

Parents / Carer's Handbook



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COANWOOD CHILDREN'S HOME.

DIRECTIONS

Directions from the A1

Take the **A19** exit from the **A1** signposted Cramlington/Blyth/Ashington.
At the roundabout take the exit signposted **A19**
At the roundabout, take the **1st** exit onto the **A1171/B1505**
Continue to follow the **B1505** going through 1 roundabout
Turn left onto **Clifton Road**
Take the second left onto **Coanwood Drive**

Directions from the A189 (Spine Road)

Take the exit off the **A189** signposted **Cramlington/ Town Centre/East Cramlington**
At the roundabout, take the **1st** exit onto the **B1326**
Turn right onto the **B1505**
Turn left onto **Clifton Road**
Take the **2nd** left onto **Coanwood Drive**

If you have a satellite navigation system in your vehicle our post code is NE23 6TL

The address and contact telephone number are:

Coanwood Children's Home,
22 Coanwood Drive,
Cramlington,
Northumberland,
NE23 6TL

Tel: 01670 712203

INTRODUCTION

Coanwood Children's Home is run by Northumberland County Council.

As a parent or carer, we are aware that having your child looked after within a Children's Home can leave you feeling extremely anxious and upset. You will probably have a lot of questions you need answered and we would hope that this booklet can assist you with the answers to your questions. Hopefully, once you have read it, you may feel more at ease. However, if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the home and speak to any of the staff team, who will be pleased to answer any questions. Alternatively, you could contact your child's social worker.

Coanwood Children's Home has single occupancy rooms with shared toilet and bathroom facilities, a lounge/dining and kitchen area, as well as a laundry/ utility area. There are also other rooms in the home, which can be made available if you are visiting. Your visit can be made in private, either supervised or unsupervised, depending on the circumstances. This arrangement also allows the young people who are resident privacy in the home.

Visitors are always welcome at Coanwood Children's Home, however we do insist on the visits being planned or arranged with one of the young person's link workers or other staff. Sometimes this may have to be with the permission of the young person's social worker.

We would also like to be informed of the number of visitors that we may be expecting and their relationship to the young person.

STAFF TEAM

There is a dedicated team of residential staff who work in the home. There is also a home manager and a domestic assistant; who keep's the home clean and tidy. We are supported by an administration team who are based externally to the home, who deal with all of our paperwork and finances. We also have a maintenance manager who ensures that all essential repairs are carried out.

LINKWORKERS

During the introduction and planned admission to the home, you may hear the name **Link Worker** used. So who or what are they and what is their role?

They are a designated member of the team who will be your link to the home. They will work closely with your child, you and your family and the social worker, as well as any other professionals who may be involved with your child. However, this does not mean that you cannot speak to other members of the team, as they will only be to willing to assist.

FORMAL MEETINGS

At the start of your child's placement we will have a planning meeting, which we hope you will attend and participate in. The meeting, as it suggests, is to agree a plan of care for your child, which will enable them to succeed and achieve in all aspects of their placement and into their future life as adults. You will also be formally invited to any future meetings that take place with regard to your child.

Within the first four weeks, a Looked after Review will be held. This meeting is for everyone involved in the care plan to look at the first four weeks and plan for the next three months of your child's care. The reviews after this will take place every six months. All of our reviews are chaired by an independent reviewing officer (IRO).

On a monthly basis we also have care team meetings that we would also encourage your participation in.

We do understand that there will be occasions when you are unable to attend these meetings and we will do our best to arrange them at your convenience. However, if this is not possible, we would seek your views prior to the meeting and, if you wish, we can send a copy of the minutes.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

At Coanwood Children's Home we respect your confidentiality in the care of your child. You can be assured that your child's case will not be discussed outside of the Children's Services Department. You should also know that there may be times that we have to consult with other professionals outside of the Care Team that you will not be familiar with. We will discuss with you the involvement of other professionals before contacting them.

We would also request that when you visit you remain in the identified family area. This maintains the privacy and confidentiality of the other young people who are resident in the home.

NO SMOKING POLICY

Coanwood Children's Home is a 'smoke free' area for everyone, including our staff. We actively discourage smoking however, the young people who are resident and 16 years or over, or those who have parental permission, are allowed to smoke in designated areas. Visitors to the home however, are not allowed to smoke anywhere on the premises. We would encourage all visitors to adhere to the No Smoking policy. Your co-operation in this will demonstrate to the young people the positive influences that we as adults have on their lives.

All young people living at Coanwood Children's Home, who are smokers, will be encouraged to take part in the smoking cessation sessions ran by Health Advisors. This is a supportive program developed by the NHS to aid the

reduction of smoking. Individual programs will be adapted for each young person with incentives in place to promote success.

INCENTIVES

Each young person living at Coanwood Children's Home will have an incentive plan, to help them understand and manage their behavior successfully as well as to help them identify how to deal with certain situations. Each plan will be unique to the young person. The more positive the young person's behavior is, the more they will achieve.

The young person will be encouraged to help identify areas of their behaviour they wish to improve upon and agree rewards for achievements. As a parent/carer you can actively be involved in this process, should you wish to be.

CCTV

CCTV is in operation around the doors and grounds. Images are monitored for the purposes of safeguarding and security, ensuring the safety of the young people and any visitors. The scheme is controlled by Northumberland County Council.

FOOD/MEALS

We offer a wide and varied menu at the home. The food is nutritious and healthy and an alternative is offered on a daily basis.

All foods are chosen with the involvement of the young people and the menu is reviewed on a monthly basis.

If your child has any special dietary requirements because of health needs or religion, we will try our best to provide it.

We prepare all meals and encourage all of our young people to participate in the preparation and cooking of foods. All permanent staff are trained in food safety procedures.

EDUCATION

At Coanwood Children's Home, we will actively encourage your child to attend their normal school and will facilitate this, as long as it is within an acceptable distance from the Home. If this is not possible we will look for a suitable alternative in the area.

Any young person who does not attend school will be offered an alternative education package, based on their individual needs and level of understanding. A varied alternative programme that includes practical and work based placements can be made available. All packages are supplemented by a computer based programme of English and Maths, which can lead to achieving GCSE grades.

The home has access to a number of alternative educational facilities and has links to all the area schools, as well as our own Educational Support for Looked after Children (ESLAC). They work closely with each young person to maintain their educational programmes and in order to maximise their potential.

We believe that your child's education is of the utmost importance and our staff team will support and encourage your child in all areas of their education.

We would welcome any questions you may have about your child's education.

CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS NEEDS

We believe that everyone has a right to maintain their religion and culture. Should your child have any specific religious, cultural or dietary needs, please let us know and we will do all we can to meet them.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

We have a considerable amount of opportunities for your child to participate in outdoor and indoor activities.

Outdoor activities include cycling, hill walking, climbing, geo-caching (this is a form of treasure hunting) camping and staying in camping barns.

All of our sporting activities are supervised by adults who have a sporting qualification or who are interested in a particular sport. All of the staff are trained in First Aid and all activities are risk assessed.

Within the home we have a games room, in which we have a large screen TV, games consoles and DVD players.

BULLYING

This type of behaviour towards young people or adults is not acceptable. We take issues of bullying very seriously and will positively act to address the situation.

Bullying comes in many forms. It does not have to be hitting or pushing someone around. It can be threats or intimidation, name calling because of a person's race, culture, faith or religious observance, sexual orientation physical size, disability or country of origin. Bullying can also be damaging or taking another person's property.

Bullying can leave a person with little or no self esteem and leave them feeling insecure in their surroundings.

If your child informs you they are being bullied or you believe that they are, please inform any of the staff team and discuss your concerns.

There are also websites where you could gain more information about how to support a child you think maybe at risk of being bullied;-

www.childline.org.uk

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

www.kidsmart.org.uk/parents/

www.ttsonline.net/Uploads/documents/chatguide_parents_booklet.pdf

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Alcohol and drugs are not allowed anywhere at Coanwood Children's Home. If your child is in possession of either of these substances they will be confiscated and destroyed or handed over to the Police.

We also provide regular education to all young people about the negative effects drugs and alcohol can have on their health.

All young people admitted to Coanwood Children's Home will be referred to Sorted, which is Northumberland's drug and alcohol support service. If it is felt that the young person would benefit from support from Sorted, a package of work will be created for them.

HEALTH CARE

As you can appreciate the health of your child is very important and we are equally committed to their health care. When your child comes to live with us they will be offered a medical examination by a Health Advisor (Nurse). A repeat examination is offered annually and you will be informed of this.

We also ensure that regular dental checks are carried out and that your child visits an optician. We would encourage your child to remain with your local GP, dentist and optician. However, if this is not practical then we will register them with the local health services. We will ensure that regular check ups are maintained and inform you of any treatment that is required.

FIRE PROCEDURES

When you visit the home, you will be informed of the procedure in the event you hear the fire alarm. If you are not informed on your first visit please ask. All of our permanent staff are regularly trained in fire procedures and carry out regular identified checks.

Should you hear the alarm, please do not panic and walk to the nearest exit, all of which are clearly identified above the doorways and meet at the designated point outside of the building. Please do not re-enter the building until you are told to do so by the Fire Warden

TELEPHONE CALLS

It is important to your child that telephone contact between yourselves and other family members is maintained. When you do telephone we will transfer your call to the telephone box, so that you can have privacy during your call.

It would be helpful if calls are made between 3.30pm and 9.00pm on weekdays. These times avoid the education programme and allow for the young people to follow the routines for settling at night. Calls at weekends can be made between 9.00am and 9.30pm.

If you urgently need to contact the Home we are available 24 hours of the day.

CHILDREN ACT 1989

The Children Act 1989 was implemented in October 1991 and because of this, changes were made to the law relating to the welfare of children in England and Wales.

The principles of the Act maintain that the 'welfare of the child is paramount' and that Local Authorities have to safeguard the welfare of the child. It also changed parental responsibility to parental rights, giving them a greater say in the care of their children, encouraging the partnership between parents and authorities in the care of their children.

At Coanwood Children's Home, we remain committed to that philosophy and continue to work with children and their families, to ensure that their needs are met. Should you require any information regarding the Children Act 1989/2004, you can access these documents on the internet or at your local library. You could also contact your child's Social Worker, who may obtain a copy for you.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At Coanwood Children's Home, our role is to work positively within the structure, boundaries and routines of the home, to ensure that young people feel safe in an environment that can effect and influence a positive change in their behaviour.

Where a young person's behaviour puts themselves or others at risk of harm, then staff will intervene by negotiating with the young person in an attempt to resolve the situation. If this cannot be achieved and the young person's behaviour escalates, then it would become necessary to use physical intervention to control the young person and avoid a potentially harmful situation.

All permanent staff are regularly trained in non pain compliant techniques of physical intervention, known as CALM (Crisis Aggression Limitation Management). The techniques are legal and safe and all incidents are

recorded and discussed afterwards with the young people, in order to obtain their views. Parents, carers and the young person's social worker are informed of all situations involving restraint techniques.

PERMITTED SANCTIONS

Northumberland County Council have approved a range of sanctions that staff are permitted to use when working with young people with difficult and challenging behaviour. All sanctions are appropriate to the identified behaviour and are meant to encourage the young person to reflect upon their behaviour.

The following sanctions are permitted and used, considering the individual needs of young people.

- Curtailment of leisure activities
- Additional chores
- Increased supervision

Reparation and restitution are permitted approaches to dealing with behaviour, such as willful damage to property or when behaviour towards an individual (either emotional or physical) causes offence. This approach is used after discussion and agreement with the young person and is not intended to be punitive in nature.

Careful consideration is given before contacting the police in relation to an incident in the home. Whenever possible, staff will explore other means of restorative justice rather than police involvement to repair situations. However police response will be requested where children/young people or staff have been seriously harmed or are at risk of immediate serious physical harm. Where there is risk of substantial damage to property or risk of significant disorder within the home. Any situation where there is police involvement will be discussed with parents / carers at the earliest opportunity.

COMPLAINTS, SUGGESTIONS AND COMPLIMENTS

If you have a complaint about your child's care while they are resident at Coanwood Children's Home, please contact the manager of the home or your child's social worker. They will treat your complaint seriously and investigate on your behalf, hopefully reaching a satisfactory conclusion.

Sue Harvey is the Registered Manager of Coanwood Children's Home, telephone 01670 712203.

The Service Manager for Looked after Children is Karen MacDonald, telephone 01670 533000.

However, if you would prefer someone independent to deal with your complaint you can contact any of the following services:

- Client Relations Officers. These are located at County Hall in Morpeth, telephone 01670 533000.
- Ofsted, telephone 0300 123 1231
- Action for Children, telephone 0800 085 0621

Should you wish to make a suggestion to improve your child stay with us or to improve the service you should contact the home manager to discuss. In addition, should you wish to compliment the service we would we please to hear from you.

PARTICIPATION AND ADVOCACY SERVICE

Northumberland County Council has Participation and Advocacy Officer who is available for all looked after young people who may need support or advice or to listen to their views on any issues that they may have.

Robin Craig can be contacted on 07768658436

CLOTHING

Young people receive a monthly identified clothing allowance from the home's allocated budget. This is to provide them with essential clothing only. It is the responsibility of the young person to take care of their clothing. We cannot be held responsible for any clothing that is provided by parents or carers which is then misplaced, damaged or stolen.

POCKET MONEY

All young people receive pocket money. The amount which they receive is based on their individual behaviour and care plan. They are free to spend the pocket money unsupervised. However, if they attempt to buy goods that are not age appropriate or illegal, they will have to be supervised for any future spending for an agreed period of time.

CONCLUSION

Throughout your child's stay at Coanwood Children's Home, your child's social worker and other necessary professionals we will endeavor to work in partnership with you to ensure your child's stay is as successful and fulfilling as possible, and to help your child move towards adulthood with as much support as possible.

We hope that you have found this handbook useful and would appreciate any feedback on its content as we continually strive to improve upon the service we offer at Coanwood Children's Home.