



# Little Acre

## Statement of Purpose

URN: SC406063

  
Your World is Our World™

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## 1. Mission Statement

Acorn Education and Care is part of the Outcomes First Group, the largest combined children's services group in the UK. Our operating businesses successfully deliver frontline fostering, educational and care services to children, their families and local authority customers.

Our purpose is to provide outstanding care and education to the UK's most vulnerable and difficult to place children and young people whether with specialist foster parents, within education or in a supportive and understanding environment of residential care.

We offer each and every child and young person courtesy and respect, and work in conjunction with local authorities to deliver a range of care, education and other specialist services which offer best value whilst ensuring the best possible outcomes for each child.

As a group, we benefit from a wealth of experience allowing young people the opportunity to thrive and develop by realising their potential whilst being happy and feeling valued.

## 2. Objectives of Little Acre

Little Acre is registered for 5 young people aged between 5 and 19. We provide care for young people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. Little Acre specialises in care for those with complex health needs including gastrostomy, oxygen, ventilation, saturations and a wide range of complex conditions including epilepsy, cerebral palsy and complex respiratory conditions. We also cater for young people with learning disabilities such as Global Developmental Delay, Autism and Asperger's.

Little Acre is an Acorn Education and Care home committed to providing care to children and young people on a long/medium/short-term basis depending on the needs of the child or young person. Little Acre provides a holistic, safe, stimulating and supporting family environment where children and young people cared for can live, learn and develop.

The home provides a high standard of care, educational support and accommodation for up to five children and young people, aged five and to nineteen. We work in partnership with relevant Social Care departments, and other agencies within a clear and comprehensive policy framework, in line with Acorn Education and Care's policy statement.

The staff team at Little Acre are highly committed to working intensively providing care and support to all children and young people who come to live here. The home endeavours to avoid the negative aspects usually associated with institutional residential living and create an environment and atmosphere, which reflects many of the positive aspects of a normal family home.

The aims of the home are to work towards the following for each child or young person (depending on their identified individual needs):

- Promote opportunities to help disabled children & young people achieve their full potential

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- Provide accommodation which is suitably adapted and meets the needs of disabled children and young people
- Provide a safe and supportive environment where children and young people are listened to and encouraged to express their needs, wishes and feelings
- Promote confidence and independence
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to make choices
- Develop individual care programmes to meet the needs of each child or young person
- Work in partnership with children and young people, their family and significant others
- Assess and take acceptable risks in order to enable children and young people to develop to their full potential.

Prior to admission, every effort is made to establish the long-term plans for each child or young person and a care plan is prepared which clearly focuses on his or her individual needs. Progress by the child or young person towards achieving the main objectives of the care plan is monitored and reviewed monthly and with other professional representatives of the responsible local authority at statutory intervals. Should there be any change in the child or young person's behaviour or health needs their Social Worker would be contacted immediately.

The staff team at the home value the role of the key worker and on arrival each child or young person will be allocated one, together with a co-key worker who can act on the key worker's behalf when they are not available. The role of the key worker will include responsibility for:

- Promoting the child or young person's participation in and the ownership of their care plan or semi/full independent package
- Actively putting the care plan as well as any independent package into action
- Ensuring the care plan or independent package is reviewed at appropriate intervals
- Ensuring the main aims of the placement are kept on target
- Ensuring that the child or young person's file is kept in order and up to date
- Ensuring that all necessary appointments are arranged and social workers, parents or significant others are kept well informed.
- Being a contact person for the child or young person to approach if they have any concerns, worries or aspirations they want to discuss.
- Being responsible for promoting personal health and hygiene, active participation in all individual or group activities and the attendance at the house meetings and discussions relating to planning the weekly menus and activities.
- Assisting the child or young person to establish, promote and maintain positive links with school, family members (or significant others) and other professionals involved in their care

Acorn Education and Care believe that:

Residential care should provide children & young people with skilled support from committed staff in a safe, caring and ordered environment.

We have a responsibility to ensure that children and young people in residential care are protected from abuse and neglect.

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Care should form part of a range of services, which combine to meet children and young peoples' needs and support their families and carers.

We should recruit and support staff that are carefully selected and have opportunities to develop skills and professional practise through training and supervision.

Disabled children are put first

We have a number of values which are important to the home and for the children and young people we look after:

- **Dignity & Respect:** recognising the value of children and young people, their uniqueness and their right to be treated with dignity and respect. A commitment to treat children and young people well
- **Equality:** ensuring that the services and facilities of the home are accessible and available to all. The service provided by our staff should not judge children and young people's circumstances, backgrounds or lifestyles. It should not discriminate on the grounds of race, culture, language, religious beliefs, gender, sexuality or disability. Individuality will be valued. A commitment to treat children and young people fairly.
- **Quality:** promoting quality services which are based on agreed standards and meet legal and good practise requirements. A commitment to ensure that staff working with children and young people will do what they say they do.
- **Independence:** a commitment to provide opportunities for children and young people to think and act independently whilst ensuring their safety at all times. To include a child or young persons' need for privacy
- **Rights:** a commitment to children and young peoples' rights and entitlements as set out in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
- **Listening:** a commitment to listen to children and young people and help them express their wishes and needs in whatever way is best suited to the individual child or young person. All children and young people will be able to access advocacy services should they wish to.
- **Development & Fulfilment:** a recognition that disabled children and young people are children first; all encouragement will be given to realise their full potential and to help children and young people achieve their hopes and ambitions and to develop their abilities in their daily lives. A commitment to ensure they have a good start in life.
- **Confidentiality:** treating all personal information in confidence

### 3. Facilities Provided by Little Acre

The home boasts an array of specialist equipment some belonging to the individual and others belonging to the home. These include tracking ceiling hoists, a platform lift to access 2 levels of the home. A specially designed sensory room with lights and sounds as well as a relaxing heated water bed. There is a specialist rise and fall side in the kitchen ensuring that everyone can access the kitchen for activities including baking. Some of our young people have their own specialised P-Pod chair where they can relax and have a change of seating.

- Five generously sized bedrooms, one with en-suite facilities

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- Accessible shower room on lower ground floor for total care needs children and young people
- Large family bathroom
- Upstairs & downstairs toilets & wash basins
- A versatile and fully equipped sensory room
- Communal Lounge
- Large family style kitchen
- Staff office room
- 2 Staff sleep in rooms
- Large gardens with sensory play equipment.
- 2 vehicles specific for the needs of our children and young people (one of which is wheel chair accessible)
- There is a platform lift fitted to enable the children and young people to get from the lower lounge to the upper area of the home safely in their wheel chairs.

### Location and Accommodation

In line with Regulations there is a community and location suitability assessment in place which is reviewed regularly.

Based within the pleasant, highly sought-after area of Hickling Pastures, Little Acre is ideally suited for children and young people. It is a rural location but is easily accessible to schools, colleges and key locations across the city of Nottingham and Leicester.

Nottingham and Leicester are vibrant and friendly cities that are a centres of excellence in many fields, with a unique combination of strong historical roots, coupled with a fast expanding business and retail sector. These cosmopolitan cities offer unrivalled state of the art leisure and entertainment opportunities, as well as excellent health and education facilities.

Little Acre is a large property with many attractive and practical features, including large sized rooms and creative enclosed gardens. The garden to the rear of the property is spacious and open for enjoyment.

All bedrooms are large in size; one is en-suite, all are furnished and equipped to a high standard, and decorated in consultation with the children and young people and/or their families where possible.

We have a fully equipped and dedicated sensory room which caters for all needs and includes aromatherapy, music, bubble tubes and a heated water bed.

We also have two rooms containing specialist equipment, hoisted wet room and ceiling tracks for children who have very severe physical needs.

The communal spaces include having TVs equipped with DVD players, and a variety of games, DVDs, books and sensory items.

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The home has a kitchen diner, which provides for a homely, friendly atmosphere conducive in size for preparation and consumption of meals by both staff, children and young people.

There are adequate laundry facilities including a utility room where more independent children and young people can learn to carry out related domestic tasks.

Staff are provided with sleeping accommodation located close to the bedrooms occupied by the children. The home operates a waking staff system and when required are able to provide a 1:1 staff to child ratio.

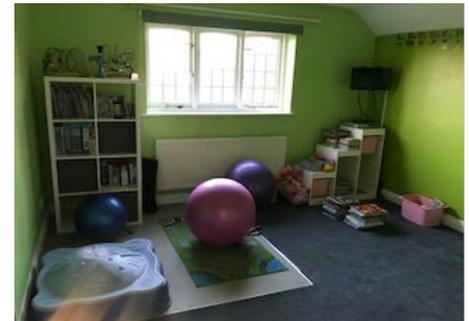
Little Acres lounge



Example of a Bedroom



Play Room



The Sensory Room



The Library



The Kitchen



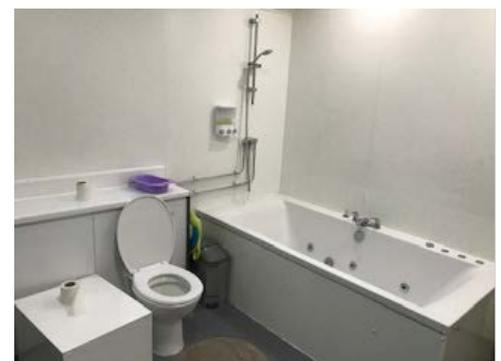
The Dining Area



The Wet Room



The Jacuzzi Bath/Bathroom



## 4. Responsible Body for Little Acre

Our head office is located at:

Outcomes First Group  
Atria  
Spa Road  
Bolton  
BL1 4AG

### **National Care director: Alison Blyth-Bishop**

Alison has worked in the care sector since 2001 in both local authority and private organisations in a variety of settings from secure accommodation, specialist therapeutic residential care, step down mental health and complex learning difficulties.

Alison has a variety of qualifications including a BSC honours psychology, Level 4 qualification in children and young people and Level 4 and Level 5 Leadership and management

Alison is passionate about the work that she does and is a strong advocate for the rights of young people and their voice being heard as well as ensuring a high quality of care is provided to all our stakeholders

### **Regional Director: Lynette Edwards**

Lynette Edwards has worked in SEN settings for most of her professional career, working in mainstream schools, youth offender institutions and special schools including residential special schools as a teacher initially. She was a special school head teacher for over 10 years and is now a Regional Director within the OFGL group with responsibility for a portfolio of schools and children's homes within the group. During her time with the group, Lynette has supported and driven outstanding outcomes across a range of schools and has shared her skills in promoting excellence both 'on the shop floor' through experience gained in teaching and leadership roles and as a director with the drive and passion to support and motivate leadership teams. With an English degree background and a NPQH qualification, Lynette has a special interest in developing a life-long love of reading as a key component to drive success and positive outcomes for the young people in our care.

### **National Care Manager: Fay Shelton**

Fay has worked in residential childcare since 2010, gaining a level 3 in Childcare and Education, a level 3 in Children and Young People's Workforce and a level 5 in Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care. Fay was previously the Registered Manager of a large residential children's home with 6 homes on site, caring for 35 children and young people. Fay's background is mainly with EBD and SEMH children.

Fay led a team who were able to achieve Ofsted Outstanding for 4 consecutive inspections and was part of achieving great outcomes for the children and young people in her care. Fay has a passion for providing children and young people with new experiences and opportunities and providing them with the chance to have a childhood they may not have had the chance to enjoy previously."

### **Responsible Individual and Head of Care Manager: Katie Harrison**

Katie has worked in the residential care sector for over 15 years. For 6 of those years she worked as a Deputy Manager and for the past 3 years as a Registered Manager. Katie has a Level 5 in Leadership and Management and a Level 3 in Working with Children and Young People. She has cared for many young people with a range of social, emotional and behavioural needs, and holds many special memories. Her ethos is to create a safe, nurturing environment, where children and young people can feel loved and cared for. An environment which supports the repair of childhood trauma and provides lots of opportunities for positive life experiences. Katie strives for herself and all our homes, to develop of each child's view of themselves and improve their relationship with the world.

**The Registered Manager** – Amy Plowman is the current registered manager of the home and runs the home to an exceptionally high standard. She empowers her staff team to be the best that they can be and they are always seeking to improve further. Mrs Plowman is a passionate and enthusiastic registered manager whom always goes above and beyond for the children, young people and their families as well as her staff team. Mrs Plowman's current qualifications include;

- GNVQ – Health and Social Care
- B.Tec National Diploma in Childhood Studies
- BA Hons Degree in Childhood studies (Health, Education & Social Work)
- NVQ 3 in Health and Social Care Children and Young People
- NVQ Level 5 Leadership and Management Health and Social Care
- NVQ Level 5 in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare

Mrs Plowman joined Acorn Education and Care back in 2013 as a senior residential worker at Little Acre. When the adult provision opened in August 2014 Mrs Plowman was approached to transfer her skills to there to work with the young adults. She fell in love with the residents, the home and the staff team so much so she progressed to assistant registered manager. After 18 months in this position she was offered the role of Registered Manager and hasn't looked back since. Amy was approached by the company with the offer of becoming a dual

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homes manager for both the young adult provision and also Little Acre. Amy jumped at the chance and carried out this role for just over 2 years. In July 2020 Amy made the decision to concentrate solely on Little Acre and progressing the children's home further.

### 5. Qualifications and Experience

The staff team at Little Acre is made up of:

Registered Manager  
Assistant Manager  
Trainee Assistant Manager  
Senior Residential Child Care Workers  
Night staff  
Residential Child Care Workers  
Bank workers

The staff team provides a balance of adult support and guidance throughout a child or young person's stay. Please refer to staffing matrix for information on the residential team's qualifications and experience.

The Little Acre staff team come from various backgrounds and bring to their work a varying level of skills, experience and qualifications. All new starters complete an induction course, which includes several essential training elements alongside a mentoring scheme that the home has introduced. Within the standard training provided by the company, staff are also given the opportunity to participate in a programme of intensive training courses, which focus on specific areas, i.e. child care practices, child protection, Autism, Administration of medication, specific medication training including emergency medications, oxygen, SATS and chest vest.

### 6. Staff Support and Supervision

All staff have been, or will be trained in the following:

- Health & Safety
- Food hygiene
- Fire Safety
- Child Protection /Safeguarding
- First Aid – Paediatric and general
- Control & Restraint – MAPA

Acorn Education and Care will adhere to staff qualification targets as set out in Children's Homes Regulations 2015.

All staff receive regular supervision and training and are required to hold or pursue the level 3 Diploma in Caring for Children and young People or equivalent (as a minimum). Managers must hold or pursue the Degree in Social Work or NVQ level 5 (or equivalent).

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Little Acre is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All Acorn Education and Care staff are committed to providing high quality, user-friendly services to the children or young people in our care. Children and young People benefit from Acorn Education and Care's commitment to a small homes policy, and a high staff to child ratio, this ensures that young people get the focused care and attention they need and deserve. We are predominantly an all-female team, we will endeavour to recruit more of a balance in gender and age.

### 7. Organisational Structure of the home

Little Acre adopts a holistic approach to care and development, addressing the emotional, social, cultural, physical and educational needs of the children and young people.

We believe that our children and young people should be cared for in a positive non-discriminatory environment. Soon after admission each child or young person has a Placement Plan, which aims to develop the child or young person and foster a relationship with them based on equality and trust where they can feel valued and respected. We provide a safe and accepting environment where issues of loss and separation will be addressed where appropriate, and expression of feelings encouraged in a positive and appropriate manner. In line with Acorn Education and Care policy, Little Acre aims to deal with issues such as:

- Education & Leisure
- Personal Care
- Health, Hygiene and Self Maintenance
- Behavioural Issues
- Safeguarding / Child Protection Issues
- Interpersonal Skills & Socially acceptable behaviour
- Family contact
- Self Esteem/Confidence
- Skills/Emotional maturity

Accurate and regular communication is ensured to protect the safety of the children and young people in our care. In addition to these issues, the arrangements made are as follows:

- Main meals are taken together in a family style atmosphere and special dietary needs are catered for.
- Children and young people have their own bedroom
- Communal as well as individual leisure/recreational activities are made available and pro-actively encouraged.
- Little Acre is well equipped with a variety of games, DVDs, books, music, craft and other resources.
- A variety of working methods are used with children and young people. These are tailored to suit individual needs. Such methods include one to one direct work, group work and teaching.

Whilst living at Little Acre, all children/young people receive the following allowances:

- o Pocket money

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- o Clothing Money
- o Personal allowances for activities/interests
- o Birthday Money, Christmas & savings.

### 8. Who may be referred to Little Acre

Little Acre is able to accommodate:

- Up to five children and young people
- Mixed Gender
- Aged between 5 to 19
- Children and young people with learning difficulties - Mild to Severe.
- Children and young people on the Autistic Spectrum and/or with Sensory Modulation Disorder
- Little Acre can accommodate up to three children and young people with moderate / severe learning disabilities and moderate / significant physical disabilities who are pad wearing / doubly incontinent and require access to a changing table.
- Children can be placed on a shared care basis

In accordance with Acorn Education and Care's Equal Opportunities Policy, children of any gender or ethnic origin may be referred.

Acorn Education and Care services are also trained to care for young people labelled as Transgender or presenting with Gender Dysphoria.

Transgender - An umbrella term for those whose gender identity or expression differs in some way from the sex assigned to them at birth and conflicts with the 'norms' expected by the society they live in. Included in the overall transgender umbrella are transsexual people, non-binary gender identities and cross-dressing.

Gender dysphoria (GD) is a condition where a person experiences discomfort or distress because there is a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. This is often accompanied by a desire to change.

There are considerable linkages with GD and intellectual disability [ particularly ASD conditions]

Trans specific training is provided for Acorn Education and Care colleagues working with Trans / GD young people

Acorn Education and Care carefully considers all referrals as part of a caring and responsible approach to admissions.

The layout and design of Little Acre [split level design with four levels] is such, that the home can accommodate children and young people with mobility difficulties, underpinned by adaptations to enable safe access and safe egress to the lower ground floor [to wheelchair mobility standard] as follows:

- Creating a pathway at rear and side of property

- Ramps into the sensory room

We have a platform lift that can be used for wheelchairs for access to the ground floor and lower floor.

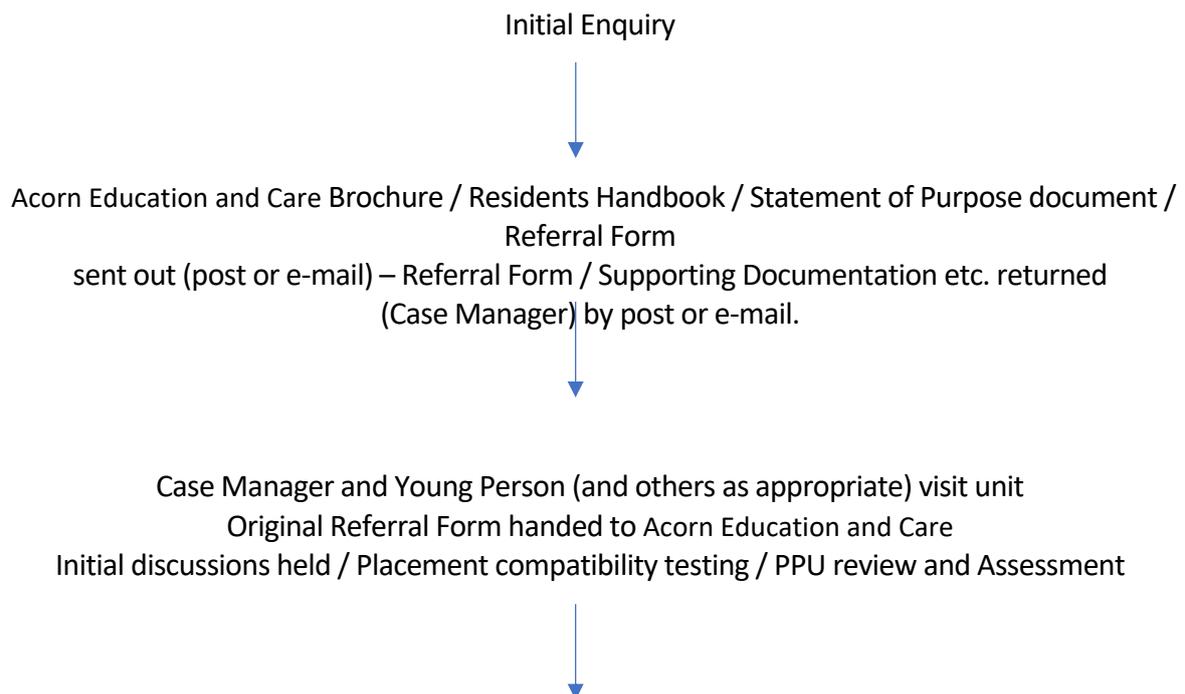
We can accommodate children and young people with various health needs and staff are trained to a mandatory standard with extra training around specific health needs, e.g.: Gastro (Mic-Key peg) Makaton and oxygen training.

Our team are trained to support children and young people with autism, learning difficulties, and complex health needs.

### 9. Admissions Procedure

We always aim to ensure the referral process is as speedy and straight forward as possible. Preferably, placements should be planned, providing for as smooth a transition as possible for the child or young person concerned, However, Acorn Education and Care will consider any potential Referrals carefully particularly from a compatibility and suitability (child's needs / existing residents of respective home) standpoint.

The flow chart below shows the normal Referral/Admissions Process. The process can be adjusted to accommodate individual referral circumstances.



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Placement/Financial Agreement sent to Commissioning Authority  
Case Manager/Placements Section confirms or rejects Agreements



Referral formally accepted  
Placement/Financial Agreement Signed  
Key Worker introduced  
Care/Placement Planning Meeting: aims, objectives, time-scales etc.



Internal Preparatory Work  
Admission into Little Acre

### 10. Available Services

#### Residential Placements:

- Short, Medium, Long Term Residential placements.
- Placements with Therapeutic Intervention (e.g. deep pressure or sensory integrative processing therapy and / or intensive interaction therapy – these therapy interventions can be commissioned and delivered by appropriately trained personnel – see note on intensive interaction therapy)
- Shared - Care.
- Respite service.

Note: this approach helps the person with learning disabilities and their communication partner to relate better to each other and enjoy each other's company more. It helps them develop their communication abilities. In Intensive Interaction, the carer, support worker, speech and language therapist or teacher works at being a better communication partner and so supports the person with learning disabilities develop confidence and competence as a communicator [Acorn Education and Care Personnel can receive guidance on IIT from the education provider REAL]

### 11. Ethos and Philosophy

The underlying ethos and philosophy of Little Acre is that every child and young person has individual recognition as to their health and well-being. The staff team ensure that the children and young people have opportunities to express their feelings and concerns using basic listening skills, signs and symbols to provide comfort and assurance and encourage the child to actively refocus their thoughts and help alleviate some of their feelings.

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Teaching basic problem-solving skills when upsetting situations arise help the children and young people to make better choices, and an acknowledgement of good behaviour with rewards, praise and positive feedback helps reinforce their strengths and builds awareness of his/her own talents and abilities.

### 12. Health Care Provision

Little Acre adopts and follows Acorn Education and Care's policy & procedural guidelines on the provision of Health Care for every child and young person. This ensures a consistent and proactive approach to health and health education by both staff and children. The central focus of our Health Policy is to empower the children and young people and to provide them with the tools and information to make informed decisions about their health.

All children and young people within our care should be registered with a local GP and have access to a range of other health care facilities, which include:

- Dentists
- Chiropodists
- Counsellors
- Opticians
- Social-Psychological Services if applicable
- Other Therapeutic services as appropriate
- Neurologists
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Dieticians

Health Education is promoted via structured individual key work or group, sessions, whichever is thought to be more appropriate in accordance with the feelings of the children and young people.

The Acorn Education and Care Health Care Policy includes providing information on physical, emotional & sexual health. Our philosophy and approach is that good health is achieved through paying attention to basic needs such as nutrition, adequate sleep, regard for safety and appropriate medical attention when required.

### 13. Education, Educational Services & Local Schools

Little Acre believes that all our children and young people have the right to an education suited to their needs, ability and personal aspirations. We acknowledge research suggesting that children and young people within the care system are potentially at risk of poor educational achievement due in part to many extrinsic factors.

Therefore, we believe that we have an Absolute Duty to ensure that children and young people in our care achieve generally and educationally, to their highest potential. Little Acre staff are all involved in proactively implementing needs assessed Individual Education Plans (I.E.P.) for each

child. Key workers/ Manager oversee the implementation of I.E.Ps and SENs/EHCs and monitor progress in order to evaluate and maximise achievement.

Little Acre creates a positive culture and environment for valuing education and works effectively in partnership with our locality SLD schools.

### Educational Services Offered and Local Schools

- At Acorn Education and Care, we have strong links with a number of schools for children with Special Educational Needs and Learning Disability
- We can liaise with Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire Children and Young Peoples Services [Education Division] and have strong links with local partnering SLD Schools in Nottinghamshire [e.g. AshLea, Cotgrave] and Leicestershire [e.g. Birchwood, Melton Mowbray]

### 14. Recreational Sporting and Cultural Arrangements

There are a wide range of leisure, recreational, and social activities that are available for the child and young person to pursue whilst residing at Little Acre. The home is deliberately located in close proximity to various facilities. Our staff team ensure that every child and young person is encouraged to participate in communal and group activities of their own choice.

All Little Acre staff recognise the importance of monitoring the participation in leisure, recreational, and social activities, whilst ensuring that adequate alternatives are offered to every child and young person, as and when required.

Also, that a child or young person is entitled to time when she or is doing nothing in particular.

There are a number of leisure, recreational, and social activities available suitable for children with disabilities.

Each child and young person in a Acorn Education and Care home is involved in completing a weekly Personal Planner that sets out the structure of the week ahead. This ensures that both children and staff are able to form a picture of the week ahead ensuring balance and variety. This system also serves review and monitoring activity.

We often organise events on site, such as our fireworks show or a charity coffee morning, and children love setting off in the Little Acres minibus to go ice-skating, to the theatre or even further afield.

### 15. Consultation Arrangements

The way the home functions enhances every child's and young person's independence and opportunity to make everyday choices. Significant views, discussions and expressed opinions are recorded promptly in the relevant places. Key worker sessions, meetings with the appropriate

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people and residents' meetings are systems that reflect the children's and young people's differing communication needs.

All children and young people will receive an allocation of pocket money on a regular basis.

In line with Policies, Little Acre operates an open access policy in relation to children and young people having access to their personal files. However, there may be specific reasons to withhold certain information from children and young people.

The children and young people will be allowed regular access to their files; their appointed key worker will undertake this task.

The children and young people will be given guidance on their rights regarding information contained in their personal file in a format that suits their communication needs. They are also actively encouraged to see files held by their Social Workers as a positive feature

### 16. Promoting Positive Behaviour and interactions

Little Acre in line with Acorn Education and Care's policy looks to promote positive relationships between the adults and children within a clearly defined policy framework.

None of the disciplinary measures prohibited under Regulation 8 of the Children Act 1989 are permitted at Little Acre. All staff at Little Acre aim to work together with children and young people as a team to enhance our ethos of a family home within a framework of continuous positive reinforcement of good behaviour. In addition, appropriate use of age and understanding-sensitive sanctions and disciplinary measures are only applied after careful consideration as defined within Acorn Education and Care's policy and procedures.

Our approach encourages reparation and restitution and we seek not to allow negative behaviour to become the focus of attention. Acorn Education and Care staff will not make excessive or unreasonable use of sanctions or physical Intervention.

Physical Intervention (MAPA - the management of actual and potential aggression) is used only in specified circumstances i.e. to prevent likely injury to the child or young person concerned or to others, or likely serious damage to property. All Acorn Education and Care staff are trained in the use of Physical Intervention techniques, which include Redirection, De-escalation, Avoidance and Reduction techniques. Clear records are kept of the use of sanctions and physical restraint ensuring that the application of the same can be monitored and reviewed at regular intervals.

MAPA [Positive Options] is endorsed by the British Institute of Learning Disabilities [BILD]. Acorn Education and Care are an approved training centre for MAPA and BILD Silver Members

Acorn Education and Care support and advocate BILD'S positive Behaviour Support philosophy which makes sure that all people with learning disabilities can exercise their human rights and be valued members of their local communities and eliminates all unnecessary restrictive and aversive practice.

### 17. Safeguarding / Child Protection / Bullying

## Statement of Principles

Acorn Education and Care believes that all children and young people have the right to be protected from all forms of abuse, whether this be physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. Our approach to all aspects of care delivery is Child Centred. With regard to Child Protection we firmly believe that the blame for abuse will rest solely on the abuser and that the welfare of the child will always remain centre-stage.

Concerns over the safety or well-being of a child or young person will never be ignored. The child protection procedures are consistent with the local policies and procedures agreed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board [LCSB]

Acorn Education and Care are a S11.Children Act 2004 compliant business

Written records of all incidents are taken by staff and reported to the relevant bodies. The atmosphere created at Little Acre is one where bullying is known to be unacceptable. There is a policy on countering bullying, which is known to children, their families, social workers and staff. Any child or young person experiencing bullying is supported and regular risk assessments of the times places and circumstances are recorded, and action is taken where feasible to reduce the risk of bullying.

To define abuse, Acorn Education and Care has adopted the definition provided by the National Commission of Inquiry into the Prevention of Child Abuse, 'Childhood Matters'

"Anything which individuals, institutions or processes do or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of safe and healthy development into adulthood."

## Policy Objectives

Our Safeguarding / Child Protection policy aims to:

- Provide clear and specific guidelines to enable staff to deal with child protection issues effectively.
- Set high internal standards to ensure that the children and young people cared for by Acorn Education and Care are well protected
- Ensure Acorn Education and Care's credibility as a professional care organisation remains high and that purchasers feel assured that Acorn Education and Care is a 'safe' organisation
- Ensure that every individual working for Acorn Education and Care knows what to do in a Child Protection Emergency.

## Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy

At Little Acre, everything we do is geared to the protection, happiness and development of the child or young person. Our Child Protection Policy (hereafter referred to as 'the policy') is detailed, extensive and child-centred.

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The policy provides detailed definitions of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, mental cruelty and neglect.

Also, the policy sets out clearly, and in considerable detail, who is responsible for dealing with suspected or actual incidents of abuse, defines how matters of abuse should be dealt with and provides supportive guidance to officers who may be involved in dealing with such matters.

Other aspects covered under the policy include:

- Disciplining Children
- Direct Work with Children – Protecting Staff
- Whistle Blowing
- Confidentiality
- The duty of care and public liability insurance
- Records and Record Keeping
- Computer Safety
- Working with Social Workers.

The Acorn Education and Care policy framework and management approach is designed to minimise the risk of child abuse. However, we recognise that with the best will in the world there is always a chance that a child located in the safest of environments may fall victim to abuse. At Acorn Education and Care, no child protection issue is ignored. Our response to any allegation or suspicion is child-centred, transparent, swift and affirmative.

Copies of the Acorn Education and Care Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy are available upon request.

### Bullying

Little Acre is committed to providing a residential environment where children and young people can live safely, without the fear of oppressive behaviour from peers by any form of bullying or intimidation. At Acorn Education and Care, we understand that the risk of bullying from children and young people with a learning disability can be minimised through robust compatibility assessment at admission stage.

Acorn Education and Care provides all staff and children in our homes with clear definitions of bullying. We believe bullying can take many forms from verbal, emotional, sexual or racial abuse to actual physical assault.

In all cases Acorn Education and Care staff will:

- Investigate fully any indication of bullying.
- Support the victim to prevent any further oppressive behaviour from others.
- Re-assure the victim that being bullied is not acceptable and that it is not their fault they are bullied

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- Minimise any further opportunities for bullying to occur by whatever strategies are realistic and achievable.
- Confront the bully with their actions so their oppressive behaviour is not condoned by inertia.
- Pursue legal action should the nature of bullying indicate the need for this.
- Arrange for an urgent review to include all involved parties from whatever agency to identify an action plan to deal with the bullying including the appropriateness of placements.
- Identify and action positive alternatives for both victim perpetrator to develop those skills necessary for positive relationships.
- Keep a written record of all incidents and actions taken

Bullying and oppressive behaviour has no place within our society of which Acorn Education and Care homes are a part. We are committed to an equality of service that demands a safe and caring environment for all service users.

### 18. Unauthorised Absence from the Home

Little Acre provides all residential staff and children with written procedures, which are clearly followed when a child is absent without Permission. The application of the Absence procedures is consistent but at the same time take account of the individual child's needs which are clearly set out in his or her Placement Plan.

Any child or young person that is away from a Acorn Education and Care home is made welcome upon return – the principal aim will be work with child or young person to find out why he or she felt the need to leave his or her home without consulting or seeking permission from staff. Wherever possible, and in any case as soon as possible after he or she has returned, the child or young person will be seen by his or her social worker or a person who is independent of the home. If this is not possible, Acorn Education and Care will always record the reasons given by the child or young person and these are reported to child or young person's social worker, if appropriate, changes to Placement / Care plans are recommended and agreed with appropriate people, including the child or young person.

Any reports from a child or young person that indicates he or she went missing in response to being abused will be immediately reported to Social Services and appropriate measures are made to protect the child or young person.

When a child or young person is absent from the home or the supervision of a member of staff without consent or authority, then the following procedure will be followed:

- Staff will initially conduct a search of the interior of the home then the outside surrounding area to locate and confirm the whereabouts of the child or young person and their safety.
- If the child or young person has not returned to the home within a previously specified time then a member of staff should go out and look for the child or young person. This should only be done after consultation with a colleague and it has been agreed that such action will not place the other children, young people or staff at risk.

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- If the search by staff has proved inconclusive then the member of staff searching for the child or young person should report the child or young person as missing to the local police. They should also notify the child or young person's Social Worker, parents and any significant others. If outside normal office hours then the young person's Out of Hours Duty Team must be contacted.
- The time period for reporting children and young people missing to the Police when they are out with a member of staff would be made after consideration has been given to their age, personal circumstances, vulnerability and previous history. This time period should be clearly noted in the child or young person's care plan and risk assessment and updated according to need.
- There is a joint protocol for young people missing from care – information is located in the Little Acre office.

### 19. Surveillance

There is a visual monitor in place for some of our children and young people where seizures are prevalent and this allows for a closer observation of this child or young person without being overly intrusive of him or her through the night, allowing for a more settled sleep pattern to be maintained. These are also used throughout the day to continue to monitor the young people when they are having time alone whilst also remaining vigilant to their health needs. There are occasions where monitoring is used for the safety of the young people and permission would be sought prior to use from parents and the young person's social worker. Consent will be obtained from the placing social worker and parent in order to address the child's or young person's health needs.

### 20. Fire Precautions Adopted within Little Acre

Little Acre has appropriate fire equipment, smoke alarms and heat detectors, which are regularly tested and serviced by a designated Fire and Safety Officer.

All staff, children and young people (subject to level of learning disability) at Little Acre are familiar with all aspects of the fire policy and procedures and the Home's Fire Risk assessment. Regular fire drills are conducted within Little Acre, with the outcome and results continuously monitored and recorded within a logbook, in accordance with the Little Acre fire policy and procedure. Such drills are undertaken to identify, clarify and resolve any issues or problems with regards to the fire safety policy.

### 21. Arrangements for Pursuing Cultural Identity and Religious Observance

As a Culturally competent care provider, Acorn Education and Care are committed to facilitating and supporting the cultural and religious practices of children and young people in our care.

In the interests of maintaining the balanced development of the child or young person and in keeping with Equality and Diversity good practice, all Little Acre staff ensure that every child and young person will be given the opportunity to uphold their cultural identity and religious beliefs. All staff will be responsible for ensuring that opportunities for religious observance are understood and respected by themselves and other children within the home. Each child or

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young person is provided with the opportunity, to attend religious services and receive religious instruction as are appropriate to his/her religious beliefs.

Special attention is given where religious observances may involve the provision of special facilities.

### 22. Contact Arrangements

The organisations policies and procedures within Little Acre are all carefully followed by all staff, and are geared towards: -

- Maintaining, supporting and actively encouraging regular and consistent contact with the child's or young person's family, friends, as well as significant others. This is achieved through telephone calls and home visits in addition to visits to see the child or young person within Little Acre.
- Maintaining and encouraging regular access to, and contact with, the child's or young person's Social Worker, ensuring any issues or concerns can be discussed between the child or young person and his or her social worker.
- To actively promote co-operation and dialogue with relevant educational establishments through attendance at appropriate school functions, continuous discussions and dialogue regarding the needs of the child or young person. Particular attention is paid to the attendance levels.
- Also, staff will look to actively promote action programmes to help the child or young person to overcome any specific educational difficulties they encounter.
- To develop and maintain links with venues for recreational, religious, cultural and social activities, particularly those within the locality of Little Acre, ensuring a balanced and structured programme for development of the child or young person is achieved.
- To maintain regular contact and co-operation with other psychologists, psychiatrists, professional associations, and workers when it is appropriate. This will ensure that our core philosophy, which is that the welfare and support of the child or young person is central to all aspects of related care policies, is maintained.

### 23. Complaints, Comments and Compliments

Little Acre deals with all representations and complaints seriously, sensitively and as close to the originating point as possible, ensuring that the child's or young person's best interests are of paramount importance in such proceedings. We endeavour to ensure that all children and young people, staff, and parents are aware of and understand Acorn Education and Care's written policy and procedures on representations and complaints. Furthermore, Acorn Education and Care operates a transparent complaints procedure, which is clearly visible on notice boards and other appropriate locations.

Each child and young person has the right to make representations by way of comments, compliments or complaints regarding their care and accommodation whilst being looked after by

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Acorn Education and Care. A record is maintained in the home of such comments, compliments and complaints.

### Complaints Procedures

Each child and young person in the home has access to:

- a) A Child friendly format of Acorn Education and Care's Internal Complaints Procedures and the services
- b) of an independent representative.
- c) The Complaints Procedure of the responsible local authority
- d) Ofsted Tel: 0300 123 1231
- e) Write to Ofsted (NBU) Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store
- f) Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Organisations representing the interest of young people being looked after, e.g. Child-line and Voice for the Child in Care.

Additionally, all children, young people and their families are actively encouraged to express their concerns regarding the quality of care they are receiving or any other issue during individual meetings with their key worker, during any young people's meetings or directly to the Manager of the home. Each child and young person is provided with a copy of the Acorn Education and Care's Complaints Procedure on his or her admission to the home.

The Acorn Education and Care Complaints Procedure consists of three stages:

Stage 1 Informal Stage – Discussion with the home Manager – recorded and signed by the young person if she/he is satisfied.

Stage 2 Formal Stage – Investigation by a Complaints Investigation Officer (i.e. someone from outside of the home)

Stage 3 Review Stage- Consideration by Senior Managers of Acorn Education and Care

## 24. Arrangements for Reviews

### Placement Review Arrangements

In consultation with the child or young person, his or her social workers and all significant others, a Placement Plan is formulated within 72 hours of their admission. Within one month the Plan is agreed and adopted. Internal review is held on the 3 month to ensure the Plan remains up to date and relevant. And then every 6 months at this time the Plan is reviewed.

### Who can attend an internal Placement Review?

- The child or young person.
- The Parents (unless they are prevented from doing so by any court orders).
- The Reviewing Officer from the young person's area office.
- The child or young person's Social Worker.
- The child or young person's Key Worker.
- A Manager.
- Teachers, Doctors, & Psychologists.
- Independent visitor, race advisor, interpreter.
- Other family members.

### External Care Plan Reviews

There will be arrangements led by the child's or young person's social worker for external reviews. Typically, arrangements for external reviews will comprise:

- Core Group Meetings
- Statutory Reviews
- Inter-agency meetings

Acorn Education and Care will co-operate and support all arrangements for external reviews. We provide written reports for all review meetings to aid and assist discussion and will provide meeting facilities when required to do so.

### 25. Provisions made available by Little Acre

As highlighted within our Purpose statement, all Residential Child Care Workers within Little Acre are responsible for providing, and promoting the provision of various developmental aspects in the life of the child or young person, which includes their health, education, physical needs, emotional security, social experience, sleep, clothing, and diet. Furthermore, all staff will ensure that they:

- Develop and sustain a manner of living, which encourages within each child or young person a sense of stability, security, worth and responsibility.
- Positively promote and encourage awareness within each child or young person of intellectual, religious, and cultural matters as part of their overall development plan.
- Develop and maintain a sound professional relationship with the child or young person, based on the principle of mutual respect, and continuous consultation. Staff will ensure that this principle is still maintained even though there may be specific periods where the behaviour of the child or young person may be seen as unacceptable.
- Promote and encourage the understanding, acceptance, and operation of acceptable forms of behaviour amongst every child or young person within Little Acre.
- Develop an understanding of the individual needs of each child or young person, whilst encouraging the exchange of views and opinions between the staff and child or young person.

### Child and Young Person Participation and Involvement

At Acorn Education and Care, children and young people are encouraged and supported in self-expression. They are encouraged and helped to recognise their rights and responsibilities. In support of the above children and young people are encouraged to participate in any young people's meetings where they are able. Young people's meetings are designed to allow children and young people to express their views and concerns and to celebrate things that they like or make them happy. Also, children and young people are supported and encouraged to take part in the reviews of their Care and Placement Plans.

Some children and young people struggle to participate in the group setting and although they will receive ongoing support and encouragement, regular one to one Key Work sessions will allow them to feed into the Acorn Education and Care /Homes decision making processes. Through whatever channel, Acorn Education and Care staff are encouraged and expected to elicit the views of our children and young people and to ensure these are taken into account in the day to day running of our homes.

### 26. Therapeutic Techniques

Where necessary, Little Acre can access other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Diana Team (specialist community LD nurses).

### 27. Anti-discrimination at Little Acre

Little Acre is a child centred home with its policy, procedural and practice framework designed to promote, in both philosophical and practical terms, the premise that the 'welfare of the child should be the paramount consideration' in any given care situation.

Acorn Education and Care believes that happiness should not be a destination but rather, a journey. Children have the right to enjoy the journey through early life to independence, following a Pathway, underpinned by the following key principles:

All of our children deserve and should be afforded the opportunity to:

- Be as physically and mentally healthy and able as possible
- Enjoy maximum benefit and levels of attainment through good-quality and appropriate educational and developmental opportunities.
- Live in an environment that assures safety and protection from harm
- Feel loved, respected and valued. Be encouraged, guided, motivated and supported through a network of reliable, affectionate and safe relationships.
- Experience and enjoy emotional, mental and physical well-being.
- Feel empowered and enabled to become competent in self-care and everyday living.
- Be encouraged to believe in themselves, through the development and maintenance of positive self-esteem, confidence and respect.
- Have a secure and informed sense of identity, including cultural, racial and gender-based identity.

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- Understand and enjoy a sense of community and citizenship through the development and use of good inter-personal skills and confidence in social settings and opportunities to play a part.
- To understand and enjoy rights and responsibilities and to be able to exercise effectively both principles, both in the care setting and in later life.

Acorn Education and Care firmly believes in its care philosophy, which impacts on and guides all areas of our service provision to every child/young person.

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### Appendix A

| Name                            | Position                  | Experience  | Qualifications  |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Amy Plowman                     | Registered Manager        | Amy Plowman joined Acorn Education and Care back in 2014 as a senior residential worker at Little Acre. When the Annex opened in August 2014 Amy was approached to transfer her skills to the Annex and the young adults that were due to move in. She progressed to Assistant Manager and after 18 months in this position she was offered the role of Registered Manager. Amy was officially registered on 29/08/18. In July 2018 Amy was asked to support the children's home on the same site. In September 2018 Amy was offered the Registered Managers position for the children's home and so became a dual homes manager. Amy was officially registered with Ofsted 23/05/19. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GNVQ – Health and Social Care</li> <li>• B.Tec National Diploma in Childhood Studies</li> <li>• BA Hons Degree in Childhood studies (Health, Education &amp; Social Work)</li> <li>• NVQ 3 in Health and Social Care, Children and Young People</li> <li>• NVQ 3 in Medication Management and Administration.</li> <li>• NVQ Level 5 Leadership and Management Health and Social Care</li> <li>• NVQ Level 5 Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare.</li> </ul> |
| Arlene Scott                    | Deputy Manager            | Arlene joined Acorn Education and Care in Oct 2014 as an RCCW at Little Acre. Arlene worked her way up to being a SRCCW and Keyworker. In January 2017 Arlene became the assistant manager for Little Acre. Arlene continued this post until September 2018 where she decided she would prefer to be a SRCCW and work directly with the young people. Arlene has since become the assistant manager in February 2021  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Hons Childhood Studies</li> <li>• Level 3 Diploma in Residential Children's Home</li> <li>• Level 5 in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare</li> </ul>   |
| Shannon Carlyle                 | Trainee Assistant Manager | Shannon joined Acorn Education and Care in July 2016 as a RCCW at Little Acre. Shannon soon became a SRCCW in Sept 2017. She became a Keyworker and leads a care team. Shannon is now starting her training towards assistant manager.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare</li> <li>• Currently studying Level 3 Supervisor and Team Leader</li> </ul>   |
| Tim Cawdron                     | SRCCW                     | Worked with children with ASD in a residential school. Experience in handling challenging behaviour. Experience of contact with professionals at all levels. Was also a short breaks support worker whilst studying at university.  | Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce: Social Care Pathway (England)  |
| Hannah West                     | SRCCW                     | Hannah joined Acorn Education and Care in Oct 2016 as a RCCW at Little Acre. Hannah worked her way up and became a key worker shortly followed by becoming a Senior Sept 2017.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Hons Psychology</li> </ul> Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare   |
| Erin Scott<br>(Maternity Leave) | SRCCW                     | Erin joined Acorn Education and Care in Sept 2015 as a RCCW. Erin made her way up to SRCCW within the company. Erin left the company Acorn Education and Care in Sept 2017 to further her career however Erin came back on a zero-hour contract in January 2018.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BA Hons English</li> </ul> Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare  |
| Jasmine Bullock                 | SRCCW                     | Jasmine started with Acorn Education and Care in November 2017. She is on the care team for one of our young people.  | Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare  |
| Filicia Matthew                 | RCCW                      | Filicia joined Acorn Education and Care in December 2015 as a RCCW.   | Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare  |

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|                   |      |   |   |
|-------------------|------|---|---|
| Sophie Widdowson  | RCCW | Sophie joined Acorn Education and Care in October 2017 as a RCCW.   | Currently working towards Level 3 Diploma                 |
| Danielle Aley     | RCCW | Danielle started with Acorn Education and Care in April 2018. She is on the care team for one of our young people.                    | Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare                  |
| Katie Cassing     | RCCW | Katie started with Acorn Education and Care in March 2018. She is part of a care team for one of our young people.                    | Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare.                 |
| Jagoda Baranowska | RCCW | Jagoda joined Acorn Education and Care in May 2018. She is on the care team for one of our young people.                              | Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare                  |
| Jasmin Gascoyne   | RCCW | Jasmin started with Acorn Education and Care in March 2019.   | Currently working towards Level 3 Diploma                 |
| Jessica Lucas     | RCCW | Jessica joined Acorn Education and Care in March 2019. Jessica has joined a care team for one of our young people.                    | Currently working towards Level 3 Diploma                 |
| Tammy Moss        | RCCW | Tammy started with Acorn Education and Care in April 2019. Tammy has joined a care team for one of our young people.                  | Currently working towards Level 3 Diploma                 |
| Jamael Rainford   | RCCW | Jamael joined Acorn Education and Care in October 2019. He has passed his probation and will be signed onto the Level 3 qualification | Currently working towards Level 3 Diploma                 |
| Eleanor Herd      | RCCW | Eleanor joined Acorn Education and Care in February 2020.   | Currently working towards Level 3 Diploma                 |
| Lauryn Booth      | RCCW | Lauryn joined Acorn Education and Care in May 2020  | Currently waiting for induction on to the Level 3 diploma |
| Lydia Hutchinson  | RCCW | Lydia joined Acorn Education and Care in September 2020   | Currently on probation.                                   |
| Martin Cross      | RCCW | Martin joined Acorn Education and Care in December 2020   | Currently on probation.                                   |
| Bathany Davidson  | RCCW | Bethany joined Acorn Education and Care in January 2021   | Currently on probation.                                   |