



## The Atkinson Secure Children's Home What We Offer

### Overview

The Atkinson Secure Children's Home is a national provision providing secure accommodation for young people aged 10-17. The Home works with young people who are deeply troubled and often in crisis that put themselves or other people at serious risk of harm. Many young people placed at the Home have substance misuse problems, have been abused, sexually exploited and have deliberately injured themselves or attempted suicide. They usually find it difficult to trust adults and other young people. They often display anger, violence and aggression towards others. Frequently, young people resident at the Home have a history of offending behaviour and have failed to thrive educationally.

The high quality service provided by the Home was reflected in its triennial Ofsted inspection in October 2010, when the Home achieved a "Good" overall grade with some outstanding features in its education provision. The Home is committed to constantly enhancing its performance in all areas of provision. The Atkinson's approach to improving the life-chances of young people in its care is based on sound research evidence that is regularly reviewed to ensure practice remains current at all times, across education, residential care and health.

All staff have been trained in the use of restorative approaches. This has enabled the Home to deliver a child-centred practice for the deeply traumatised young people we care for. Across all areas of provision the Home reviews the developmental needs of each young person throughout their stay, working closely at all times with the in-house child psychologist and other visiting professionals. At the core of the therapeutic working approach are the relationships that staff form with young people, through which they help them develop understanding and skills in better regulating their emotions, thinking through problems, and getting on with others. The Home aims to help young people to develop their sense of self worth both while they are resident and for the rest of their lives. This in turn allows young people to see the consequences of and take responsibility for their actions.

### Education

The Home has a fully operational school which caters for young people with differing levels of academic ability. The school enables young people to work towards and take their GCSE's as well as helping those with poor literacy and numeracy skills through the ARROW literacy recovery scheme. Young people receive an educational assessment on the first day they attend school. This assessment identifies the educational needs of the young person. Individual education plans (IEP) provide a personalised education programme based on the needs of the young person. For students at a higher level some advanced programmes are available.

The curriculum follows mainstream foundation learning to aid smooth transition back into full time education. Accreditation is available in all subjects at all levels. Young people are encouraged to take ALAN tests in literacy and numeracy and functional skills are under development. The Home works towards all young people obtaining a substantial accreditation portfolio before they leave. All young people are assigned a tutor and receive tutorials on a regular basis. The tutors role is to set targets based on the individual plan and monitor the young person's progress and success. The tutor and keyworker work closely to ensure the young person is supported in all their needs.

Young people participate in vocational training. This includes car repair and maintenance, hair and beauty, cooking, gardening and trade skills (plumbing, plastering, tiling and building). Career aspirations are encouraged and are supported by regular visits from a Connexions worker.

The Home promotes the developing of life skills through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE) schemes. Education and care staff work together to enable most of the young people to achieve at least a bronze award. Young people can utilise two life skills rooms to develop their cooking, washing and ironing skills.

## **Health**

Upon admission young people have a medical examination by the Home's nurse and an initial assessment by YSMART, the substance misuse team. A dentist and optician visit the Home on a frequent basis. The Home has an expanding range of mental health provision for young people which includes dedicated in-reach from the local CAMHS team and support from a Consultant Psychiatrist, Psychologist and Community Psychiatric Nurse.

In addition the Home has developed working partnerships with Psychology Associates to be able to meet the demand for independent assessment reports for young people. The young people also have the opportunity to access sexual health relationship sessions that can be accredited through ASDAN. Negotiations are taking place with a local organisation for the provision of bereavement and loss counselling for young people in the Home.

## **Keyworker**

Each young person has his/her own key worker who meets his/her needs and works through issues that are highlighted in care and placement plans. Some of these issues may include anger management, self-esteem/confidence, self harm, attitudes and boundaries.

## **Facilities & Leisure Activities**

The home offers a wide range of facilities including:

- Indoor sports hall
- Outdoor multi-purpose astro pitch
- Fitness room (cross trainer, running machine, rowing machine etc)
- Large garden with vegetable patch and chickens
- Music room
- Life skills rooms
- Outdoor workshop

Young people can participate in a wide variety of activities within the Home such as climbing, gardening, football, cooking, arts and crafts, husbandry courses, equine and poultry care, football, basket ball and table tennis. More leisurely activities include board games, cards, television, DVD's, music and computer games etc.

For those young people who have mobility (which requires Social Worker approval and risk assessments) they can explore and pursue activities outside of the Home. Here are some of the activities young people have participated in:

- Shopping
- Cinema
- Swimming
- Horse riding
- Beach trips
- Country walks
- Kayaking
- Surfing

## **Partnerships**

Working with different partners is essential in order to sustain high quality holistic services for the young people at the Home. In addition to existing partners the Home has developed a strong partnership with the Eden Project. This has enabled us to explore the possibilities of introducing renewable energy sources, recycling, sustainable development and water saving. Involving young people in these projects broadens their knowledge and understanding of the world that they live in.

The Home has teamed up with Exeter City Football Club, to help the young people develop their football skills and appreciation of the game. Young people can train with the team on a regular basis and watch them play at the local stadium when they get the opportunity to have mobility

## **Resettlement**

The Resettlement Officer works closely with placing authorities to identify which placement will be suitable as a future placement for the young person. Within this process the young person has the opportunity to express his/her views and opinions as to what kind of placement he/she would like to go to. The Resettlement Officer helps prepare the young person for independent living.

## **Young Person Consultation & Participation**

All the young people are encouraged to participate in weekly meetings where they can raise issues and express their views and opinions. A young person volunteers to attend the weekly managers meeting to put forward the issues raised by the residents. Young people are also part of the selection process for the recruitment of new staff.