

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Verona House



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Verona House can offer 52 week placements and short, medium or long term placements with the provision for emergency placements regulated by a strict process of risk assessment to ensure the safety of other children placed within the home.

The Pilgrims Corner Group has three residential units: Verona House, Lingate Cottage and Yew Tree Cottage, an independent fostering agency and an independent school.

Welcome to Verona House. In this document we would like to introduce you to our core beliefs and philosophy. We will give you an insight into daily life at the home along with profiles of the staff, the accommodation and the policies that make Verona House a safe family environment.

Purpose

Verona House is a residential unit offering a home to young people from 5 - 17 years of age.

Verona House provides 24 hour care for young people who would benefit from living in a family environment. Places can be offered to large sibling groups to enable them to stay together provided that appropriate risk assessment supports the viability

of this proposition. Verona House can offer short or medium placements with the provision for emergency placements regulated by a strict process of risk assessment to ensure the safety of other young people placed within the home.

Core Values

Verona House believes that each child is entitled to a safe living environment under the protection of a high quality and well-trained staff team. The home offers a stable, caring family environment, which promotes positive attitudes and a proactive support to each young person in its care. Our emphasis is on creating a holistic environment where young people are encouraged to explore their potential and develop their characters. Overall we believe

that these aims will be achieved through positive re-enforcement, nurtured in an atmosphere of fun, and laughter, (where appropriate), also through empathy and non-judgemental support when working through difficult issues. In summary we believe that Verona House is there as a resource for our young people at a time that is often characterised by crisis in their lives.

Outcomes

Verona House will guide and assist each young person to achieve their personal best, to prepare them for their future and to help them to deal with their past. Each young person will be given every opportunity to be successful in educational and life skills achievements.

Mission statement

Pilgrims Corner supports the tenets of the Care Value Base in:

- Treating each young person in its care as an individual
- Treating all young people with equality
- Supporting their right to express their cultural, ethnic, religious, sexual or social diversity
- Fostering and promoting their rights.

Pilgrims Corner is committed to:

- Promoting an atmosphere that will develop open, non confrontational communication.

- Promoting dialogue & encouraging active listening from all staff members.
- Remaining non judgemental or discriminatory toward any young person's behaviour or disclosures they might make.
- Ensuring that we will do all we can to ensure that all children are kept safe and protected from any form of abuse.
- Supporting the young person's right to make complaints with full details of how to do so.
- Encouraging young people to make decisions and take

- responsibility for their choices supported by firm boundaries.
- Encouraging young people to be active participants in their care plans, placement plans and care reviews.
- Supporting the young person's right to move towards independent living and to encourage them to gain the necessary life skills to achieve this.

Verona House Offers:

Short, medium & long-term placements, respite placements and emergency placements (subject to thorough risk assessment procedures).

Description of residential accommodation

Location

Verona House is located at 45, Station Road, Herne Bay, Kent.

The town has main line rail services with direct bus routes into the city of Canterbury and coach routes to London. The M2 & M20 motorway's are easily accessible.

The local community's varied leisure facilities include, a cinema, various cafes a swimming pool and sport centre. There is good access to the countryside with beaches and coastal walks close by and local attractions include 'Farming World' and 'Wildwood' where young people can interact with animals in a range of natural settings.

An overview of the house

The house is a large detached turn of the century town house, providing accommodation on three floors. Each room is large with ample space for single occupancy. It is Pilgrim Corners policy that one young person will occupy each room although consideration will be given to same sex sibling groups sharing a room provided that a risk assessment supports the viability of this scenario.

The house will offer the facility for school placements. Each young person's room will be equipped with the necessary furniture to support private study should the young person wish to do so.

The house has 3 reception rooms, an industrial specification kitchen, two bathrooms and 5 bedrooms in total.

Ground Floor: Communal Areas

The ground floor comprises of 3 large reception rooms, cloakroom, lobby and a kitchen. A 'school room' will be set-aside during the day and each young person's room will be furnished with the necessary equipment to support private study

First Floor: Sleeping Accommodation

The first floor comprises of two bathrooms and 6 bedrooms.

Second Floor: Staff Accommodation

The top floor of the building provides a fully equipped staff office and kitchen available. The top floor will be secure at all times to ensure that client records and other confidential documents are protected and that the privacy of the live in staff is safe guarded.

Gardens & Recreational Areas

The property benefits from a spacious garden to the rear. This is planted with a sensory planting scheme to provide a relaxing combination of colour, texture and smell. There is also a trampoline in the garden.

Security Measures

The property has a fully operational type L2 fire alarm system with smoke detectors. Each landing and all communal/office spaces are equipped with H2O and CO2 fire extinguishers. There is a dry powder extinguisher and a fire blanket in the kitchen to cover electrical and oil fires.

Each floor is fitted with regulation fire doors and there is access to a fire escape.

In addition, regular fire drills are in place to ensure that staff remain trained in all aspects of the emergency procedure.

Exit doors are monitored by electrical sensors and are fitted with dual locks to ensure that no young person is able to leave the premises unnoticed and go out of the house and onto the road. In addition, landings have movement sensors and door have sensors to monitor night-time movements out of rooms. These measures have been taken in the interests of child protection.

Positive outcomes as a result of size:

Verona House helps children & young people to learn to live with others and also to become part of a team (or have a sense of family). Being part of a group of six can help a young person to build relationships that could last them a lifetime. Our young people have others around them who understand their situation better than we can. Our young people can bond and become a team, which outside of the home environment can be positive for the more shy, regressive child. If the number of young people in the house is too much for some then we can offer residential placements at Lingate and Yew Tree Cottages, where young people can be one of just three placed. In all cases we help and encourage our young people to achieve their personal best.

Placement criteria and admissions requirements

Verona House Can Accommodate:

- Young people who are the victims of trauma
- Young people with low self esteem or lack confidence
- Young people who are emotionally or behaviourally challenged (subject to risk assessment)
- Young people who might be considered more difficult to place (subject to risk assessment)
- Young people who have been the victims of abuse or domestic violence (subject to risk assessment)
- Sibling groups

Verona House Cannot Accommodate:

- Young people with serious criminal convictions (rape, arson, murder)
- Young people who have been suspected or convicted of sexual offences
- Young people with a history of serious assault
- Young people who have a drug or alcohol dependency

Admission Requirements

Before a young person can be admitted to Verona House, a full risk assessment of that young person's needs must be carried out. In the case of emergency referrals Verona House reserves the right to insist upon an assessment period of 1 month before a final decision with regards to the young person's suitability for a place in the home. The assessment period would look at all aspects of the young person's integration into the home environment and their impact upon the other young people already in residence.



Admissions procedure

Admissions to Verona House will be planned wherever possible. In this scenario, each young person will be introduced to the home over an agreed period. The Registered Manager and key workers will all be involved in meeting and assessing their needs. The young person will be invited to visit the home for an introductory visit and then for a weekend visit and stay before full-time admission to Verona House. There will be a planned admission to any of our units..

Assessment of the child or young person's needs will take the following into account:

- The young person's history & age
- Their background and a pen picture of their family
- Their health needs (including allergies)
- Their emotional needs
- Their cultural and social needs
- The level of support required
- Any behavioural problems
- Any learning difficulties
- The potential risk that they pose to other children at Pilgrims Corner
- The potential risk posed to them by other young people
- Any special circumstances or needs

Once an initial assessment has been completed, the young person, along with their family or carers (where appropriate) and the Social Worker from the placing Authority will be invited to meet to discuss the placement further. If it is felt by all parties that the placement should go ahead then a formal contract will be drawn up between the placing authority and Verona House and a second contract between the young person and Pilgrims Corner.

Health

All young people are registered with a G.P., dentist and optician on entry to

Verona House. All young people are given a health care booklet to enable us to monitor & review all health needs. A history will be sought for each young person from G.P. on entry to the home and all young people will be registered with local LAC Nurses.

Any young person moving to semi (or) independent living will be given the appropriate assistance by the Registered Manager and staff...

The young person will be given copies of Service User Guide and the Statement of Purpose which will be fully explained to them. They will be invited to discuss the general ethos of Pilgrims Corner with the Registered Manager or Key Worker. The staff will clearly define what the young person can expect from the home and the young person will have a clear understanding of what the home expects from the young person. They will be asked to sign a contract in order to demonstrate their commitment to living in the house. The expected standards of behaviour will be re-enforced as often as necessary to ensure that the young person has understood.

For young people who are admitted to Verona House as an 'emergency' admission, the admissions process will be that same except for the fact that the young people will be subject to one month's probation whilst an extended period of risk assessment is carried out. The additional period of risk assessment is considered necessary to safe guard the existing young people who live at Verona House.

They will be encouraged to bring cherished possessions into the home and locked boxes will be provided in every room to ensure that these possessions are kept safe.

Clear procedures are in place for young people leaving the home in both planned and emergency cases. On leaving the home they will be given written and verbal information in an appropriate language, to support them with clearly understandable reference material should they wish to refer to it in the future.

Any young person moving to semi (or) independent living will be given the appropriate assistance by the Registered Manager and staff, to enable their needs to be met in accordance with their Pathway Plan or Leaving Care plan.

Ongoing contact with the home will be encouraged, to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible. No young person will leave Verona House (whether planned or in an emergency) without suitable suitcases or holdalls for their possessions. Key workers should aim to assist the young person in making an inventory to ensure that nothing goes missing.

Details of children to be accommodated: age, gender number, disability or other special needs.

Verona House can accommodate up to 6 young people, both male and female, severe physical disabilities cannot be accommodated by the house. Disabilities & special needs in which we are experienced are: Autism, Aspergers, ADHD., ADD., Attachment Disorder, Dyspraxia, Prader-Willi Syndrome, Global Developmental Delay, Mental Health Disorders, Oppositional Defiance Disorder and many more.

Therapies Available:

Art

Drama

Dance

Psychotherapy

Counselling

Aromatherapy

Play Therapy

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Neurolinguistic Programming

Self-Esteem Building

Positive Self-Image Work

Positive Reinforcement

Review Procedures

Placement Plans

All young people admitted to Verona House will be provided with a placement plan. This document clearly sets out the objectives for the placement and identifies clear goals detailing how they will be met on a day-to-day basis.

Fulfilment of placement plans is the joint responsibility of the staff team at Pilgrims Corner working in partnership with each young person and his or her carers/family (where appropriate). Plans will be prepared in accordance with the 5 outcomes from Every Child Matters: be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and achieve, Make a positive contribution and Achieve economic well-being.

Each placement plan will include:

- An assessment of the young person's health needs and advice about health promotion
- An assessment of the young person's care needs including ways to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and promote good personal hygiene
- Details of the young person's emotional and psychological needs
- An overview of the young person's educational needs with targets for educational attainment
- Details of the young person's spiritual/religious needs and how they will be met
- Details of the young person's cultural and ethnic requirements and how they will be met
- Details of the young person's communication need (both language barriers and physical communication) and how it will be met
- Details of the young person's leisure requirements with details of how they will be met
- Details of contact arrangements with family, friends and significant others where appropriate

Placement plans will be continually monitored and updated as appropriate by the Registered Manager of Pilgrims Corner, in consultation with the staff team, other professionals, the young person's family or carers and the young person concerned.

Each young person will be made aware of the content of their placement plan and will be encouraged to voice their concerns and opinions and to contribute to it on a regular basis.

Each young person will be allocated a key worker who will work proactively to assist with this communication. No decisions will be taken without the young person's wishes being given serious consideration.

Pathway Plans & Leaving Care

For young people who are moving towards independence, a Pathway or Leaving Care plan will be drawn up in partnership with the young person's placing authority. The plan will assist the young person to phase out of full time care and to begin to live an independent life. The plan will be carefully structured to ensure that young people leaving Pilgrim's Corner feel supported as they leave the home. A key worker will monitor the first 6 months of independent living by phone or visit and feedback regularly to Social Services. The young person will be encouraged to keep in contact with the home for a planned period after leaving care. Our three year plan is to provide our own semi-independent/independent living facilities.

No decisions will be taken without the young person's wishes being given serious consideration.

In situations where the child or young person is in need of a counsellor or therapist then Verona House will negotiate with the placing authority to ensure that these services are provided.

Care Plans

Each young person will be entitled to the following services:

- A Doctor of an appropriate gender and ethnic background
- Other specialist medical practitioners as required
- A Dentist
- An Optician
- An Educationalist for two days per week (or school placement)

Verona House will ensure that these services are provided for each young person within seven days of admission.

In situations where the young person is in need of a counsellor or therapist then Pilgrims Corner will negotiate with the placing authority to ensure that these services are provided. Since waiting lists for these services are often long and access to them slow, Verona House will set funds aside to contribute to this provision of a maximum of 3 sessions per week per child on an emergency basis.

Health Promotion Information

Each young person's care plan will contain details of the following:

- Their medical history
- Details of yearly medicals
- Details of specific treatments, drug regimes or therapies
- Specific medical conditions with details of necessary preventative measures
- Allergies and reactions to foodstuffs and/or medication
- Dental health records
- Optician records
- Hearing records
- Records of developmental checks
- Involvement of parents/significant others in health issues
- Written records of any medication administered; illnesses or accidents during the placement
- Details of health related advice and guidance given to the young people during the placement.

Reviews

The Registered Manager of Pilgrims Corner will be responsible for co-ordination between the home and the placing authority to ensure that arrangements are made for both statutory and emergency reviews of each young person's placement plan. Wherever possible the young person will be encouraged to participate in their review.

The young person's key worker can act as an advocate for the young person's rights during the review. All outcomes arising from the review, along with actions to be taken, will be recorded and a copy placed in the young person's file. Action plans will be sent to all relevant parties within 14 days of the review,

If the young person is unable to attend the review then a written copy of the review will be made available to them and support will be offered to ensure that they are able to discuss the outcomes.

Restrictions on contact will be made clear to all parties

Contact Arrangements

Contact arrangements will be discussed with the placing authority at the time of admission to the home. A copy of all contact arrangements will be available in each placement plan and all arrangements will be

made with the young person's full knowledge and input.

Restrictions on contact will be made clear to all parties concerned along with any special arrangements such as supervision required.

Private contact arrangements can be accommodated, where this is permitted and written guidance to staff will be provided to ensure that a clear policy is adhered to.

Staffing policy, training, supervision and development

No staff member will be permitted to commence working at Verona House until full-enhanced disclosures from the Criminal Records Bureau have been received and suitable references taken.

Verona House is committed to providing excellent standards of care for all the young people who live in the home.

To promote this level of excellence it is the company policy that all staff members will be qualified to at least NVQ level 3 award in Children and Young People and undertake the qualifications & credit framework Level 3 (minimum). Senior staff will undertake QCF Leadership & Management. The company will require evidence of this qualification to be produced at interview regardless of prior experience.

If the interviewee is not qualified they will be asked to sign a contract which will commit them to begin their training within 6 months of their qualifying probation period. All staff will undergo a company induction programme before they begin work with Yew Tree Cottage

No staff member will be permitted to commence working at Verona House until full-enhanced disclosures from the Criminal Records Bureau have been received and suitable references taken. Any agencies will also need to supply proof that all staff have been vetted to the same level before staff can work at Verona House.

Pilgrims Corner will not employ any care worker who is not a minimum of 21 years old or 5 years older than the oldest child designated in this Statement of Purpose.

Pilgrims Corner will not employ anyone as a manager who is under 25 years.

Staffing The Home

Pilgrims Corner will be staffed 365 days per year on a 24-hour basis. Staffing will cover 3 shifts on a rota basis.

Supervision

All staff will have at least one senior on duty with them. Formal supervision takes place at least once per month.

Staff Team

Numbers, gender, qualifications & experience.

This information is available upon request as we aim to provide the most up to date version when asked, which is not possible if it is encapsulated within this document.

Shift Times

- 7am - 3.30pm (7.00 - 7.20am handover)
- 3.00pm - 10.30pm
- 10.00pm - 7.30am (This will be a waking night duty with a staff member sleeping in.)

The staffing levels would be as follows:

- 7am - 3.30pm 2 care staff (plus one ancillary driver for school runs as required)
- 3pm - 10.30pm 2 care staff
- 10am - 7.30pm 1 waking night staff & 1 sleep in member of staff

Other staff:

- The Registered Manager would work 9 - 5pm, Monday - Friday with a rostered 24 hr on call allocation in the case of emergencies
- The Directors will assist with the 24 hour on call roster
- Our consultant social worker is available to young people and staff

Contingencies

In the event of sickness or emergencies the Directors and the Registered Manager will have a staffing contingency plan, which will identify suitable individuals who can cover in these eventualities. If no cover can be found it is the responsibility of the Directors and Registered Manager to help to cover the shifts themselves whilst alternative arrangements are sought.

If agency staff members are required, they must be vetted and Police checked. No agency staff member must be left supervising the young person alone and at no time will the staff ratio fall below 1 staff member from Pilgrims Corner - 1 agency staff member.

The Company Staffing Policy will also reflect Pilgrims Corners aim to be an equal opportunities employer welcoming staff members from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Pilgrims Corner will actively seek to recruit both male and female staff to ensure that the young people in our care, experience the benefits of mixed gender roles in the care environment.

All young people will be allocated a key worker. A major emphasis in the role of the key worker will be to offer the child or young person a level of day-to-day continuity. Every effort will therefore be taken to ensure the greatest levels of staff continuity possible.

Staff absence, through holiday or sickness will therefore be rostered as carefully as possible to minimise any disruption to the provision of care at Verona House.

Staff recruited at Verona House can expect the company's full commitment to their training and development. Staff training will take the form of internal and external courses and since the Company operates a policy of succession training; all staff will be encouraged to gain relevant qualifications. This development will be monitored through regular staff appraisals.

Staff members will be required to attend regular supervision sessions carried by a trained supervisor. Supervision will examine any professional issues and allow a forum for the staff member to reflect about aspects of their care practise. Supervision will be supported by planned actions and practise orientated goals. Supervision will not take the place of appraisals and the two development tools will be kept separate.

The company's staffing policy also ensures that all staff members receive accurate Job Descriptions with clearly defined performance criteria and clear lines of authority.

The young people at Verona House will be made aware of the levels of accountability within the staff team and will understand whom they can approach if they have a grievance or complaint.

Pilgrims Corner's aim to be an equal opportunities employer welcoming staff members from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds.





Educational arrangements

Education - Fairlight Glen

Pilgrims Corner Education Ltd has an education facility called Fairlight Glen.

Fairlight Glen is a small independent school catering for students aged 8-18 who are not attending mainstream secondary school because of an inability to cope with the main stream school setting. This inability could be the result of emotional and social difficulties arising from (for example) a life trauma, bullying, disaffection or a phobia of education. It is Fairlight Glen's stated intention to be a Centre of Excellence in the care and education of students with these complex individual needs.

Fairlight Glen is situated in a quiet residential area in Herne Bay, with a leisure centre, public library and beach within walking distance. The building is currently being extensively modernised to provide a high-quality teaching environment including, 3 classrooms, a small student common room, a dining/teaching area and male and female bathrooms. The senior management team are aiming to develop a learning environment that reflects alternative education in the 21st Century. Fairlight Glen intends to develop a caring and considerate ethos in which all members of the school community are respected and valued. In particular, the school values parental/carer partnerships and operates an open door policy to aid effective communication with parents and carers.

The school only employs high-quality staff who are deeply committed to the care and education of our students. The senior management team, are very experienced in dealing with students with complex educational, behavioural, emotional and social needs and aim to genuinely give the students the chance that they deserve.

Recreational & cultural activities

Pilgrims Corner believe that it is extremely important for young people to be actively encouraged and supported in their choice of recreational and cultural activities.

Every weekend organised activities will be arranged and funded by the home

We believe that it is not in the best interest of each young person to spend hours each day watching television or playing electronic games. Wherever possible, outdoor activities will be encouraged. Team building and group activities which help promote self esteem will also be arranged so that those in our care can grow in confidence. It is also vitally important that heritage is maintained for each young person.

Every weekend, organised activities will be arranged and funded by the home and the company Activities Organiser will publish a monthly programme of activities appealing to a wide spectrum of ages and abilities. We will involve each

member of the household to be actively involved in planning these activities when we hold our weekly house meetings.

Verona House will give its full support to educational activities and visits. Specific trips to educational attractions (such as the Science Museum) can be built into the educational syllabus for the year.

Each young person will be encouraged to pursue particular hobbies and interests of their own. Verona House will make a full risk assessment to ensure the safety and the suitability of each recreational activity. Any private club leaders or tutors will need to be vetted thoroughly before the activity can be permitted. Verona House will fund any individual leisure activities.

Each birthday will be celebrated according to the wishes of the individual concerned. Some will find birthdays very difficult and we will discuss with each young person the most appropriate way to mark the occasion. If it is possible, we will try to arrange a home visit for the young

person should they wish us to do so.

Christmas celebrations will be observed and made as easy as possible for the young people for whom this time of year can be particularly difficult. If a young person does not wish to celebrate Christmas for religious or cultural reasons, then Verona House will mark the appropriate celebration for that young person at the correct time of the year. In this way the children will experience a range of celebrations throughout the year.

If a young person does not wish to take part in an activity then Verona House will make alternative arrangements for them. We will also discuss with the young person, the reasons why they did not wish to participate so that we can assure ourselves that there are no underlying issues to be concerned about in their actions.

As Verona House is based in a culturally bland community we shall provide independent visitors, cultural events and foods which are specific to a young persons needs.



Religious and cultural needs

Religious Observance

Verona House is committed to supporting the religious and cultural needs of each young person who lives in the home. Part of the assessment process will concentrate upon the most appropriate way in which the home can support each individual's spiritual development.

In line with its anti-discrimination policy, Verona House will not tolerate persecution or abuse from other residents or staff on religious or cultural grounds.

Verona House wants to celebrate the diversity of each religious tradition represented but will also acknowledge a young person's right to be atheist.

Those who wish to attend a regular religious service will be encouraged to do so, provided a satisfactory risk assessment has been conducted and the organisation vetted for child protection reasons.

Verona House will be proactive with its links to local religious groups and local ministers of religion and seek their advice where appropriate to ensure that any links made by the young people are safe. Verona House acknowledges the individual's right to prayer and meditation and to access to appropriate religious reading materials. We will establish a library of religious and cultural texts and set a quiet room aside for individuals or groups to pray or meditate.

Verona House wants to celebrate the diversity of each religious tradition

Cultural Identity

Verona House believes that a young person's cultural identity & ethnic heritage are an integral part of their character and should be supported and developed. Young people have the right to grow up with a full sense of their identity and we believe that

this will be achieved by promoting diversity and creating an atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance.

Staff at Verona House will support young people with 'life history' work. This will help them to build a picture of their cultural background especially if they have had to leave their country of origin as a refugee.

For many young people, a change of location will also introduce them to a new culture. Staff at Verona House will ensure that life transitions and changes of regional culture are treated sensitively so that each young person feels supported throughout.

Verona House will be proactive in establishing cultural links to refugee councils and support groups for ethnic minorities. Young people will be consulted about any cultural requirements affecting diet, dress or social customs and staff will be trained to enhance their awareness of these religious and cultural issues.

Charter of children's rights

I have rights to:

- be protected from harm
- be able to express my wishes and feelings in the knowledge that my concerns will be taken into account
- be given information about my family and other important people and to have contact with them or an explanation of why this is not possible
- be told clearly what I can do and what I am not allowed to do
- not be discriminated against for any reason
- education and health care that suits my needs
- opportunities to develop my skills and interests
- encouragement to participate in making decisions and plans for my future
- be prepared for a life as an adult with the necessary help available to me while I do this
- know how to complain if things go wrong and for my complaint to be dealt with properly

Consultation policy

Verona House will encourage the young people to have an active involvement with the running of their home.

The Company believes that all young people have valuable opinions, which need to be taken into account.

Consultation will be encouraged on a range of issues including:

- decisions affecting a young person's future.
- any decision that effects the young person's rights
- choices about daily living that the young person can participate in such as: their choice of diet, fashion, entertainment etc.
- their choice of key worker
- changes in the way the home is run
- the decoration and furnishings or their personal spaces
- the adequacy of their personal space
- how the home is run and managed
- leisure activities that they would wish to participate in.

It is fundamental to the ethos of Verona House that no decision is made without full consultation with the young person concerned.

If a decision has to be taken in the young person's best interest, then the reasons for that decision must be discussed in a sensitive manner with the young person.

It must not be assumed that a young person is unable to communicate their views due to disability or language barriers and Verona House will always pay for the services of an advocate or translator should this scenario arise.

Consultation with a young person's family will only take place against the individuals will if it is considered to be in their best interests.

Where it is not appropriate for the young person's family to be involved, then the young person concerned will be made aware of the reasons in a sensitive manner.

To ensure that consultation is maintained for all young people in the home a weekly meeting with the Registered Manager will be held. They will be made aware that they can talk to their key worker between meetings if they have a problem.

Placing authorities, young people & families will all be consulted by the home when any changes to the operation of Verona House are made. Regular contact will be maintained with contact officers from the young peoples placing authorities.

It is fundamental to the ethos of Verona House that no decision is made without full consultation with the child or young person concerned.

Anti bullying policy

Discrimination on the grounds of sexuality, ethnic origin, belief system or gender, will not be tolerated at Verona House.

Any incident of bullying will be reported to the young person's Social Worker regardless of whether they are the victim or perpetrator.

Bullying in any form whether verbal or physical will not be tolerated at Verona House. As part of the initial assessment process, the issue of bullying will be discussed with each young person admitted to the home and it will be made clear that bullying behaviour, whether verbal or physical, will be challenged and if habitual, could lead to the cessation of the placement.

The Company's anti bullying policy will be displayed on all public notice boards within the home. The policy will clearly define bullying and identify the ways in which it can be identified.

The Company will put the following measures in place:

- on the first occasion of bullying behaviour or language being used in front of staff member the staff member concerned will call the young person to one side and discuss with them the full implications of what they have said and why they said it. The individual who caused the bullying behaviour will be asked to apologise and a record of the incident will be recorded in their daybook.

- if repeated bullying behaviour is witnessed then the staff team will address the issues at the weekly home meeting, so that everyone is aware of what is happening.

- following this, a meeting will be set up with the individual/s concerned and the matter will be talked through. Staff will facilitate this meeting. Actions to repair the situation will be formulated within a set time period.

- if the behaviour persists then the Registered Manager or the Directors will become involved and the matter will form part of the young person's review. If after this the behaviour does not cease, then the home will consult with the child's Social Worker and the placement will risk being terminated.

- if the bullying leads to physical violence the Police will become involved.

- for all instances of reported bullying, the process will be the same if the allegations are investigated thoroughly and found to be true. Verona House acknowledges the possibility of false accusations out of spite. We believe however that all allegations of this nature are taken seriously.

Staff at Verona House will receive training from professionals specialising in this area, about recognising bullying and implementing intervention strategies.

Bullying in any form whether verbal or physical will not be tolerated at Verona House.

Any instances of bullying will be dealt with and recorded.

Instances of racism will be dealt with seriously and immediately.

Safeguarding children policy

Verona House will work in accordance with the guidelines set down by the Kent Child Protection Committee to ensure that safeguarding issues are maintained as a top priority for the staff at the home.

All members of staff will be familiar with the Area Child Protection Committee procedures and will sign to say that they have read and understood them.

In addition, all staff members will receive a copy of Verona House's safeguarding children procedures and procedural guidance to staff should they be subject to an allegation.

All staff will receive training by a competent provider, to ensure that they are aware of safeguarding children issues within a residential setting.

Young people will be protected from physical or sexual abuse through a comprehensive vetting procedure for new staff and a thorough assessment & monitoring process for new young

people placed with Verona House. Relatives, friends and acquaintances of the young people who live at Verona House will again be subjected to review. Where a young person is considered at risk from visitors then Verona House will have the right to exclude the visitor and seek legal protection for the young person where necessary.

Young people will be protected from physical danger within the home through thorough risk assessment as outlined in the health and safety policy.

Internet access will be monitored with any computers subject to staff checks. Software will be installed making it impossible for pornography to be downloaded and chat rooms will be subject to staff scrutiny to ensure that the young people in our

care are protected from those who prey on vulnerable young people. All computers will be installed in a public and highly visible part of the building. No computers will be allowed in rooms.

All young people within the home will be protected from discrimination and bullying by our anti discrimination and anti bullying policies.

They will be protected from physical danger within the home through thorough risk assessment as outlined in the health and safety policy.

Any child protection issues that arise will be reported to the Area Child Protection Officer immediately and appropriate action taken.

Verona House will initiate and maintain links with the local authority LADO and will undertake all requests of the LADO effectively and efficiently.

Safeguarding children within the home

A member of staff receiving a disclosure will not be permitted to ask leading questions. Only open-ended questions will be asked. It is also inappropriate for staff to make false promises of confidentiality since the information will need to be passed to the correct authorities.

Staff will be required to report to the Registered Manager, The Directors and the Police, any evidence of a

child or young persons involvement in prostitution & no unauthorised person will be allowed contact or be allowed to pick up the young person either inside or outside the home.

Staff will be aware of Verona House procedural guidelines on safe practise when working with young people. Staff will sign to say that they have read and understood these guidelines.

The Registered person will work in conjunction with other agencies with regards safeguarding children issues to ensure that an inter agency approach is maintained and that the home is not operating in isolation. Local interagency protocols on prevention and investigation of child abuse or prostitution will be followed.

Disciplinary policy

Discipline in the home

The staff team at Verona House recognise that clear and consistent boundaries are an essential support for the young person's behaviour. Reasonable boundaries will be defined upon admission to the home and will form the basis to the contract between the young person and Verona House.

The 'contract' or code of conduct will clearly explain the behaviour expected whilst living at Verona House and it will outline and sanctions any consequences for unreasonable behaviour. The code of conduct will be contractual rather than judgemental of the client's actions and the sanctions will be clearly defined under the following criteria:

- relevant to the incident
- reasonable in relation to the incident
- weighted toward reparation and restitution rather than punitive
- consistent and fair
- as contemporaneous as possible.

A copy of this contract will be placed in the child or young person's file.

No disciplinary action will involve the withholding of personal finances i.e. pocket money or the withholding of essential components of care such as food.

Challenging behaviour will be discussed with the young person rather than staff entering into a head to head confrontation. Verona House believes that it is important to identify the underlying causes for the behaviour rather than respond to aggression with aggression.

The consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be made clear to the young person and clear choices outlining possible courses of action will be given to help in negotiating the conflict.

Regular house meetings will be held to discuss the management of behaviour and to talk through potential sources of conflict. These meetings will ensure that an open channel of communication is maintained.

Verona House believes that it is important to identify the underlying causes for the behaviour rather than respond to aggression with aggression.

Restraint/physical intervention

In dealing with violence and aggression, restraint must be seen as a last resort, which is used for the minimum amount of time and is specifically for the purpose of ensuring the child or young person's safety.

All staff will be trained by professionals in the use of correct restraint techniques.

If restraint is carried out, a report will be required from the members of staff involved. The report will address the following:

- the names of all persons involved and persons present.
- the names of the persons who effected the restraint
- the time and date of the restraint
- the method of the restraint used
- the effectiveness and consequences of the restraint.
- any follow up action taken
- any follow up action planned

The report will be signed and submitted by the end of the same shift in which the restraint occurred. The Registered Manager will then forward the report to the Ofsted and the Social Worker of the Placing Authority.

Within 24 hours following the restraint the young person has the right to a medical examination by a G.P.

The child or young person will be asked to give their version of events, which will be recorded. If the young person is unable to write then a dictated report can be submitted provided that it has been read to the child and they have signed it.

Equal opportunities statement

Equal Opportunities Statement

Verona House believes that young people who live in the home should be treated with equality and their individuality should be respected at all times. No young person will be discriminated against on the ground of their age, gender, ethnic origin, core beliefs or sexuality.

Staff at Verona House will endeavour at all times to offer young people real choices that reflect their age, maturity, understanding and cultural background.

Placement planning will be underpinned by dignity and respect for the individual and an equal effort will be made to ensure that decisions are taken in the best interests of the young people in our care.

All children will have equal access to any services and support networks available to them and we will be proactive in encouraging them to take advantage of these resources.

Staff at Verona House will demonstrate a positive commitment to equality as part of the company's recruitment and selection criteria.

Verona House is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from any member of the community who is committed to providing the highest levels of child care.

As part of its commitment to equal opportunities for the young people in our care, Verona House will take active steps to protect all of our young people. This will include a thorough vetting procedure in line with legislation to ensure that no sex offenders or paedophiles are recruited in error. We believe in this instance that our equal opportunities policy must favour the rights of our clients above all other considerations.

Verona House will view any racist, sexist, or ageist comments as a breach of its position with regards to equal opportunities. Any employee found in breach of this position will be considered liable for disciplinary action and possible dismissal.

Any young person involved in an incident of abuse relating to Equality issues:

- Disability
- Gender and Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy & maternity
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Marriage & Civil

Will be dealt with immediately, sanctions will be given and the incident shall be recorded in the Equality Log.

All children will have equal access to any services and support networks available

All staff undertake a 16 week course in equality and diversity within their first 12 months of employment.



Complaints procedure

Should the young person fail to return by the agreed time then the Registered Manager should be alerted in the first instance.

Client Complaints

Verona House supports the young person's right to make complaints about any aspect of their treatment whilst living at the home.

Young people should have access to fair representation, and should be kept informed of the progress of any complaint or grievance procedure. It is the Company's policy that any child or young person who makes a complaint should do so without fear of retaliation or reprisal.

If a child has a complaint, then they will be encouraged to voice their complaint to their Key Worker in the first instance. If the Key Worker is involved with the complaint, then another member of staff will act as mediator for the child. It is important that any person cited in a complaint cannot be involved in the investigation or mediation process.

If the complaint is informal in nature, then internal negotiation and arbitration will take place. This will normally involve the Key Worker and Team Leader (who will keep the Registered Manager informed of developments).

If the complaint is formal in nature then it will be presented to the Registered Manager in writing. If a young person has difficulty writing the complaint, then a staff member or independent advocate will be used to assist the young person. Unless cited in the complaint, the Registered Manager would deal with the first hearing of the complaint. If he/she were unable to resolve it then the matter would be referred to the Director of the Home. If he/she were still unable to resolve the matter then an external ombudsman would be appointed.

At each stage of the complaint, the child would be kept informed of the outcome and advised about the next stage of the process. The young person's Social Worker and the young person's parents or carers would also be kept informed and written records of all meetings would be minuted and logged.

Young people will be given the name and contact details of:

- Social Worker
- OFSTED
- Independent Visitor
- Counsellor
- Childline
- Local Authority Complaints Officer
- Childrens VOICES
- NSPCC



Unauthorised absence and monitoring procedure

Unauthorised absence

Each young person at Verona House will be given clear instructions about unauthorised absence. No young person will be permitted to be absent from the premises without the clear agreement of a member of staff. In the case of specific events, this permission will also be required in writing and a copy will be logged with the day journals in case of a fire or emergency.

The absence form will require the following details:

- where the young person is going?
- who they are meeting
- a contact telephone number and address
- what provision has been made for their travel
- what risk assessment has taken place (from the staff team)
- what time they are due back to Yew Tree Cottage.
- the young person's signature

Should the young person fail to return by the agreed time then the Registered Manager should be alerted in the first instance.

The Police, the placing authority, the parents (where appropriate) and the Directors of Verona House will then be contacted.

operation to make provision for a staff member to search the local area.

The Police will be assisted in filling in a missing persons form and an up to date photograph will be issued by the home to assist the Police.

When found, the young person shall be collected by the Registered Manager or a director of the company.

The unauthorised absence will be discussed with the young person and appropriate action will be taken. The action will be specific to the incident and the young person's legal status.

Written records will be kept for all instances of unauthorised absence and will form part of a young person's review.

All staff members will be made aware of the procedure for unauthorised absence.

Electrical Equipment

An alarm system is installed in the home. This monitors all main doors and windows and sensors on each landing can detect movement outside rooms at night.

This alarm system will be activated during night time hours and any activity will be investigated immediately.

Should the young person fail to return by the agreed time then the Registered Manager should be alerted in the first instance.

Fire precautions and emergency procedures

Fire precautions and emergency procedure

Verona House is subject to regular inspections from Kent Fire Service. The Company actively complies with Local Authority guidelines relating to fire safety and emergency procedure.

Verona House ensures the following:

- Verona House has a comprehensive fire alarm system installed to a recognised standard to comply with the Local Authority guidelines.
- the alarm system, together with sensors & smoke detectors will be tested and maintained on a regular basis.
- all fire extinguishers are checked and serviced on an annual contract by a reputable supplier.
- all fire doors and means of escape are clearly marked and kept free of obstructions at all times
- flammable Liquids and other fire associated risks are identified by risk assessment and appropriate security measures taken.
- fire drills are held monthly and all staff will be subject to fire and safety training
- fire drills are held on a regular basis for all new staff and young people admitted to the home.
- in the event of a fire, the building will be evacuated by the members of staff on duty in accordance with guidelines defined in the Fire Drill Procedure.
- a prescribed assembly point is clearly marked and made known to staff and clients alike

Registered Provider: Pilgrims Corner Ltd.
 Verona House, 45 Station Road, Herne Bay Kent. CT6 5QQ
 Owned By: Linda Norman M.I.W.
 Sarah Curry M.I.W.

Qualifications & Experience of Registered Provider: Sarah Curry. M.I.W.

Cert. Welfare Studies
 DIP. Welfare Studies
 Institute of Welfare Member since 2003
 AQA Counselling Children & Young People
 Safeguarding Trainer - Certificated
 NVQ3 Youth Justice
 Cert. Equality & Diversity
 Cert. Mental Health

Experience: Was Foster Carer for Local Authority & I.F.A. for 8 years.
 Managing Director of Pilgrims Corner Group since 2002.

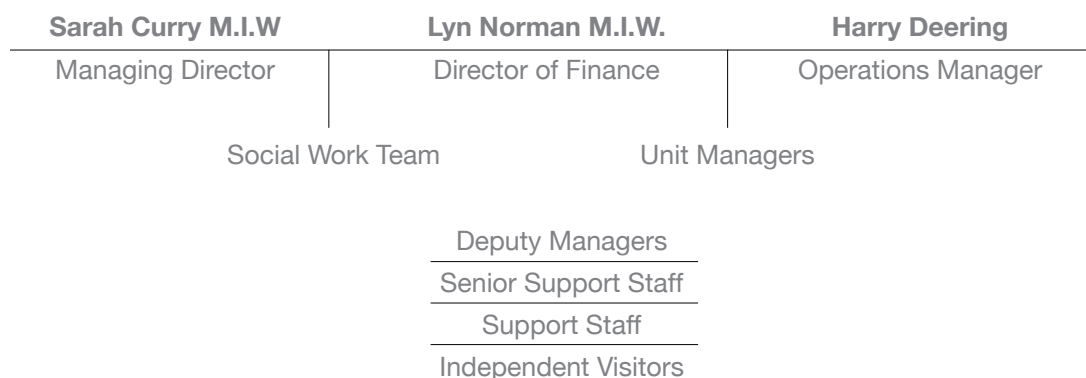
Registered Manager: Harry Deering - Operations Manager

Qualifications: Registered Managers Awards
 NVQ Management Level 4 Dip. R.S.A.
 Safeguarding Trainer - Certificated

Experience: 8 years as an I.F.A. Foster Carer
 2 years as Deputy Residential Manager
 5 years as Residential Manager
 25 years Managerial Experience

Managers of Residential Units: All expected to hold either the registered managers award/Q.C.F. Leadership and Management and at least two years residential experience.

Organisational Structure:



Qualifications & Experience of Staff Team and Gender - available on request as subject to change.

OUR TOTAL FOCUS
MEANS THAT
PILGRIMSCORNER
IS IN A POSITION
TO GIVE THE BEST
SUPPORT AVAILABLE

For further information contact: