autistic son. Jillian has three children and her middle son has attended Thornhill Park School, Thornbeck College and has been at New Warlands Farm since 2003 as a day pupil. Jillian joined the Society in 2005 as a Trustee.

Jillian believes it is important that the views of parents should be heard. Still to this day she feels privileged to see at first hand how the Society supports children, young people and adults to have a wonderful future and how the Society continues to expand.



Trustee- Lisa Waller

Lisa Waller has over 30 years' experience working in management positions in a wide range of sectors including Travel & Tourism, Recruitment, Welfare to Work and most recently as Head of Business Development at Derwentside College and New College Durham.

Away from the busy office Lisa enjoys spending time with family and friends, visiting the countryside and going to the theatre. With a love for musical theatre Lisa has been an active member of Fatfield Musical Stage Society for 40 years both on and off stage!



Trustee – David Parker

David graduated from Newcastle University with a degree in mathematics before training as a Chartered Accountant in the audit department of a national accountancy firm in Bristol. After qualifying he moved back to his native northeast where he worked for a local independent accountancy firm before moving to be the Financial Controller of IAM Sold, a Fast Track 100 property auction house.

Following this he worked at Newcastle United Foundation heading up their finance team as Finance Manager, before moving to Home Group's accounts team. Dave has extensive experience of working both for and with a wide range of charities and is proud to have the opportunity to use these skills developed to serve as a trustee of NEAS.



Trustee - Nicola Leonard

Nicola works as a Lean Coach with a national bank but has years of experience in customer service, business change, communications, training and leadership. Using her skills outside of the workplace, Nicola founded an online community for mothers during covid which now supports over 1000 mothers in sharing stories and connecting. She also enjoys walks along the Sunderland coast.

As a mother to two young children, Nicola is particularly enthusiastic about supporting neurodiverse children, adults and families. Nicola has first hand experience of some of the support gaps experienced by families and is passionate about helping us to bridge those gaps.



Trustee - Mehrban Sadiq

Mehrban has worked with the Tyne and Wear Fire Rescue Service for the last 17 years. As a fire safety professional and the chair of the IETUK Northeast, Mehrban has worked to ensure that aid is delivered in every format to the communities around me and in South Asia. This also involved working with businesses to create awareness around the need for fire safety training.

Between 2016 and 2020, Mehrban served as a trustee for the Northeast Dyslexia Charity. And, in addition to his role as trustee for NEAS, he is currently a trustee for Fire Aid UK. More recently, Mehrban has also been elected as a Councillor within Newcastle City Council.



Trustee - Bob Nicholson

Bob is a retired University Technical Manager having spent 43 years in the university sector organising/running and planning Medical Research Institute laboratories/services.

He is a married with two children, one of whom is Autistic. Bob's son has attended NEAS schools and colleges from the age of five, now has a residential placement and attends Adult Day Services at New Warland Farm.



Trustee - Stephen Eyres

Stephen is currently a Police Officer in North Yorkshire, having relocated to the area in 2018, following 10 years in the Metropolitan Police in London. He has worked in a number of different areas including safeguarding, CID and domestic violence.



The move to North Yorkshire was partly influenced by the fact that Stephen's close family live in Co. Durham. His youngest brother is autistic and is an adult residential service user in Sunderland, in supported living accommodation provided and staffed by NEAS. Stephen has therefore seen first-hand the excellent quality of care and support provided by the Society.

Trustee - Jim Beall

Jim brings 50 years' public service experience to the Board. This includes 33 years of working in a local authority social care environment, both adults and children, and 18 years (and counting) as elected councillor in his native Stockton-on-Tees.



As a councillor, Jim has had lead roles in adult social care and health and was deputy leader of the council for 11 years before becoming civic mayor of the borough. NEAS was one of his chosen charities alongside Eastern Ravens Trust, a children's charity he chairs.

Jim represents the Roseworth Ward and supported the establishment of Kiora Hall school there, helping it to forge links with the local community and Eastern Ravens.

He says: "I was so impressed with the positive approach of NEAS that I was keen to support the ongoing development of its work, especially in Teesside, and readily accepted the invitation to become a Trustee."

Trustee - Steve Connor

Steve has worked in the criminal justice system in a variety of roles for 20 years. As a former school governor and member of the Independent Monitoring Board of a large prison, Steve retains an active interest in the social issues affecting the community.



Having received his own diagnosis as an adult, Steve now researches autism and is completing his PhD around the needs of autistic individuals who have involvement with the criminal justice system. This involves a keen focus on social developments, and Steve is keen to support the society in working with autistic individuals in a neuro-affirmative and individualised way.

Senior Leadership Team



John Phillipson – Chief Executive Officer

John Phillipson has been involved in social care and education since 1975. He has managed a very wide range of services having worked as an Assistant Director with Barnardos North East for several years before joining North Tyneside L.E.A. as Manager for S.E.N. John went on to be Head of Children's Services and latterly Director of Social Services in North Tyneside. Since 2005 he has been Chief Executive at the North East Autism Society where services are being continually modernised and transformed to improve outcomes for autistic children, young people and adults.

Qualifications:

Masters (MSc) in Advanced Social Work Management, *Edinburgh University 1990*
Certificate in Qualified Social Work, *Newcastle Polytechnic 1980*

Brian Stoker – Head of Care and Responsible Individual

After serving five years in the 2nd Battalion Coldstream Guards Brian left the army in 1990 looking for a career which he would find both challenging and rewarding. He found this career at the North East Autism Society. Brian initially worked within Children Residential Services for five years before moving to be part of the development of Adult Services. After spending five years as a Residential Home Manager he moved to the role of Head of Adult Care Services and then Head of Care Services in 2014.

Brian believes the challenge remains to provide a person-centred approach in planning and providing flexible personalised services for autistic people and their families.

We achieve this by adapting services to meet the needs of the individual and through the development of a highly motivated staff team who have the theoretical knowledge and the practical skills to support individuals.

Qualifications:

Bachelor of Philosophy - Special Education: Autism (Adults)

BTEC Higher National Certificate - Business

Diploma in the Management of Care Services Management NVQ Level 4



Marjorie Clifford – Operations Manager Children's Services

Marjorie began working with adults with learning disabilities in 2000. She was involved in the re-provision of adults from a hospital environment into supported living as both a support worker and a senior. Marjorie went onto manage these new services in the Durham and Aycliffe area. Marjorie came to NEAS in 2009 as a Residential Manager of Thornhill Children's Home and has been in the role of Operations Manager since 2010.

Qualifications:

Level 5 Diploma in Children's Health and Social Care

NVQ Level 3, 4, Care Management

A1 Assessors Award, Registered Manager's Award

What We Do

Promoting Health and Healthy Lifestyles

The health of the people we're entrusted to care for is of paramount importance to us and we encourage our young people to be as independent as possible when it comes to living a healthy lifestyle. We encourage healthy choices in many different ways both within the home and at school. Menus for the home are created with involvement of the school to ensure that a balanced and varied diet is provided in both settings. Each person's dietary needs are taken into account. Dietitians may also be involved for additional guidance and support. Key workers ensure all aspects of the young person's health is being cared for. They liaise with family and professionals, which may be involved, and update where needed their Health Action Plans.

All our young people are registered with the local G.P. This is only a short drive away, so we have easy and immediate access to medical services. We have worked closely with the medical professionals who are now understanding of the needs of each person living at Belford. We ensure that when we welcome someone new to Belford, they visit the G.P to register and have a full health check-up at the earliest convenience. We also ensure everyone has an annual health check-up. We also have a trusted relationship with local Dental Surgeries where our young people are registered. If a person in our care would prefer to have a dentist come to our home, we can arrange this.



All our young people have detailed Person-Centred Health Action Plans. These have been developed by involving both the young person and their parents. We use these when we need to access a health service.

We monitor emotional and mental health daily and ensure that each person living at Belford has a lifestyle that is active, fun, and full of opportunity. We have a good relationship with Consultant Psychiatrists who we can call upon when we have a concern about medication. A Consultant Psychiatrist has visited Belford, and the schools our young people attend, for reviews on several occasions. Psychiatrists also attend 'Looked after Reviews' and EHCP (Education health care plan) reviews where possible.

All staff are trained in first aid as part of the mandatory training and our home has fully stocked first aid boxes, which are checked weekly. This means that if anyone was to have a minor injury, we can actively administer first aid and limit the need to attend a surgery.

The home also has a positive relationship with the local NHS primary health centres, and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, to provide health support to the young people as well as training if required to the staff team.

Some of our young people require medication for various reasons and we work closely with the primary care services to ensure that any medication taken is only for therapeutic purposes.

All of our staff are trained in the Safe Handling of Medication, and we ensure robust recording and storage procedures are in place.

The leadership team and staff team at Belford understand promoting health and a healthy lifestyle also means supporting individuals to take part in a wide range of activities that they enjoy and are good for them.

Children and young people are supported by staff to identify what activities they would like to take part in, and children's hobbies are fully supported. Children and young people are supported and encouraged to access wider community with staff support based on their individually assessed needs. Examples of activities available include, but are not limited to:

• Swimming	• Trampolining
• Bowling	• Go Karting
• Play parks	• Beach and coastal trips
• Trips to places of interest	• Sport clubs
• Youth clubs	• Sports matches
• Walks and hikes	• Shopping
• Wall climbing	• Music festivals

In addition to regular activities, we also support children and young people to access annual holidays, supported by staff of their choice. Children and young people can have holidays with their friends from Belford or a holiday of their own. Children and young people are encouraged to take part in the planning of their own holidays and chose what activities they would like to take part in when they are away.

We also have close links with 3 other Children's homes within our society, two of which are local to Belford within Sunderland and another In Newton Aycliffe, where we can support our young people socialising with other peers and take part In other activities across the Northeast.

Promoting Educational Achievement

Our young people attend autism-specialist educational programmes

- Beacon Hill School (Wallsend) and Outdoor Ambitions (a joint education package meeting the young person's needs).
- Hopewood Academy Sixth Form (Peterlee).
- Thornhill Park School (Sunderland).
- Thornhill Park School (Emsworth site, Sunderland).
- The Poplars (Herrington, Sunderland).

The educational programmes offer a broad curriculum, which is balanced towards the individual needs of each pupil. Individual programmes for education are drawn from an overall curriculum design, which involves the 'Essential Curriculum'. This develops skills which are fundamental to development.

The 'National Curriculum' offers access to a range of academic subjects. The 'Moving on Curriculum' is delivered at post 16 alongside the adult numeracy and literacy frameworks. There is an option-based curriculum for pupils at post 16.

Where there is a need for further diversity and flexibility, pupils will have access to an alternative individually devised curriculum, with opportunities to access off-site facilities. The curriculum design prepares young people to take their place as a member of the community and includes work experience.

To maximise learning the school uses a range of teaching strategies, which are based on positive approaches and take account the individual learning styles and needs of each person. Where it is felt appropriate additional therapeutic approaches are considered, such as massage therapy, hydrotherapy and music therapy.

We work as a team to provide a calm and engaging atmosphere across all services. Staff know everyone they support well. This allows positive communication and provides opportunities to achieve independence resulting in an improved quality of life.

Belford supports the educational achievement of its young people through working together with teaching staff and attending regular meetings. The young people living at Belford also have the opportunity of private study within the home.

Key Leaders for Education



Christine Dempster - Director of Education

15/16 Lumley Court,
Drum Industrial Estate,
Chester-Le-Street,
DH2 1AN
0191 410 9974

Our Young People's View 'My Say'

We encourage everyone living at Belford to make decisions about their own lives wherever possible. We understand that communication difference will vary from person to person. By spending quality time with each young person and engaging with them on their level, we ensure they feel empowered to live as independent as possible.

Consultation is encouraged through the key worker system, parents, and - if necessary - an independent advocate. Each young person has designated key workers. The key worker provides 1:1 support and has regular meetings to gain the young person's views and can advocate on their behalf if needed.

The young people living at Belford take part in a Children's Meeting. This happens monthly to ensure we are capturing the young people's views and opinions. All young people and their individual keyworkers are given the opportunity to choose what activity they like / dislike. Keyworkers assist in this area and help support the young people in choosing activities. We base everyone's activities around their chosen subjects and support in all areas to develop their creative, intellectual, physical, and social interests. These have been developed with Speech and Language Therapy involvement. They use observations of the young person's mood, body language and behaviour to understand their views on specified activities or situations. The monthly Children's Meeting also includes a section around meal choices. This ensures the young people are actively involved in meal choices in the weekly menus. They can discuss which foods they have enjoyed, which foods they haven't, and what they would like to try in the future.

All our young people have an Annual Education Health care plan and Person-Centred Planning reviews which they can attend if they wish. Key workers and the leadership team also attend these meetings and reviews along with parents and other relevant professionals. These reviews focus on the individual and promoting their voice within the home.

Belford is also visited each month by an External Regulation 44 Visitor. She meets with the young people, parents and staff monthly and submits a Regulation 44 report on her findings each month to the Registered Manager and Ofsted. All documentation reporting systems ensure that we capture the voice of the young person to ensure that we meet our home's aim of *'the young person being at the centre of everything that we do'*.

The young people also have statutory visits by their relevant social workers, who ensure that they are consulted and involved in their home. All current recording systems also feedback to capture the voice of the young person.



Supporting Family Time

Our goal is to create a **'home away from home'** for each person who lives here. We understand that having a child / family member move into a care facility can be an anxious and stressful time for all involved, which is why we work hard to make sure the process is smooth and involves the whole family, every step of the way. We provide support for our young people to have regular time with parents, family, and other significant people in their lives.

We discuss this special time upon admission, and this wishes of the family are recorded in each person's individual plan. Any restrictions on this will be made clear and only for the protection of the young person. We encourage parents and siblings to be fully involved in the young person's life and actively promote activities with their involvement in the home itself and within the community.

Examples of what we do:

- Key workers maintain regular contact with families
- Parents evening at school
- Letters and the opportunity of private telephone calls
- Monthly financial statements
- Involvement in care team meetings
- Family involvement in activities
- Involvement in training sessions, e.g. PPS training
- Consultation and involvement in appointments
- Involvement in monthly theme nights/celebrations
- Involvement in person centred planning

We do require notice of all visits if these are different to the current recorded arrangements so that we can prepare the young person for their visit and ensure they are at home. All contact arrangements are recorded on the young person's records and visitors are requested to sign in and out of the home for security purposes.



Supporting Religion

All our young people have the right to practice and observe their chosen religion and beliefs. At Belford we fully support and value their decisions. Upon admission to the home, we request information regarding religious instruction and observation and work closely with the family to promote this.



All staff within the home received training on Equality and Diversity to proactively promote rights, choices, beliefs and traditions.

We also promote inclusive and anti-discriminatory views in the home and hold regular 'theme' nights so children can be share in different cultures and experiences. Children and young people are encouraged to give their ideas of what they would like to take part in and experience. Examples of theme nights we have held include American and Japanese nights, Earth Day celebrations and World Book Day events.

Therapeutic Input

All young people within Belford have access to Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy from a named therapist. Staff can contact the therapist with any questions or queries regarding the young person's communication or sensory needs.

There are several therapeutic approaches used within Belford, and these are bespoke to each person in the home. We understand that communication difference will vary from person to person. If needed, a form of visual communication can be used. For example, some young people will use photographs and symbols or the written word to communicate. This is implemented by the Speech and Language Therapist and carried out by support staff with the young person throughout the day.

There are several therapeutic approaches used within Belford and these are individualised to each young person and these are outlined below.

Intervention	Professional Overview	Purpose of Intervention	Comments
Body Sock	Occupational Therapist	Deep Pressure Therapy	The body sock provides sensory feedback for individuals who have proprioception deficits and are recommended for deep pressure therapy.
Multi-Sensory Room	Occupational Therapist	Visual, Tactile, Deep Pressure Therapy	The multi-sensory room offers a range of sensory experiences aimed at raising and lowering sensory thresholds and promoting well-being.
Picture Exchange Communication System	Speech and Language Therapist	Functional Communication	PECS provides a functional communication system by which young people are able to communicate with staff, peers, and the wider community through the use of picture symbols.
Visual Planning	Speech and Language Therapist	Functional Planning	Visual planning provides a functional and predictable planning system and involves the young person in the ordering of their day-to-day lives.
Ear Defenders	SaLT/OT	Auditory Sensitives	For young people with hypersensitivity to pitches and noise the ear defenders dampen noises and reduce sensitivities.
Gustation Sessions	Occupational Therapist	Gustatory Perception Therapy	For individuals with sensitivities to taste gustation sessions introduce new tastes and sensations into the diet and reduce sensitivities.

All approaches are monitored regularly by the Therapist involved through on-going direct discussion with staff and, where appropriate, direct work with the young person and their staff team. Staff attend training around the use of specific therapeutic interventions which enables them to implement therapeutic strategies and approaches effectively.

The Care Team

Belford is managed by a dedicated team who are knowledgeable about the needs of everyone we aim to serve. The number of staff in the home is dependent on the children's individual assessed needs. Staff support children and young people to achieve their full potential through a range of educational, social, vocational, and therapeutic approaches.

Staffing Levels

Staffing levels of the home are based on individualised assessed needs. All young people living at Belford receive at least 1:1 support, with some residents receiving access to 2:1 support, especially for off-site activities from 9:00am.

During the morning, the young people have shared care with 4 staff between the 5 young people. This includes a 7:00am start and either of the deputy managers starting at 8:00am.

There is one waking night staff and one sleep-in staff member to support overnight between 21:00 and 08:00 hours.

Staff Management

Each shift is led by either a member of the leadership team or a member of experienced staff who are either trained in Level 3 Children's and Young People's Workforce or are working towards this diploma and have made significant progress towards completion. There is a 24-hour on-call operated by the home's leadership team, whereby staff can call for advice and guidance. Staff have several resources to guide them to ensure all tasks are completed timely.

Recruitment and Selection

At Belford, recruitment and selection are supported by NEAS's Human Resources department, enabling a comprehensive recruitment, vetting and selection process to take place.

All applicants for employment are required to complete a comprehensive application form detailing their employment history, qualifications, and experience. All candidates must disclose any criminal convictions, consent to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Scheme check, and provide three employment references prior to being offered a position at Belford. Written references are followed up by a telephone call to confirm references.

For a copy of the Recruitment and Selection Policy please contact NEAS Human Resources department on 0191 410 9974.

Meet the Team

	Acting Home Manager - Majorie Clifford Marjorie began working with adults with learning disabilities in 2000. She was involved in the re-provision of adults from a hospital environment into supported living as both a support worker and a senior. Marjorie went onto manage these new services in the Durham and Aycliffe area. Marjorie came to NEAS in 2009 as a Residential Manager of Thornhill Children's Home and has been in the role of Operations Manager since 2010. Qualifications: Level 5 Diploma in Children's Health and Social Care NVQ Level 3, 4, Care Management A1 Assessors Award, Registered Manager's Award
	Assistant manager – Paul Halford Date started in Belford: 10th December 2024 Having started at the Society in January 2019, I have worked in several homes, starting as a support worker. In 2019, I undertook the role of PPS Instructor and then moved on to become a Senior Support Worker in 2022. I then moved into the role of Assistant Manager at Tunstall House before moving to support the management team at Belford Terrace In November 2024. Qualifications: Level 3 &4 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma Level 5 Diploma in Health and Social Care (Working Towards) Safe Handling of Medication B&R Instructor. Designated Safeguarding Officer
	Assistant Manager - Maria Alison Date started Belford: 10th March 2025 I started working at Belford in 2020 after completing my psychology degree and my masters in practice development, as a support worker. In 2023, I relocated to the Scottish Highlands, however, returned to Belford for career progression when I was successfully appointed Assistant Manager. Qualifications: BSc Psychology MSc Practice Development Level 3 &4 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management (Working Towards) Safe Handling of Medication. Designated Safeguarding Officer

	RCCO – Julie Owens Date of Joining: 06/04/2010 Date started in Belford: November 2010 I value the knowledge I have gained in Autism in the years I have been with the society. Qualifications: Level 3 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma- Safe handling of Medicines
RCCO – Michael Marshall Date of Joining: 17/04/1988 Date started in Belford: November 2010 Qualifications: Level 3 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma NVQ 4 – Children and young people. Safe Handling of Medicines	
	RCCO - Christine Morrison Date of joining: 02/15 Date started in Belford: March 2015 Qualifications: NVQ Level 3 Health and Social Care - Adults Safe Handling of Medicines Level 3 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma
RCCO - Julie Eltringham Date of Joining: 07/06/2008 Date started in Belford: 1/11/2010 Qualifications: Safe Handling of Medicines Level 3 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma	

RCCO - Joyce Peel Date of Joining: 23.12.2012 Date started in Belford: 27.08.2020 Joyce ran an Early year's Childcare provision before joining NEAS in 2012. Qualification: Level 3 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma	
	RCCO - Steven Watson Date of joining: 07.11.2020 Date started Belford: 07.11.2020 Qualifications: NVQ Level 3 Children and Young Peoples Workforce Diploma Safe Handling of Medication
RCCO - Ellie Bewick Date of Joining: 06/01/2025 Date of starting Belford: 13/01/2025 Qualifications: Level 3 Health and social care Safe Handling of Medicines Working towards Level 3 Diploma	
	RCCO - Christopher Costello Date of joining – 05.04. 2023 Date started Belford – 17July 2023 Qualifications: Level 3 workforce diploma - Working towards Safe Handling of medicines.

RCCO - Phillip Curry

Date of joining – 27.05.2024
Date started Belford – 03.06.2024

Qualifications:
Working towards Level 3 diploma.
Safe handling of medication



RCCO - Marie Jubb

Date of joining – 20.04. 2023
Date started Belford – 17July 2023

Qualifications:
BA Hons Counselling skills
Level 2 - mental health awareness
Level 2 - Eft tapping therapy
Level 3 workforce diploma - Working towards
Safe Handling of medicines

RCCO - Gillian Low

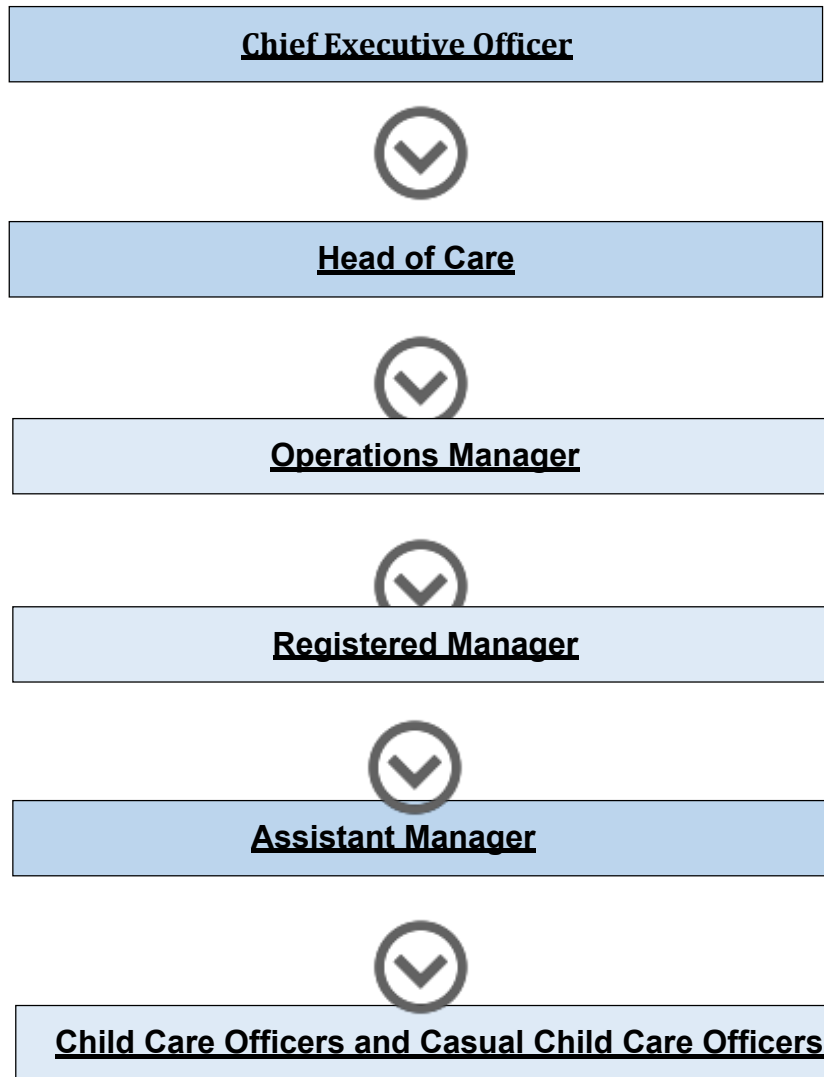
Date of Joining: 26.04.2021
Date started in Belford: November 2024

Qualifications:
Level 3 Children and Young Peoples
Level 4 Children and Young people
Workforce Diploma
Safe handling of medication
Fire Warden



RCCO - Christopher Johnson Chris Joined the society working in Tunstall, another children's residential home within the society, Chris moved over to Belford in January 2025. Date of Joining: 19.09.2024 Date started at Belford: 06.01.2025 Qualifications: Currently working towards level 3 Diploma Safe handling of medication.	
	RCCO - Rebecca Blakeston Rebecca has previously worked at the society, including Belford and then left to progress other things in 2023, Rebecca has now returned to work at Belford. Date of joining: 9th June 2025 Date started at Belford: 16th June 2025 Qualifications: Level 3 Diploma Children's residential
RCCO - Venkatesha Chandru Venkatesha has a background of working with neurodiverse children and young adults coaching Cricket and other sports at a local youth centre. Date Of joining: 4th August 2025 Date of Joining Belford: 11/08/2025 Venkatesha will be signed up to the level 3 diploma in residential children's care	
	RCCO - Morgan Pearson Morgan has previously worked at the organisation's children's short break in newton Aycliffe. Date started at Belford: 2nd June 2025 Qualifications: Working Towards Level 3 Diploma Children's residential

Staffing Structure



Induction and Training

New staff are appointed on a three-month probationary contract, during which time they must complete our formal induction programme. Additionally, if their appointment was made on the condition they complete or commence a particular qualification, this is also monitored. A full week induction takes place prior to their commencement of work in their designated workplace.

Staff will also be assigned a mentor, who they are able to shadow and will provide guidance during the probationary period. New staff members are given an induction workbook to work through during their first weeks induction programme.

NEAS's compulsory core training includes:

NAME OF COURSE
Introduction to North East Autism Society
Level 3 Residential Childcare (NVQ)
Emergency First Aid
Health and Safety – including risk assessment, COSHH, fire safety
Moving and Handling People
Level 2 Safe Handling of Medication Certificate
Positive Proactive Support (Core Theory)
STEP Positive Proactive Support (Practical)
Level 2 Autism
Sensory and Behaviour
Food Hygiene
Safeguarding Children
Child Sexual Exploitation

NAME OF COURSE
Working with Children with Disabilities
FGM
PREVENT/British Values
Food Allergy
Equality and Diversity
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

Additional training may apply to some roles.

This training includes:

NAME OF COURSE	ROLE SPECIFIC
Supervision & Appraisal	Leadership team
Epilepsy Awareness	Working with children with epilepsy
Picture Exchange Communication System	Working with children using PECS
Safeguarding Adults	Working with vulnerable adults
Mental Capacity Act	Working with vulnerable adults and children
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards	Working with vulnerable adults
ADHD Awareness	Supporting young people with an ADHD diagnosis

Arrangement for Supervision

All our young people have the appropriate staffing levels consistent with their Local Authority Care & Placement Plan. These staffing levels are reviewed during each Looked after Care Review to ensure that they are supported and safeguarded appropriately.

All staff receive supervision every 2 month from the management team and have an annual appraisal. The supervisions take either the form of a formal 1:1, group, or an observational supervision.

Performance frameworks are also embedded into each staff member's supervision to ensure a high standard of service is provided. We also ensure at Belford that there are regular monthly staff meetings to keep the staff up to date with the young people's development or to share information regarding the different reviews that have been carried out. Where therapeutic techniques are provided, this is supervised by the Therapy Team during regular Therapy/Champion meetings.

The Registered Manager also receives a formal supervision with the Operations Manager/Head of Services where a discussion will take place about young people's welfare, planning, review, monitoring and evaluation of placement planning and practices.

The Operations Manager receives a monthly supervision with the Head of Children's Services to report on practice and operational issues. They can then ensure that there is an effective and efficient application of resources to each young person.

Each month the Head of Children's Services, is requested to report to the Trustees on matters related to both our young people and the staff team. There is also an annual performance review of the service which is presented to the Trustees and also sent to Placing Authorities.

The Registered Manager undertakes, where possible, monthly staff meetings where information can be shared from senior management. More regular than this we have introduced weekly handovers which give staff a regular update on what has happened in the previous week. This helps staff to be up to date on any changes or updates that have happened. It supports the leadership team to communicate to staff effectively and promote positive working practice. We recognise the value in a joined-up supervision system that provides the opportunity of bottom up and top-down communication. We also expect high supervisory standards from our management team therefore the senior and Registered Manager receive training on managing teams and supervision and appraisal.

In addition to these supervision arrangements, Belford also has the support of central support services such as Human Resources, Learning and Development and Finance.

Our Policies

Admissions

All admissions are undertaken on a planned basis and are coordinated by the Operations Manager in conjunction with the Registered Manager. The service does not take emergency admissions, i.e. an admission within 24 hours without a full assessment. Once we have received a letter from the Local Authority requesting permission for an assessment, we work together with the young person, their family, social worker and any other professional who is able to provide information.

Assessments, prior to admission provide invaluable holistic, person-centred information, which enables us to be able to make an informed decision. We also request an updated copy of the young person's Local Authority Care Plan and Education, Health Care Plan from the social worker and Individual Education Plan. This information will provide us with the educational and care needs information required so that we know exactly what the individual needs are and how we can support them consistently and appropriately.

We will work together to consider the most appropriate placement and complete a compatibility risk assessment. We will then encourage the young person, their family and carers to visit Belford Terrace in order to involve them in the decision-making process.

We will write back to the Local Authority outlining the service that can be offered. After this has been approved, we work alongside the young person, their family and any other professional to develop a person-centred transition plan prior to admission. We also provide the young person with an accessible format of the Children's Guide, and we provide families and social workers with a copy of the homes Statement of Purpose.

The individual and their families are also offered the opportunity to take part in social activities, e.g. have a meal with the other young people, or attend an activity outing. This is helpful to develop social relationships and build familiarity and predictability for transition purposes. Some may have difficulty with this and may benefit from using technology such as FaceTime to meeting the staff team and young people, so discussions will take place to ensure the right transition is taken for each individual person.

For some young people and families, the transition may have to be quicker and more condensed due to the young person's needs whereas others may benefit from a longer transition. Any transitions are based on the young person's needs.

There will also be a key worker assigned and where possible we support the children and young people to identify which staff member they would like to act as their key worker. The key worker will become the crucial connection between home and school and with the family. Sometimes the young person or the family may just want to ask practical questions which the key worker can offer advice and reassurance.

For further information please contact Brian Stoker on 0191 410 9974

Next Step Criteria for NEAS

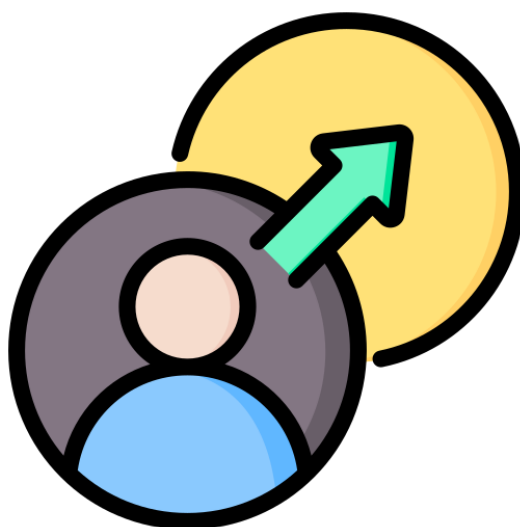
Belford Terrace is registered as a children's home with Ofsted. As such, children will move onto their new home when they become an adult at 18. However, in most cases, this will mean a move before the adult finishes their education, which is usually the July after their 19th birthday. Within Belford Terrace's registration, there are provisions for individuals to 'stay put' until they finish their education, however, this must be deemed in the individual's best interest.

Ofsted have issued guidance that the home must remain '*wholly or mainly a children's home*'. This means that the majority (3 minimum) of individuals living at Belford Terrace must be under the age of 18.

At Belford Terrace we work closely with young people, parents and social workers to help identify the best home for the young person for their next step in life. From 16 we start working with individuals to gain their views on where and how they would like to live after Belford Terrace. If the individual is completing their education and remaining at Belford Terrace until the July following their 19th birthday, we will put in place a Next Step plan from their 18th birthday. This will document the work and support in preparing with the upcoming move into adulthood.

The plan will outline the resident options for the young adult, education or employment choices and what support is needed to help the young adult meet their goals. Once a suitable next home has been identified and the young adult is happy with this, we provide a supportive transition to their new home, whether this be through meeting new staff, visits to the home, or seeing the surrounding area.

Prior to any move, all relevant documentation is shared with any new provider in order to ensure that they are fully aware of individual's needs and support required in order to make the individual's next step a success for them.



Safeguarding Children

Our young people have the right to feel safe in their home and we are committed to ensuring that this is achieved. We do this in many ways:

- All staff are vetted and checked via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) with full references prior to commencing employment.
- Security is maintained within the property.
- The home meets environmental health standards.
- All staff receive safeguarding training which is refreshed every two years.
- Designated child protection officer poster available for all children, staff, parents and Local Authority representatives.

The safety and well-being of the young people is paramount and is underpinned in all care provided within the home. This is fully supported in the Society's policy of safeguarding children where its procedures driving aim is to keep our children safe.

All young people have individual risk assessments which are regularly reviewed and monitored. We are careful to ensure that these risk assessments do not infringe the rights of the young person and allow them to take an element of risk in order to grow and learn.

Staff are familiar with and adhere to child protection protocol and will be prompt in raising a child protection concern. They are familiar with and will refer to:

- North East Autism Society Safeguarding Policy
- Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Protocol
- Children's Homes Regulations 2015
- North East Autism Society Complaints Policy

A copy of the above policies are readily available to staff on SharePoint (intranet website) and paper form can be requested.

Safeguarding young people is part of statutory induction training for all new staff to become familiar with and gain an understanding of child protection issues and protocol.

All staff will attend appropriate inter-agency training in Safeguarding and also complete the e-learning training course. The manager and senior staff also attend higher level training in making child protection referrals and child protection conferences.

The Head of Services, Brian Stoker, will complete visits to ensure that safeguarding is key within the home and that the relevant Children's Homes Regulations are being met.

The Home Manager and Assistant Managers also attend quarterly CPD management workshops which discuss updates to policies and procedures or changes to legislation.

Missing from Care

At Belford we ensure that all young people are supervised both during the day and at night according to their Assessment Needs. If a young person has been known to run away, a Missing Person's Risk Assessment is created to assess the risk and provide a history of outcomes of past experiences.

If a young person does go missing the police are notified immediately, whilst staff conducts a localised search. The safety of the young people is paramount. On their return the young person will be supported and monitored, a full investigation will be initiated and reported to Ofsted.

If the young person wished to speak to an independent advocate, this can be arranged. Parents and professionals would be kept fully informed of any action taken to prevent reoccurrence.

At Belford we have a comprehensive Missing from Care policy which is linked to the Sunderland Safeguarding Children's Missing from Care Policy and Sunderland Policies Missing Children and Young People Protocol.

At Belford we do not use any electronic monitoring devices for the purpose of preventing children from going missing from care.



Bullying and Harassment

A bully is defined as person who hurts, intimidates or persecutes a weaker person. It is normally an intentional act which is aimed at causing distress to the weaker.

Some autistic people may struggle to understand the concept of bullying. Any form of behaviour that causes distress to others, regardless of intent or reason, is treated as a serious matter. Any instances of such behaviour will be investigated, responded to and monitored.

Staff use many forms of alternative and augmented communication to help young people to divulge their feelings including things such as feeling bullied. Staff are also observant and alert to any changes to patterns of behaviour which may indicate a young person is bullying or being bullied. The young person's behaviour development plan will address aspects of behaviour that may be causing harm or distress to another young person.



How we protect our young people:

- We encourage respect, particularly for others' dignity and privacy.
- The Children's Guide is in accessible format informing them of what bullying is and how to respond to it or make a complaint.
- We advocate for each individual, and key worker support is available.
- Produce detailed placement plans and positive & proactive support plans.
- We host regular meetings so that everyone has an opportunity to air their feelings.
- Provide high level of support and supervision.
- Monitor indicators of Well-being which help to spot the subtle signs of bullying.

Positive Proactive Support

Autism is an unchanging neurological difference. Autistic people may react differently in situations to what you expect. Some autistic people may have a lack of social understanding, be unable to anticipate what is to happen next in certain situations and be unable to effectively communicate their needs. This can result in challenging behaviour.

We believe our young people:

- Have talents and skills
- Are valued members of our society and community
- Have the right to be treated with dignity and understanding
- Should have an excellent quality of life through opportunity and learning
- Should be allowed to express themselves individually
- Should have strategies that are effective in promoting positive and durable lifestyle changes.
- Be supported to develop skills over time.
- Should not be restricted in life

We have achieved BILD Accreditation in our Positive & Proactive Support training programme. This involves a highly individualised program that has been developed via a person-centred approach through a referral system.

Our trained instructors develop a training package specific to the needs of our home and the young people that live at Belford.

Each young person has a positive & proactive support plan that is developed alongside the young person, their family and Local Authority representative and is agreed before implementation.

Positive & Proactive Support Plans are reviewed regularly through a multi-disciplinary approach and are risk assessed. All staff at Belford have been trained in this approach and refresh their skill and knowledge level every 12 months in line with the BILD Code of Practice 2014.

This service does operate a locked door procedure which is only operated due to young people being at risk of either running away or having a lack of awareness of the dangers within the community and because of their individual vulnerabilities.

We abide by the **Mental Capacity Act 2005** and practice within the following five person centred principles:

- A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that they do not.
- A person is not to be treated as unable to decide unless all practicable steps to help them do so have been taken without success.
- A person is not to be treated as unable to decide merely because they make an unwise decision.
- A decision made, under the Act for / on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done, or made, in their best interests.
- Before the act is done, or the decision is made, regard must be had to whether the purpose for which it is needed can be as effectively achieved in a way that is less restrictive of the person's rights and freedom of action.

A decision to have a locked door procedure fully complies with the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards whereby we have requested individual and independent assessments conducted by two external professionals.

This acts as evidence of the decision-making process undertaken and thereby provides a safeguard for any decisions made on behalf of the individual who may lack capacity. This assessment process is fully communicated to the individual's Local Authority and guardians.

Promoting good behaviour and respect

Belford provides a supportive and functional environment for all our young people and has a caring ethos. We provide several means of celebrating achievements and good behaviour.

Some examples include:

- Sharing and acknowledging good behaviour, through reward charts.
- Having agreed methods of rewarding good behaviour through multi agency meetings.
- Young people having opportunities for gaining extra responsibilities.
- Discussion times with the young people where they can share their successes and congratulate one another through resident meetings and de-brief sessions.
- Sharing and acknowledging good behaviour with parents and others in the wider community.
- Rewarding certificates of achievements, merits or working towards a person-centred goal.
- Displayed work by young people at Belford and at school.

The Positive & Proactive Support Plans have been designed using the Multi-Element Behaviour Support Model. This model provides a larger emphasis on proactive intervention.

The proactive elements of the plan are overseen by the PPS Planning Team who will carry out various assessments, e.g. environmental assessments, motivational and functional analysis, behaviour baseline assessments, etc. in order to provide a proactive approach to positive behaviour.

Where young people require a reactive assessment to their individual behaviour a PPS referral system is available. Where a referral has been made, a Principle Physical Intervention Instructor will assess the need for physical interventions or breakaway techniques. The Instructor will meet with the young person, undertake observations and speak with key staff who know the young person well.

All physical interventions have been risk assessed by a Physiotherapist and are reviewed and evaluated every 12 months in line with the BILD Code of Practice 2014. A referral response will be provided to the Senior Manager and Registered Manager for consideration and is discussed with the young person (where possible) along with their parents and social worker.

A Physical Intervention Acknowledgement Form is signed by all parties. Training is then conducted on a bespoke basis and refresher training also takes place every 12 months. Centralised records on training is held at our Head Office but also provided to the home.

Individual Rights and Anti-Discrimination Practice

All young people have the right:

- To be treated fairly.
- To be provided with a high standard of care in a warm, safe and clean home where all dietary and health needs are supported.
- Welcome family and friends into the home in accordance to their individual person centred plan.
- To learn through experience.
- To be consulted and involved in everything related to their own personal needs. To access the religion of their choice and to celebrate this.
- To have appropriate choice delivered in a way that the young person understands.
- To have accessible information provided to them where appropriate.
- To receive care, which is planned and reviewed regularly.
- To have the support to express their feelings especially if they are unhappy about something.

Responsibilities:

- Staff have a duty of care to ensure that young people are safe, supported according to their individual needs and abilities and are protected from any act or omission of harm.
- Staff act as role models for young people.
- Staff will act as a chosen key worker for each young person and promote communication and relationships between Belford and the young person's family and friends.
- We will ensure effective placement planning, monitoring and evaluation systems to demonstrate the young person's development.
- We will liaise with the young person's school to ensure the continuity of educational programmes.
- We will respond quickly and be flexible in the changing needs of the young people and work proactively with other professionals.
- We will ensure the right level of experience and mix of staff are on duty at any one time

Placement Planning and Reviewing

On admission each young person will have a Placement Plan, which sets out clearly the assessed needs of the young person and how these will be met on a day-to-day basis.

The Plan includes the key elements of the L.A.C. system; health, education, physical and emotional needs. Safeguarding and promoting welfare, cultural, religious language, racial needs and leisure needs. Also contact arrangements with family, friends and significant others.

The young person's needs and how best they are being met will be monitored by the young person's key worker. The key worker is responsible for maintenance of the Plan and coordinating the guidance, advice and support for the young person.

The Registered Manager regularly seeks the views of young people, parents (where appropriate), social workers and teachers and takes into account in initiating and making changes to the plan.

Young people are encouraged to participate in meetings designed especially for them; minutes are taken of their views, opinions and ideas. These meetings; held monthly or when requested, are tailor made to take into account the age range and level of understanding, they have an open agenda and cover all aspects of daily life within Belford. All young people receive a copy of these minutes on their working files, with copies also provided to the multi-disciplinary team.

Staff will support and encourage the young people who wish to make a less formal "one-to-one" approach with staff and the placement plan is an evolving plan that is discussed during these events.

All young people are made aware of the context of their overall plans and placement plan according to their level of understanding and support received by the Therapy Team where appropriate

Who is involved in reviews?

Placement plans are reviewed under a multi-disciplinary team approach including:

• Young Person • Registered Manager • Key Workers • Family	• Education • Therapy • Social Worker
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Fire Precautions

Fire drills are carried out monthly and we actively support young people in understanding fire safety. We do this through picture/symbol fire procedures, talking about fire safety and through fire drill simulations. All drills are recorded within the fire log and include young people's comments and scenarios used.

Within the fire book we have a procedure when it would be necessary to evacuate the building in an emergency such as fire, flooding.

All exits are clearly marked and with emergency windows and fire equipment in place that is checked regularly we provide a safe home to young people. Fire equipment and alarms are tested at regular intervals and is recorded in the fire logbook.

We also participate in three monthly nighttime simulation drills to raise staff awareness on fire safety. We also have an evacuation plan which highlights the procedure for staff to follow in the event of a day or nighttime fire and accommodation required for the young people in the event that the building is unsafe. This has been done in agreement with Ofsted and Tyne and Wear Fire Service.

The staff carry out weekly checks on Belford fire equipment, recording and drills. We also liaise with Tyne and Wear Fire Service on all matters involving fire safety.

All of our staff have been trained in first aid and management ensure there is a first aider on duty at any one time. All staff are trained in fire safety and complete weekly fire safety checks that are recorded in the fire safety check book.

Fire precautions and emergency procedures are inspected during monthly statutory Regulation 44 visits and during the registered managers monthly Regulation 45 reporting. The health and safety officer also ensures that portable appliance testing (PAT) is carried out on a yearly basis. The boilers are serviced annually to ensure that they are safe for use.



Arrangements for Managing Complaints

The young people and their families have the right to let staff know when they are not happy with anything relating to our service.

There is a robust complaints policy in place where any complaint will be dealt with informally or through the formal process. A child friendly complaint guide is available with appropriate symbols for our young people which are in the Children's Guide. Where required, a more specific communication format can be requested and referred to the Speech and Language Therapist.

Complaints can also be discussed within Children's Meetings and the option for complaints within the PPS Young People's De-Briefing. All parents and the Local Authority has access to our policy and procedure. This is located in the office area of the home and can be requested at any time.

All young people have access to telephone numbers in their Children's Guide and for additional support Belford staff can provide support.

An informal complaint is something which we try to resolve through discussions with the parties involved and these are still recorded. Although we receive very few complaints, we do welcome feedback and see this as a way to continuously improve practice.

The formal complaint process is for independent investigation of complaints that cannot be resolved through the internal informal process or when the parties concerned are not happy with the outcome of the informal investigation.

All complaints are logged within Belford Compliment, Complaint and Suggestions logbook with the outcome recorded. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, then this can be followed through with the appeals process, whereby this will be investigated by the Board of Trustees, Sunderland Local Authority or Ofsted.

We also want to learn from our young people, their families, professionals and staff members so we do encourage new ideas where individuals can provide us with new and innovative ways or practicing and also ways to improve our service.

Communication is the key to positive relationships, and we all have a shared responsibility towards this. We are very proactive in dealing with any complaints and the earlier that we know, the less of a problem it creates.

We want an "open door" policy of working so complaints are dealt with in a professional and reflective manner. Every complaint has the potential to give us quality assurance to improve our service or gain access to a support network like the community police team to ensure we are not being discriminated against.

Below are the relevant contacts for complaints or to make a safeguarding referral/alert:

Marjorie Clifford <i>Operations Manager</i> Belford Terrace Sunderland Tel: 0191 514 2523 marjorie.clifford@ne-as.org.uk	Brian Stoker <i>Head of Care</i> 15/16 Lumley Court Drum Industrial Estate Chester-Le-Street DH2 1AN Tel: 0191 492 4381 brian.stoker@ne-as.org.uk
Ofsted Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD Tel: 0300 123 1231 www.ofsted.gov.uk	Childline Tel: 0800 11 11 Independent Sessional Advocacy Barnardos Tel No: 0191 240 4800 www.barnardos.org.uk

Distribution List

As per our regulatory requirements we have sent our Statement of Purpose to all relevant people and stakeholders.

We have sent the up dated changes within this Statement of Purpose to Ofsted on 26/10/2025.

We have sent the up dated changes within this Statement of Purpose to all residents' parents on 26/10/2025

We have sent the up dated changes within this Statement of Purpose to residents' social workers on 26/10/2025.

north east autism society

North East Autism Society

Head Office
15 Lumley Court
Drum Industrial Estate
Chester-Le-Street
County Durham
DH2 1AN

T: 0191 4109974
E: info@ne-as.org.uk
W: www.ne-as.org.uk

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