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## **Statement of Purpose**



## **Afon Goch Children's Homes Ltd**

August 2009



## About Afon Goch











Afon Goch is a children's home, registered with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales (CSSIW).

Up to three children are in placement at any one time. We offer each child an individually tailored therapeutic programme of support, supervision, guidance and activities; with the aim of helping them make sense of negative life experiences, learn better ways of coping, and equipping them to face the challenges of adult life.

We help them to overcome the limitations of their past; to experience and embrace choice; and to learn to live in hope.

Typically, children come to us with a cynical and distorted world-view. We show them that 'it doesn't have to be that way'. During their time with us, each child is supported in learning and appreciating their own value; overriding limiting beliefs; and setting and achieving goals for the future.

We do this by:

-  Individual placement plans and risk assessments that are reviewed at regularly
-  A keyworking team for each child, with regular keyworker sessions. The keyworkers are given clinical supervision from our Art Psychotherapist who provides direction and guidance
-  High levels of staff supervision; usually 1:1; but higher levels if this is in the interests of the child
-  A therapeutic programme of activities for each child, reviewed weekly
-  A 'points' system, where specific behaviours are encouraged by reward
-  Daily discussions with each child about their progress and weekly goals set with the children
-  A therapeutic team approach. All staff are trained in, and work consistently to, the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention model of interventions; and are also trained in understanding attachment disorders
-  Our resident Art Therapist (HPC registered) provides a three-month comprehensive assessment for each child on admission; and offers a confidential (at least) weekly session for each child
-  We are AALA registered. Adventure Activities are provided by members of our core staff team (rather than 'outsiders') and are an integral part of the therapeutic programme for each child.
-  We provide 1:1 tuition from qualified teachers, where it is indicated in the child's PEP. The educational curriculum is broad and flexible and is designed around the individual needs of the child.

Afon Goch is situated on the outskirts of a small village in the Snowdonia National Park. There is a calming environment within the home, which is set in an area of intense natural beauty and with easy access to nearby towns and national road/rail links.



We have had marked successes with children from urban environments who need support in breaking delinquent links; or simply need respite from the limiting experiences they may face in their home environment. Our experience has shown that we can maintain positive familial and peer links in the child's 'home' locality, whilst supporting the child in learning better ways of responding/acting in the future; in the calm that is Afon Goch.

We have also had significant outcomes with Welsh children needing to be placed 'near home', but also needing intensive therapeutic input and the security of hearing the Welsh language. (A proportion of our staff are fluent in Welsh.)

Placements at Afon Goch can be of unlimited duration. Initially, we prefer a three-month referral to enable us to complete a comprehensive assessment of the child's therapeutic needs. Once that is in place; we can offer a placement as indicated by the referring authority's Care Plan. (Including up to the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.)

Our current practice is to offer free post-placement support to all children who have been placed with us. (Subject to the child's own wishes and the overall Care Plan.) As an example; a child who left us at age 18 last year still has allocated keyworker support, as and when he wishes.

Emergency placements can be accepted; but only with a view to a comprehensive assessment of the child's needs; and only after carrying out a full risk assessment relating to the child; and a compatibility risk assessment relating to other children in placement.

The Manager reviews this Statement of Purpose monthly. It is formally reviewed and adopted by the Responsible Individual annually.

*Reviewed by Manager and Responsible Individual: March 2009*

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**1. A statement of the overall aims of the home, and the objectives to be attained with regard to children accommodated in the home.**

Children placed at Afon Goch have suffered damaging life experiences, and are often in crisis both at the point of placement and at various times during their stay. Typically the children are inadequately equipped to respond effectively to the challenges facing them.

Afon Goch offers children the opportunity, resources and support for lasting change. The children are empowered to take their rightful place in the world; offering a better future both for them as individuals, and for society.

We aim to provide children with the opportunity to explore positive experiences. This means challenging negativity, through appropriate decision making, understanding how actions have a cause and effect and empowerment, thus '**completing the circle**' of learning better, more effective coping strategies.

**Without striving for constant improvement within ourselves, we can never achieve our goals. Human nature is such, that, there will always be new ideas and room for improvement.**

The children placed with us receive a high quality of services for they deserve nothing less. We strive to achieve the best possible options and outcomes to prepare them for moving on from Afon Goch and for their future life. The welfare of the child is paramount.

**Aim**

**To provide opportunities for lasting change and to help the child to overcome the limitations of their past.**





## Objectives

- To protect children from harm (actual or likely)**
- To lead children through traumatic life experiences**
- Provide a safe, warm, structured, nurturing environment**
- To empower through the use of caring, appropriate adult role models**
- To work in partnership by operating an open, honest culture**
- To formulate individual plans based on individual need**
- To teach better, more effective ways of coping**
- To develop the worth of self in society**
- To teach respect for self and others**
- To give the child the opportunity they deserve to change their life**
- To reunite families through trust, relationship building and stress reduction**
- To provide a positive attitude toward education and work**
- To prepare children for moving on successfully**

Ultimately, success in achieving these objectives will be the result of employing staff of the highest calibre and ensuring that they have sufficient resources to complete their roles successfully.

All staff are committed to a therapeutic team approach to achieve these objectives for Afon Goch; and to translate them into specific measurable outcomes for each individual child.



## 2. A statement of the facilities and services to be provided, within and outside the home, for the children accommodated in the home.

Afon Goch is registered as a children's home with the Care and Social Services Inspectorate for Wales. Afon Goch is a detached five-bedroom former farmhouse with extensive outbuildings set in picturesque gardens in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park. From the gardens there are views of Snowdon Mountain and its surrounding peaks and views to the harbour of Caernarfon Bay.



Afon Goch provides care and accommodation twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, 365 days per year for up to three children. An individualised, structured programme is provided to assess and meet the needs of the individual child.

Some children lose the ability to cope with group living settings and therefore require the additional support of a high level of staffing (often a two to one environment) to support them through crisis. All children enter in and out of states of crisis in their lives. Through an individually tailored programme Afon Goch aims to use that crisis as an opportunity for growth and change for the individual child. Throughout their stay, children are closely supervised for their own safety; and a comprehensive therapeutic programme is developed with them for their own growth.



All staff are trained in the University of Cornell Therapeutic Crisis Intervention range of behaviour management techniques and interventions. These are deployed throughout the day, as needed by the child. Other health, psychological or therapeutic support is offered as identified in the child's Placement Plan. However we are always conscious that any interventions must be carefully planned considering the needs of this child at this time.

Afon Goch is a licensed activity centre, licensed by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority.

Our activities include adventurous, physical endeavours that are led by our multi-qualified outdoor education instructors. They include mountain walking, climbing, abseiling, canoeing, kayaking, gorge walking and coastering etc.

Other activities include sports; making use of local resources e.g. football, rugby, netball, kickboxing etc. We also make use of arts and crafts.

Some of these activities are challenging and arduous but are designed to give the individual the opportunity to attain personal achievement and growth and success through new and exciting experiences. These activities are of proven value in raising self-esteem and establishing trust, they also provide an excellent training ground for learning the value of teamwork. As well as the educational and demanding elements of the activities they offer stimulation, motivation and a lot of fun!



Afon Goch offers comprehensive assessments, treatment packages to help social workers assess and understand the complex needs of children facing difficult challenges. The benefit of placing a child at Afon Goch can help the social worker have a deeper knowledge of the child, if a long term placement is not suitable for the child at Afon Goch, our assessment should help identify a more suitable placement which should prevent multiple placement breakdowns and offer a more secure base for the child to live and develop. Assessment and treatment packages are offered to work towards future transitions for children who are possible children for fostering or adoption.



Full professional reports are produced for each child. At the end of their stay they will be prepared for moving on and helped through that period. Follow up work will be undertaken as necessary. This includes participating in Pathway Plans where appropriate.

Children are encouraged to be involved in menu planning, budgeting, shopping, cooking, household activities, developing self-care skills, and choosing activities.

Although our resource is rurally located, there are shops and amenities in the local village, which is approximately half a mile away. The city of Bangor is 8 miles from Afon Goch and has a cinema, leisure centre, McDonalds and many other leisure outlets.

Children spend time away from Afon Goch. There are regular holidays and expeditions to different parts of the country.



Afon Goch offers additional services including escort services, supervision of contact, court reports, outreach work, independence support, post-placement support and assessments.

Above all, the staff at Afon Goch attempt to discover or develop healthy interests in the child, recognising that interest generally sparks aptitude which, in turn, supports self-esteem, the fundamental building block of a fulfilling life.



### **3. The name and business address of every registered person**

**Registered provider:**

**AFON GOCH CHILDREN'S HOMES LTD**

**AFON GOCH**

**DEINIOLEN**

**GWYNEDD**

**LL55 3ND**

**Registered Manager**

**HAYLEY KNOWLES**

**AFON GOCH CHILDREN'S HOMES LTD**

**AFON GOCH**

**DEINIOLEN**

**GWYNEDD**

**LL55 3ND**



#### 4. The relevant qualifications and experience of every registered provider

The Registered Provider is Afon Goch Children's Homes Ltd. The directors are Louise Irving and Bob Pigeon.

**Louise Irving** is the Responsible Individual. She is a lawyer by profession, transferring to social care work after six years as a local authority lawyer specialising in care proceedings, child protection and adoption. Louise has worked as a Social Care Consultant since 1999, specialising in the private children's homes sector. She was appointed Responsible Individual for Afon Goch in July 2004, and has been approved as a 'fit person' by CSSIW.



Louise is Managing Director and majority shareholder of Afon Goch Children's Homes Ltd. Louise has training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention; Risk Assessment; Child Protection; ITC Emergency First Aid, Fire Safety, Food Hygiene, Supervision Skills, Understanding Attachment Disorders. Louise lives in North Wales, and regularly visits the home.

**Bob Pigeon** is a Director and shareholder of Afon Goch Children's Homes Ltd. Bob is a qualified Chartered Accountant, and has forty years' experience in the commercial sector; most recently as financial director for a North West soft drinks company. Bob retired last year, and continues to work as a Consultant for businesses around the UK. Bob is Trustee of a Manchester based charity.

#### 5. The numbers, relevant qualifications and experience of persons working at the home, and if the workers are all of one sex, a description of the means whereby the home will promote appropriate role models of both sexes

##### The staff team at Afon Goch

The Registered Manager of Afon Goch Hayley Knowles, works closely with Lynsey Evans who is to be Manager of the home on Anglesey which we are planning to open by the end of the year. Both houses will be run as a joint venture, we have one large staff team who are available to work at either house. Hayley and Lynsey are supported by a staff team comprising: a Lead Senior Residential Support Worker, five Senior Residential Support Workers; a Senior Practitioner / Head teacher, a team of Residential Support Workers, some of whom hold adventure activity qualifications; an Art Psychotherapist

(HPC registered); and a Policy and Projects Adviser. The managers have direct line management responsibility for all staff.

We have two senior qualified teachers on the team, who can offer 1:1 tuition, where this is identified in the child's Personal Education Plan.

The managers report directly to Louise Irving, the Responsible Individual and receive clinical supervision from our Art Psychotherapist Pete Russell.

The staff team are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, following a rigorous selection process. Values and attitudes are assessed; as well as qualifications, skills and experience. A therapeutic team approach is key to our working at Afon Goch; and great care is taken to ensure that team members are suited to, and supported in, this way of working.



Recruitment strategies at Afon Goch encompass equal opportunities as a matter of good practice. We aim to maintain a gender balance within the team, ensuring that children have access to appropriate role models of both genders. Both genders are recruited to carry out the same tasks (i.e. we do not operate a system that differentiates between gendered work) save where the need for a worker of a particular gender has been specifically identified within the child's Placement Plan.

### **Gender balance**

It is our policy to ensure that there is a mix of both male and female staff on the Afon Goch team. Should there be a shortfall, we would consider advertising for staff of a particular gender, following the GOQ procedures.

### **An introduction to a few of our staff**

**Hayley Knowles** is the Registered Manager of Afon Goch and has worked for Afon Goch since January 2004. Prior to working for Afon Goch she had her own painting and decorating business, which was extremely successful. She chose a change in career so as to pass on her skills and life experiences to children within the care system.



Hayley is also a qualified Carpenter and Joiner with City and Guilds qualifications. Hayley spent ten years in the Army with the Royal Logistics Corps and served as a Combat Driver, Transport Officer, Military Training Instructor and an Assistant Adventure Training Instructor. She is



interested in most outdoor activities and will attempt challenges very well. She is an enthusiastic, creative and committed worker. She is creative and inventive with the art and craft sessions she carries out with the children and encourages children to learn DIY and gardening skills. Hayley has specific responsibilities for overseeing the maintenance, upkeep and improvement of the premises.

Hayley's training includes Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, First Aid, Health and Safety, Food Hygiene, Supervision Skills in Social Care, Medication, Fire Safety, Mountain Leader training, Child Protection, Employment Law, Understanding Attachment disorders. Hayley holds NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and NVQ Level 4 Registered Managers in Child Care award and is training towards A1 NVQ Assessors Award. Hayley is the Health link worker for Afon Goch.

Hayley has a working understanding of the Welsh language.

**Lynsey Evans** is going to be Manager of the new home on Anglesey and has worked for Afon Goch since it opened in 2003. Lynsey previously worked for a number of years developing young people through the medium of kayak and canoe sessions. She has dedicated her spare time to providing safe, stimulating and fun sessions with children in order to help their development in the sport.



Lynsey has an infectious enthusiasm and energy to her approach in life, and uses the medium of adventure activities to develop and progress children in their lives. Lynsey is a dedicated kayaker and represents Wales and Great Britain in National and International kayak solo and team events. She is currently ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the World in Freestyle Kayaking.



Lynsey holds a Degree in Sports Science from the University of Bangor. Lynsey's other sporting interests include climbing, surfing, paragliding, mountain walking, and mountain biking. Adventure Activity qualifications include the BCU Level 4 Kayak (inland) Award, Advanced Swift Water Rescue Technician, BCU Level 1 Raft Guide, RYA Level 2 Powerboat, Mountain Leader training, Single Pitch Award and Trail Cycle Leader Award.

Lynsey has specific responsibilities for the operation and oversight of Afon Goch's Adventure Activities programme.

Lynsey has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Risk Assessments, Manual Handling (Moving and Handling), COSHH, Food Hygiene, Fire Marshal, ITC First Aid, Child Protection, Child Care Law, Record Keeping, and Written Communication, Employment Law, Supervision Skills in Social Care, Understanding Attachment Disorders. Lynsey holds the NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People, NVQ Level 4 in Health

and Social Care and NVQ Level 4 Registered Managers in Child Care award and is training towards A1 NVQ Assessors Award. Lynsey is the Education Link worker for Afon Goch and is currently learning Welsh.

**Pete Russell BA, P.G.Dips, MA** is our resident Art Psychotherapist, having joined the team in 2006.

Pete has over ten years experience working with very damaged children with attachment disorders and trauma related issues in the looked after environment. Pete is trained in Art Psychotherapy to Masters level and is a state registered practitioner with the Health Professions Council. He is a specialist in working with attachment disorders and the focus of his 6 years university training was employing art psychotherapy working with children and young adults. Pete uses various media in his work including Art, Music and Drama, although many children prefer to just talk. The team now benefits from having Pete on the team; providing guidance, clinical supervision to the key workers working and with the team; educating and training the team in complex areas such as attachment disorders and trauma related issues such as P.T.S.D. and self-harm. Pete receives clinical supervision and oversight from Les Sloan, Senior Lecturer in Psychotherapy at the University of Derby.



Other training includes the Certificate in Counselling Skills, First Aid, Basic Food Hygiene, Basic Health and Safety, etc. He has previously worked as a Senior Residential Social Worker and is widely experienced. Pete is responsible for our art therapy programme. Pete Russell is registered with the Health Professions Council.

**Martin Taylor** is Lead Senior Residential Support Worker who joined Afon Goch a year ago but has over five years previous experience working with young people with challenging behaviour in a variety of different environments. Martin has worked in two other residential children's homes and with a youth group delivering alternative education and encouraging young people to engage through the medium of sports.



Martin has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Child Protection, Food Safety, Health and Safety, Attachment Theory and Practice, Self Harm Awareness and Manual Handling. Martin holds the NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care and is currently working towards NVQ 4 in Care and NVQ 4 ILM.

Adventure Activity qualifications include the Canoe Safety Test, Level Two kayak coach and Mountain Bike Trail Cycle Leader. Martin is very enthusiastic member of the team and with his calm manner is a positive role model to the children he works with.

**Jean Davies** is a Senior Practitioner with Afon Goch and has worked for us for a year now. Jean is a qualified teacher and has experience as a lecturer and basic skills coordinator within a Learning Support department at a Further Education College working with young people who have been excluded from mainstream school. Jean also has previous residential experience working with vulnerable adults experiencing severe and profound learning disabilities helping to provide them with a comfortable and secure home life and the opportunity to develop their potential.



Jean is very structured and consistent with her approach to the children which allows them to feel safe and provides them with predictable routines. Jean has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Child Protection, Food Safety, Health and Safety, Attachment Theory and Practice, Self Harm Awareness and Manual Handling. Jean is currently working towards NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care.

Jean has good interpersonal skills which enables her to get the best from the young people through the medium of adventure activities. Qualifications include Mountain Leader Award, Single Pitch Award and ITC First Aid.



**Bryan Lloyd** is a Senior Residential Support Worker and has been employed with Afon Goch since 2004. He has had a varied career, including landscape gardening and tree surgery industry.

He is interested in mountain walking, kayaking and fishing. He has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, ITC First Aid, Understanding Attachment Disorders, Child Protection, and Promoting Equality & Diversity. Bryan holds the NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People.



**Jill Jones** has been with Afon Goch since 2005 and has worked her way up to Senior Residential Support Worker.

Jill has worked within a hospital setting as a Health Care Assistant and has also worked in schools as a classroom assistant including 1:1 work with children with special needs including Downs Syndrome, autism and Aspergers.

Jill uses firm and consistent boundaries that allow the children to feel safe and secure at Afon Goch.



Jill has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and Child Protection, Food Hygiene, Manual Handling, Health and Safety, ITC First Aid, Fire Safety, COSHH and Understanding Attachment Disorders. Jill holds NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care and is also fluent in Welsh and English.

**Kieran Mullin** is a Trainee Senior Residential Support Worker with four years experience working with young people in a variety of roles including escorting and supporting young offenders. Kieran holds a BSc (Hons) Degree in Psychology and has received training in Child Protection, COSHH, Food Safety, Health and Safety in the workplace, Risk Assessment, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and Understanding Attachment Disorders.



Kieran is a keen kayaker and is currently working towards gaining BCU kayak coach qualification. Kieran has previously worked as an IT technician dealing with computer or network related problems and therefore has

responsibility for computers at Afon Goch. Kieran is also currently working towards NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care.

**Lucy Elis** is a Trainee Senior Residential Support Worker who joined Afon Goch two years ago. Lucy has nine years experience working as a carer with elderly patients and patients whom have suffered severe spinal injuries. Duties included giving administering medication, emotional support and arranging appointments and emotional support within the family home.



Lucy has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention,

Attachment theory and practice, Child Protection, COSHH, Health and Safety in the workplace and certificate in food hygiene. Lucy is fluent in Welsh and is currently working towards NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care.



**Gemma Sellens** is a Trainee Senior Residential Support Worker and has been with the team at Afon Goch since July 2007. Gemma has a BA degree in Sociology with social policy. Gemma has previous experience of working with adults with learning disabilities and mental health problems.

Gemma has also worked in the retail and hotel industries, which has provided her with strong verbal and written communication skills in both English and Welsh and the ability to work well within a team. Gemma has received training in

Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Child Protection, Food Safety, Attachment theory and practice and is currently working towards NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care.

**Paul Carre** is a Relief Residential Support Worker has gained a Distinction in the use of English, has been an Army Officer in the Royal Engineers, Field Work Operations Manager, Special Constable in Guernsey and worked with the Elderly. Paul has received training in ITC First Aid, Child Protection, Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, COSHH, Health and Safety in the workplace and Understanding Attachment Disorders.



Paul holds a degree in Social Work and is currently working towards a Masters degree and is also our Policies and Projects Advisor.

**Katie Jones** works for Afon Goch as a Residential Support Worker on a part time basis whilst studying for her BA Degree in Childhood Studies at University of Wales, Bangor.



Katie has previously worked for Social Services as a Support Worker dealing with children between the ages of four and eighteen with special needs ensuring their safety and happiness. Katie has also had experience working with children with a variety of needs at a Saturday club and through a summer play scheme.

Katie is a fun loving and active person who enjoys a challenge and uses her endless amounts of enthusiasm to engage the young people at Afon Goch.

Katie is fluent in Welsh and English and has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Attachment theory and practice and Child Protection.

Katie is currently on sabbatical leave, travelling around the world and remains in touch with Afon Goch.

**Andy Turton** is a relief Residential Support Worker and has worked for Afon Goch since March 2007. Andy has previously worked for a number of years developing young people through the medium of kayak and canoe sessions and now runs his own kayak coaching business operating in the UK, Austria and Nepal.



Andy has an enthusiasm when working with young people that is second to none and uses the medium of adventure activities to develop and progress children in their lives.

Andy has a BA Degree in Sports, Health and Physical Education and is also a qualified White water raft guide and BCU Level 4 Inland Kayak Coach. Andy holds Swift water Rescue Technician certificate and Explorer First Aid. Andy has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Attachment Theory and practice and Food Safety. Andy is also currently working towards NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care.

**Gareth Roberts** is a Residential Support Worker at Afon Goch and has worked at Afon Goch since April 2008. Gareth has had experience working with children and young people as a support worker with the local Social Services and in a Special Needs Unit working with children with ADHD, moderate learning difficulties and behavioural difficulties. Gareth has also been project manager for mental health, learning disability and community support project in the local area. Gareth has spent eighteen months travelling around the world which has given him an insight into different cultures.



Gareth has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Child Protection, Food Safety, Health and Safety, Attachment Theory and Practice, Self Harm Awareness and Manual Handling. Gareth is currently working towards NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care and is fluent in both Welsh and English.

**Colette Macko** is a Residential Support Worker at Afon Goch and has worked at Afon Goch since April 2008. Colette holds a BA Hons Degree in Illustration and Animation and is currently studying for PGCE at Bangor University.



Colette has previously worked supporting adults with learning disabilities to assist them to integrate back into the community by teaching them domestic skills and supporting their basic educational needs.

Colette is a caring individual who works very hard with great energy and a good sense of humour. Colette has also received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Child Protection, Food Safety, Health and Safety, Attachment Theory and Practice, Self Harm Awareness and Manual Handling.



**Karen Ball** is a Residential Support Worker at Afon Goch and has worked at Afon Goch since April 2008. Karen holds a BA First class Fine Arts Honours Degree and is currently studying part time for a PGCE at Bangor University. Karen has received training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Child Protection, Food Safety, Health and Safety, Attachment Theory and Practice, Self Harm Awareness and Manual Handling.

**Tom Marshall** is a Residential Support Worker who has also joined the Afon Goch team in February 2009. Tom has spent many years working with young people in varying roles and environments, the focus being on personal development through outdoor education. Tom holds a degree in Outdoor and Science Education and a diploma of higher education in mental health nursing, and the mountain leader summer award. In addition Tom spent five years in the French Alps working as a maintenance and buildings manager for a chalet company, two years in retail, and a year as a landscape gardener.



Tom enjoys participating in the majority of adventurous activities, but most of his spare time is spent exploring the underground archaeology of the local mines. Tom has received training in attachment theory and practice, self harm awareness and intervention, the aware culture and child protection.



**Mark Revell** is a Residential Support Worker who has also joined the Afon Goch team in February 2009. Mark has worked with children for the past 11 years



and has NVQ Level 3 in Caring for Children and Young People. Mark has a good sense of humour and enjoys his hobby of diving which he has done for the past 16 years and has gained a P.A.D.I. Dive Master qualification.

Mark has received training in attachment theory and practice, self harm awareness and intervention, the aware culture and child protection.

### **Additional professional resources**

**Robin Barker** is responsible for the clinical oversight of the application of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention within Afon Goch and is our Regulation 32 visitor. Robin Barker is a qualified social worker holding the ICIRC and CSS certificates. He is the Manager of a long-term therapeutic children's home in Derbyshire and has also managed a children's home offering short term Crisis Intervention. He has set up three children's homes. He has undergone further training in management, direct work with children and families, and other relevant areas. He has over twenty years experience in a variety of schools, children's homes, CHE's, fieldwork, crisis intervention and youth training and activities. He is a qualified Therapeutic Crisis Intervention trainer, accredited with the University of Cornell. He leads Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training for various children's homes. By invitation, he has trained Social Services in-house staff. He has additional training in supporting staff following crisis interventions. He is an accredited safeguarding and child protection trainer.

Robin Barker holds the Rescue and Emergency Care HSE First Aid certificate. He is qualified to teach and coach a number of sports and activities. He has extensive experience of outward-bound activities with children and has taught water sports in the UK and the Caribbean. He holds the RYA/DOT Yacht-Master Offshore, Powerboat Level 2 and the VHF operator's licence. He has worked as a professional yacht delivery and charter skipper and has successfully completed many ocean passages under sail in small yachts. He is a former county captain of fencing. Robin Barker is Member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists. He is currently studying for a masters degree in therapeutic child care.

Robin Barker is a member of the Social Care Association and works to their code of practice. Robin Barker receives clinical supervision from Les Sloan, Senior Lecturer in Psychotherapy at the University of Derby.

**Dave Brown** is Afon Goch's Technical Advisor for the Adventure Activities licence. Dave holds a (PGCE) specializing in Physical Education. Other qualifications include Level 3 Canoe coach, Level 5 Kayak Coach, Grade 4 Surf and Sea Kayak, White Water Safety Provider, Canoe Safety Test Examiner, Mountaineering Instructor Award, summer and Winter ML, International ML Registered SPA, Triathlon coach Level2, Cave leader, Beach life guard, Powerboat level2, Qualified Fitness Instructor, Fitness counselling NVQ 3, Hockey leaders, Rugby and Basketball coach, to name a few! Medic First Aid and Dave has worked with children with emotional difficulties.

**Tros Gynnal** is a Children's Right Service providing a visiting advocacy service to children placed at Afon Goch.

## **6. The arrangements for the supervision, training and development of employees**

All staff are recruited, trained and supervised as required and advised by the National Minimum Standards and regulations. All staff receive induction training in excess of Caring for Wales Induction Standards. Staff receive training in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention, Understanding Attachment Disorders, basic food hygiene, basic health and safety, child protection, childcare law, fire procedures, first aid and adventure activities. Afon Goch is committed to ongoing staff development, which is achieved by individual training needs analysis, structured professional supervision and by team building and education and individual courses including professional qualifying courses. Each member of staff has their own Personal Development Plan.

There is a regularly updated Training Programme for the home.

We are fully committed to staff development and training, and aim to have all our staff on training courses during the year. These include induction training, regular professional training in: fire prevention and control, basic food hygiene, basic health and safety, First Aid, dealing with violence and aggression, Child Protection, the Children Act 1989 and other relevant legislation, guidance and reports, assessment and therapeutic skills and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training. Staff are also involved in outdoor education skills training and qualifications to national governing body standards.

We are committed to the NVQ programme. Following successful completion of our induction programme all core staff are offered NVQ Level 3 training. All staff at senior level are offered NVQ Level 4.

There are dedicated team building days away from the home; e.g. white water rafting and gorge walking.



Staff are supported through supervision, briefing and debriefing, team meetings, annual appraisal and through individual attention to their training and development needs. Staff receive particular support through induction and during their trial period. Each member of staff has a designated supervisor.

Keyworkers receive additional clinical support from our Art Psychotherapist. All staff can at their option approach the Psychotherapist for individual confidential support on life issues. Our Art Therapist receives external clinical supervision from Les Sloan, Senior Lecturer in Psychotherapy at the University of Derby.

We aim to employ staff with a good aptitude for the type of care we provide, develop their skills, support them with effective management, engage them in decision-making, and recognise their contribution to our success.

## **7. The organisational structure of the home**

### **Responsible Individual**

Louise Irving and Bob Pigeon carry on the business of the children's home through their company Afon Goch Children's Homes Ltd.

Louise is Managing Director and Company Secretary and has delegated responsibilities for Afon Goch. She reports regularly to the company through general meetings, and informal contact with Bob Pigeon, who is a Director of the company.

The company has nominated Louise Irving as the Responsible Individual for Afon Goch, (effective date July 2004) and Louise has been approved as a 'fit person' by CSSIW.

Louise's responsibilities include ensuring that Afon Goch is adequately resourced (finances, staff, premises, equipment) and monitoring and reviewing the quality of care. Louise has direct line management responsibility for the Manager.

## **Managers**

Manager's Hayley Knowles and Lynsey Evans are directly employed by Afon Goch Children's Homes Ltd. Hayley is registered as manager with CSSIW whilst Lynsey is currently awaiting registration.

Hayley and Lynsey have direct responsibility for the day-to-day running of the home. They have line management responsibility for all staff employed at the home: a Lead Senior Residential Support Worker, A Senior Practitioner / Head Teacher, a team of fourteen Residential Support Workers (five of whom are at Senior level), an Art Psychotherapist, Two teachers and a Policy and Projects Adviser. Hayley and Lynsey also oversee the work of freelance consultants who may from time to time be engaged by Afon Goch.

## **Contingency arrangements**

The Lead Senior has authority to deputise for Hayley and Lynsey in their absence.

Contingency arrangements are in place for the sudden loss or incapacity of either the Responsible Individual and/or the Managers, which have been approved by the company at board level.

## **On call**

There is 24-hour access to designated senior staff to provide advice, assistance and support, and to come into the home if necessary.

## **Overview**

Managers Hayley Knowles and Lynsey Evans, Managing Director Louise Irving, Art Psychotherapist Pete Russell and Senior Residential Support Workers have specific responsibilities for supervising designated staff.

Hayley and Lynsey are responsible for designing and implementing the therapeutic programme for Afon Goch. This is discussed as appropriate at the monthly Team Meetings, the weekly Senior Management Meetings, and the weekly House Meetings (children participate in the House Meetings).

Lynsey Evans has specific responsibility for designing and implementing the outdoor education aspect of the programme. She liaises closely with Dave Brown, Technical Advisor. Lynsey holds regular meetings of all qualified

adventure activities staff, to ensure consistency in practice, compliance with procedures, and that the adventure activities programme for each individual child is consistent with their therapeutic programme, as outlined in their Placement Plan.

Art Psychotherapist Pete Russell has specific responsibility for ensuring that identified therapy needs of each child are met. This includes carrying out a comprehensive assessment of need, which is not dependant on the active co-operation of the child. Pete also liaises directly with other professionals who are directly involved in the therapy needs of the child; e.g. CAMHS, drug counsellors. Pete offers direct clinical supervision to the child's Keyworkers. (In addition to standard supervision arrangements.)

### **Keyworking**

Each child has two nominated Keyworkers; usually one of each gender, although this may be adapted according to the child's assessed needs. The Keyworkers receive clinical supervision with our Art Psychotherapist who provides guidance and direction for the child. It is the keyworkers that have responsibility for planning the therapeutic programme for their child and then reviewing the progress at the end of the week. The keyworkers also ensure that the day-to-day needs of the child (e.g. health appointments and contact arrangements) are met. The Keyworkers ensure that the child's Placement Plan and Risk Assessment are regularly updated and that changes/requirements are fully communicated to the team.

The Keyworkers develop the therapeutic programme for their child in consultation with Hayley, Lynsey and Pete Russell. Keyworker 'tasks' for a particular child are overseen by a designated Senior. (This is in addition to scheduled supervision for the worker concerned.)

Keyworking is seen as an integral part of Afon Goch's therapeutic programme, and Keyworkers are allocated time outside of usual shift patterns to fulfil their responsibilities.

### **Day to Day**

The Lead Senior is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the therapeutic programme. This is accomplished using set shift patterns following the days of the week. Of course there is flexibility to take account of the changing needs of the child (e.g. prolonged home contact, a court appearance, an expedition, a holiday) and also to offer 'family friendly' working arrangements to staff.

The daily pattern is as follows:

<b>Input/Process</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Monday</b>		



Input/Process	Outcomes	Comment
<b>Wednesday</b>		
Review progress with child  Outdoor education programme during the day	A quiet day  The team is reinforcing expectations for the week.  The child may need to be reminded of expectations.	This is a pivotal point of the week, where children are reminded whether they are on course with the programme, or need to make a special effort to get back on track.  At this point in the week, children can make up deficiencies before the all important weekend
<b>Thursday</b>		
<b>Handover 0800 – 0900</b>  Review progress with child  Art therapy offered for each child  Fortnightly therapeutic community meeting  Keyworker meetings (at least monthly) <b>Team meeting</b> In week four	This shift is factually reviewing the events of the past week, and making determinations about what Saturday activities will be available to the child.  Focusing on identifying and correcting cognitive distortions  Focusing on relationships in the home and living together as a group  The keyworkers meet for group supervision with the art Therapist  All team members are expected to attend	Our responses are predictable and consistent; depending on goals and outcomes pre-agreed with the child.  This can be challenging for children who ‘need’ to have intimate, and complete, direct control over all decisions involving them.  Clarity of expectations (including outcomes for the child.)  Information sharing; and sharing of expectations. Reinforcement of the consistent therapeutic team approach.

Input/Process	Outcomes	Comment
<b>Friday</b>		
Review week, and progress. Identify ‘rewards’ for previous week	The child has a plan for the weekend; directly connected to their	The child has short-term achievable goals and can see the direct causal link between behaviour and consequences.



<p>Detailed discussion with each individual child about how the week has gone</p> <p>Identify 'rewards' that the child has earned</p> <p>Suggestions for the following week.</p>	<p>individual behaviour the previous week.</p>	<p>A possible reward for good behaviour could be the opportunity to hire a DVD for the evening</p>
<p><b>Saturday</b></p>		
<p><b>Handover 0800 – 0900</b></p> <p>This is a 'chill out' day for children, they can have a lie-in in the morning (if they choose) and afternoon and evening will be spent in activities of their choice that they have earned the previous week.</p> <p>They begin 'earning points' for the coming week.</p>	<p>The child enjoys the rewards of their behaviour the previous week.</p> <p>The child has another opportunity for a 'fresh start'</p>	<p>There is a new staff team working with the child. The child learns that consequences (good and bad) are a direct result of their own actions; and not the result of an individual staff decision.</p> <p>There is a consistent therapeutic team approach.</p>

<b>Input/Process</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<p><b>Sunday</b></p>		
<p>Children can again have a lie-in in the morning if they choose.</p> <p>Children tidy their personal space by hoovering and changing bedding</p> <p>It is a relaxed day,</p>	<p>Children have had a relaxing weekend, have seen the direct rewards for them of working to a programme, and are receptive to discussion about the coming week.</p>	<p>Established and safe routines such as shared household chores and a shared Sunday dinner reinforce to the children that they are accepted as part of the group, whatever their behaviour the previous week.</p> <p>Discussion of the therapeutic programme is yet another</p>

<p>with an emphasis on the group. Children and staff work together on household matters. Children may go on family contact in the afternoon before returning to Afon Goch for a traditional Sunday dinner.</p> <p>Staff spend time with each individual child discussing and agreeing the child's goals for the coming week, and planning together the Therapeutic Programme for the coming week (which will be confirmed on Monday).</p>		<p>opportunity to show children that there is hope, they need not be limited by their past, and they can agree clear short term achievable goals for the next few days.</p>
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### Schedule of meetings

As with the staff rota we operate a four weekly schedule of regular meetings at Afon Goch. This is to increase the consistency and predictability of the week. Handovers remain on specific days of the week.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
0800 Handover 1000 Week four Senior meeting 1300 week four Keyworkers meeting 1800 House meeting	0800 Handover pm Social Worker visits	Pm LAC Reviews Or Social worker visits	0800 Handover 1100 KW meeting with Pete 1400-1700 Art therapy for each child 1700 Community meeting	YOT / Drugs visits 1000 Management meeting	0800 Handover	Chill out day. No meetings, appointments or visits except family

Each week the structure remains the same. A different keyworking team meet Pete each Thursday, so all keyworkers get clinical supervision from Pete on a

monthly basis. In week four on the Monday we have a keyworkers meeting with all keyworkers present and on the Thursday we have a team meeting.

## **8. The following details –**

**(a) The age-range, sex and numbers of children for whom it is intended that accommodation should be provided**

**(b) Whether it is intended to accommodate children who are disabled, have special needs or any other special characteristics**

**(c) The range of needs (other than those mentioned in sub-paragraph (b)) that the home is intended to meet**

Afon Goch accepts children of either gender, aged between ten and seventeen on admission. Placements automatically terminate on the day before the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Up to three children may be accommodated at any one time.

It is not intended to accommodate children who have been identified as having significant physical disabilities or severe learning disabilities.

We can accommodate children who have a temporary physical injury on admission (e.g. fractured limb) or who are experiencing withdrawal symptoms as a result of substance abuse.

Typically children are in crisis. In the majority of cases, the children could be described and assessed as suffering from emotional and behavioural difficulties. Many of the children may have a mild learning disability that may not have been identified as such under the statementing procedures of the



Education Act 1980 or problems with attachment.

The children do not have 'special characteristics' as such. One common feature is that they have all suffered difficult life experiences and may be troubled and disturbed; or exhibiting extremes of behaviour.

We believe that for some children residential care is the positive choice.

Some young people find families, either their own or an alternative foster family, difficult to cope with at a particular time. It may be easier to maintain and enhance family links from a residential base than from a foster placement. Children may have experienced damaging experiences and environments.

Placement at Afon Goch can help break links with delinquent networks whilst preserving, improving and maintaining valuable family ties. Where children are placed away from their home area we take particular care to ensure that they are safe and supported; and that they feel safe and supported.

Children and young people of any ethnic origin or religious persuasion may be admitted to the home.

## **9. The criteria used for admission to the home, including the home's policy and procedures for emergency admissions (if the home provides for emergency admissions)**

When considering the admission of a child or young person attention will be paid both to their needs and background and to those of the children already within the home to achieve a balanced and harmonious group. Children of any ethnic origin or religious persuasion may be admitted to the home.

Children may either be accommodated by a local authority under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or subject to a care order. Remands may be considered.

- **The placing authority must be supportive of the objectives of Afon Goch, including involvement in adventure activities**
- **The placing authority must be supportive of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention.**
- **The child (and parents where appropriate) must be consulted about the placement.**

There is sometimes short notice of admissions. However short the notice, admissions will be handled in a calm and structured way.

Children placed at Afon Goch are often in a period of upset or disturbance, such as the breakdown of their current placement. Admissions may be at short notice, or emergency admissions, but they will always be planned. Emergency Referrals will not be accepted unless there is a suitable staff team, available for the child. This includes ensuring that all necessary equipment, vehicles, clothing, are ready so that the child will not experience unnecessary distress or disruption. In most situations, including emergency admissions, the child will be encouraged to visit Afon Goch, will be given written and verbal information about Afon Goch, and will be encouraged to discuss their feelings about the admission. It is the expectation of Afon Goch that the placing authority will actively support the child through this stage.

Children will always be given written and verbal information about Afon Goch at the earliest opportunity. This will include rules and expectations; that they may be held (restrained) for their own safety; about how to complain.

The Admissions Form will be faxed, emailed or personally delivered to the placing authority who will be required to return this to Afon Goch prior to placement with as much information as possible completed.

Where the child is admitted less than 24 hours after initial referral, their situation will be reviewed as soon as possible and in any case within 72 hours of admission (including weekends and holidays) to ensure that the child has been appropriately placed. To facilitate that review, the placing authority will be required to provide all necessary information. This will include clear decisions and protocols on managing contact.

Staff have specific instructions on managing emergency referrals in a calming way. It is recognized that pertinent information may have to be patiently repeated to the child as they may be non-receptive to engagement. The priority will be to ensure that the caring message gets through to the child. Children are encouraged to bring special possessions or photographs with them to personalise their room at Afon Goch for the duration of their stay.

Many of the children placed at Afon Goch are being placed out of their own area. In addition to our standard Admission Procedures, we also carry out an assessment to ensure that there is appropriate information sharing between agencies in the respective areas, and in particular children's health and education needs are met and they will feel safe and supported away from their home area. There is a focus on how contact with their home social worker and with their family and other significant people will be addressed. This follows the concerns raised in 'Safeguarding Children 2005'.

Where any child or sibling group is admitted, there will first be detailed prior consideration of how this will affect the dynamics of the group of children already in placement, and each individual child.

This will include issues such as keyworking; choice; attention to the individuality of each child; privacy; and the possibility of bullying.

We only accept referrals where we consider that placement at Afon Goch will make a positive contribution to that child and his/her future life. We always consider how the placement of a particular child would affect the dynamics of the group of children in placement. We consider each child, and their particular needs and vulnerabilities. We consider the group interests and the interests of each individual child.

Care at Afon Goch is very child focused; with an emphasis on individual direct work with the child through keyworking. There are detailed weekly reports for each child, and regular reviews of Placement Plans and risk assessments. The children are discussed individually at the daily handovers, and during the monthly team meetings. There is detailed and considered debriefing after any incidents. All staff receive regular structured, professional supervision. All this goes to ensure that at Afon Goch we never lose sight of the needs of the individual child.

There will be times when children need time away from the group, and benefit from additional attention from staff, over and above their regular keyworking sessions. Children may spend time away from Afon Goch, in small groups or on their own with staff, for holidays, expeditions etc. (Usually 2:1 staff/child ratio.)

**10. If the home provides or is intended to provide accommodation for more than six children, a description of the positive outcomes intended for children in a home of such a size, and a description of the home's strategy for counteracting any adverse effects arising from its size for the children accommodated in the home**

It is not intended that Afon Goch will provide accommodation for more than three children.

**11. A description of the home's ethos and philosophy and the theoretical or therapeutic basis for the care provided**

Children First (Wales, Quality Protects in England), Therapeutic Crisis Intervention and understanding the needs of children by utilising theoretical frameworks of Social Work practice, underpins the therapeutic ethos and philosophy of Afon Goch. All our services are needs led and not resource led, therefore providing the children with the best possible service and assessments.

At Afon Goch our philosophy is something that is practiced throughout the organisation. Therefore, we believe in the following principles:

**Children are worked with in an open, honest, caring, warm and empowering manner**

**That all children receive an anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory, equal and respectful service**

**Children have a right to have, at least, their basic physical, social, emotional, cultural, linguistic developmental milestones met**

**Children receive maximum life chance benefits from educational opportunities, health care and social care, in a safe, warm, nurturing, consistent environment**

**Children are protected from emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect whilst being Looked After at Afon Goch**

**That crisis is an opportunity for growth**

**That the team are effective role models**

**To provide opportunities for attachment with staff whilst receiving safe, effective care**

**To provide a forum that enables children to make decisions about their lives and to take responsibility for their actions**

**To teach better, more constructive, effective ways of coping with stress or painful feelings**

**To provide an environment that encourages staff and children to voice their opinions and to make complaints in a supportive manner**

**That all children are listened to, heard and appropriate action taken**

**Children receive individualised programmes specifically designed to meet the needs of the individual**

**Children receive clear, consistent, boundaries and expectations**

**Focus on prevention rather than cure**

**To respect children's dignity**

The most valuable tool we, as a staff team can use in therapeutic interventions with children is ourselves. One of the basic contributions we make to the lives of the children in our care is the ability to relate to and be open, consistent, sensitive and caring. It is our actions and reactions that shape, influence and modify behaviour that enables the growth process of the children in our care. This issue is highlighted during times of crisis and upset.

It is essential that we are aware of, and possess an understanding of our own personal emotions, feelings and attitudes toward the young people in our care so as to work effectively and provide the best possible service. We must use our skills, knowledge, professional opinion and experience to teach children constructive methods of dealing with anger, frustration, rejection, hurt, pain and failure. It is also in line with our ethos to use therapeutic skills for the resolution of inner and interpersonal conflicts and to bring the child to a higher level of functioning following a crisis.

Additionally, theoretical frameworks such as child centred and direct work will be drawn upon. As will other social work models, psychology, sociology and social policy issues. Messages and outcomes from research contained in 'Lost in Care' and 'The Response To Lost in Care' are utilised.

### **Therapeutic Crisis Intervention**

The University of Cornell Therapeutic Crisis Intervention programme embodies a range of techniques and strategies drawn from several approaches – behavioural and interactional – which provides a framework for helping children through crisis, and teaching them better ways of coping.

### **Crisis as opportunity**

The key element of our ethos is that children may come to us in crisis, and we treat crisis as an opportunity to effect lasting, positive change.

**“During the period of upset of a crisis, a person is more susceptible to being influenced by others than at other times of relative psychological equilibrium...this is a matter of supreme importance: because by deploying**



helping services to deal with individuals in crisis, a small amount of effort leads to a maximum amount of lasting response.”

Gerald Caplan in “Prevention of Mental Disorders in Young People

Crisis is an opportunity for growth and we endeavour to make the most of that opportunity to help the children and young people develop better, more constructive, effective coping skills and strategies.

### **The caring environment**

We are striving for a psychologically ‘clean’ environment within which there is sufficient love and affection for children to grow. Children need to feel treated with care, and so need to have their bodily comforts met.

“With a sense of physical well-being a person becomes more receptive and is, in fact, eager for experiences beyond the immediate bodily demands”  
Henry Maier 1979

“The children must get plenty of love and affection whether they deserve it or not: they must be assured of the basic quota of happy, recreational experiences whether they seem to have it coming or not. In short, love and affection, as well as the granting of gratifying life situations, cannot be made the bargaining tools of educational or even therapeutic motivation, but must be kept tax free, as minimal parts of the youngster’s diet, irrespective of the problems of deservedness.”  
Fritz Redl 1952

“Youngsters need to find this evidence of the right to exist in difficult as well as good moments” Henry Maier 1979

At Afon Goch we are proactive on showing and reinforcing the caring message to children.

“No attempts at influencing behaviour pathology can be successful if, at the same time, every party of the environment is not kept scrupulously ‘clean’ from the point of view of psychological hygiene.”  
Fritz Redl 1951

### **Friendship with influence – the adult as role model**

The relationship between staff and child plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of our programme. There is a special quality in the relationship between the adult as educator and the troubled child. At all times staff must be seriously engaged in their efforts to help the child



explore and understand their experiences and feelings and then to move forward. At one level this involves breaking the momentum of the crisis cycle by presenting the child with alternative ways of reacting rather than allowing a pattern of maladaptive ways of interacting to proliferate. Our staff will not react to the child's destructive behaviours in the way that the child expects/fears/wants. Our practice is to encourage more mature strengths, to teach the child better ways of coping with difficult feelings and situations.

### **The Aware Culture and the Arena of Safety**

Afon Goch must be a safe, non-abusive environment for children and staff. We operate to an Aware Culture as described by Ray Wyre. All staff are supervised, supported and trained to ensure that they always operate within the Arena of Safety. There is no point to anything we do, if we cannot create and maintain a safe environment for children. This is the starting point for all our recruitment practices, and for all our operational practices, policies and procedures.

Staff at all levels are encouraged to voice their opinions or question anything they are not sure about, whether this is questioning a senior or the managing director. At Afon Goch we believe in continually improving the service we provide and the most effective method to do this is to continually review our policies and work practice. Good communication throughout the team is vital for providing a consistently high level of care to the children and maintaining good work practice.

### **Social Care Association and Care Council for Wales**

Afon Goch is a corporate member of the Social Care Association and is bound by the ethos and Code of Conduct of that organisation.

Afon Goch complies with and promotes the Code of Practice of the Care Council for Wales for employers of social care workers.

All staff are issued with their own copy of the Code of Practice for Social Care Workers and are required to comply with this.

All staff must register with the Care Council for Wales within six months of starting work at Afon Goch.

## **12. The arrangements made to protect and promote the health of the children accommodated in the home**

All staff are pro-active in promoting good parenting role models with regard to all aspects of the children's health. The staff are required to comply with the health care policy and health education. The team are trained to basic health and safety standards, First Aid, Child Protection and relevant legislation from the Children Act 1989.

Afon Goch is proactive in promoting the health needs of children, recognising that although some of the placements are intended to be short term, the intensive level of support offered to the child provides a good opportunity to reassess health needs, including those left unmet or inappropriately

addressed. It is also a good opportunity to demonstrate the caring message to the child. Where basic needs have been met with a caring and nurturing environment as standard; this is more conducive to progressing to addressing the underlying problems with the child.

It is recognised that many children or young people who enter residential care may not have had continuity of medical and dental care and it is our policy to ensure that health needs are assessed, monitored and met and that the children and young people understand the importance of health care and learn to take responsibility for their own health in an age appropriate way. We ensure that health, dental and eyesight checks and assessments are carried out in accordance with the regulations and that health needs are actively considered at every review. In addition to this we actively promote the health care of the individual in the same way that a caring parent would do.

Prior to admission we seek the authority of the parents or those with parental responsibility to consent to routine or minor medical or dental procedures. This includes the administration of first aid. In the case of major procedures parental consent is sought except in the case where delay would be dangerous. A young person over 16 years of age or of sufficient understanding may give consent to his or her own medical treatment.

An individual Health Plan is drawn up for each child; and this is regularly maintained and reviewed.

Parents or those with parental responsibility are routinely kept informed of their child's state of health, however in the case of an older child or young person who is of sufficient understanding any request for privacy is taken into consideration.

Local GPs, dentists and opticians are used, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual and his or her parent or those with parental responsibility. Close co-operation is sought and promoted between the parties.

Accurate and contemporaneous health records are kept for each child or young person. When a child or young person leaves Afon Goch we ensure that relevant health records are forwarded promptly.

Medications are securely stored and handled. In the case of young people over the age of 16 or of sufficient understanding they are in general entrusted with the retention and administration of their own medications where these are suitable for self-administration, this will be risk assessed. Administration of medication by staff is recorded; logging date, time, dosage, reason for use of medication and signed by the member of staff.

In compliance with the Children's Homes (Wales) Regulations 2007 each child is allocated a health link worker to ensure that all their health needs are met whilst at Afon Goch. For all three children the health link worker is manager Hayley Knowles.

### **13. The arrangements for the promotion of the education of the children accommodated in the home, including facilities for private study**

In caring for looked after children, it has become apparent that obtaining a suitable and continuous education is extremely difficult. It is our experience that children in care have experienced a sense of failure in their education often because of difficulties and disruptions earlier in their life, which has left them damaged and vulnerable. The education system may have failed them by exclusion, or the child's desire to opt out with no follow up or interest from the school. The experience of failure within the school environment can perpetuate a cycle of inadequacy, anxiety and an inability to cope.

Young people often suffer from low self esteem and may have under-achieved in the past. It is our goal to give every child as many opportunities and tools necessary to succeed in their life. Enjoyable learning opportunities and experiences tailored to the needs of the individual, provides children placed at Afon Goch with a standard of education that focuses on their ability to cope in such settings.

Within that context, Afon Goch has the facility to provide curriculum education and the educational needs of the child are an important aspect in considering their suitability for admission into our care. We are in the process of gaining registration as an independent school; we have two teachers who are able to provide one to one or group tuition depending on the needs of the child. Children attend mainstream schooling; college; or home tuition as arranged by the education services.

There are situations where the educational needs and/or abilities of a child coming to Afon Goch have not been fully assessed or have previously been afforded a lesser priority due to their life experiences. We aim to provide each individual child or young person with the particular help and encouragement he or she requires to achieve their full educational potential which will equip them as well as possible for adult life.

At Afon Goch we endeavour to offer a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum that meets specific interests, aptitudes and abilities of individual pupils and, in doing so, provides genuine access, for each pupil to develop skills for life, the 'World of Work' and the changing society in which we live. We aim to provide a safe, supportive and structured educational programme which raises their self-esteem and enables them to progress and achieve success.

The Curriculum Entitlement in KS3 and KS4 will consist of English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, Design Technology, Art,

Information Communication Technology (I.C.T.), Personal Social Education (including Citizenship), Physical Education and Religious Education.

In Years 8 and 9, in addition to the provision outlined above, pupils will be given an opportunity to study a second Modern Foreign Language selected from German and French or alternatively European Studies.

Children identified as having special education needs in one or more areas of the curriculum will be supported through the S.E.N. Code of Practice. Pupils with additional needs (Gifted and Talented) and pupils unable to access the curriculum in the normal manner will be provided with appropriate provision.

The aims we have for all children are:

- To develop enquiring minds
- To develop social independence and communication skills enabling full participation in society
- To develop self-respect, value others and the environment
- To achieve high standards in all respects of the curriculum
- To become independent, confident, lifelong learners
- To fulfil their potential in the adult world

The school is committed to:

- Setting high expectations for pupils' personal, social and academic progress
- Providing a broad, balance and relevant curriculum that prepares pupils for life beyond school
- Providing stimulating and challenging experiences which offer each child opportunities to enjoy success
- Providing a happy, caring environment in which our students feel secure
- The promotion of a positive ethos where each child's achievements are valued and celebrated
- Innovative teaching utilising a broad range of modern learning resources
- An effective partnership between school, parents and the community
- A learning experience that contributes to and is enriched by the life of the local, national and international community

The resources available at Afon Goch aim to have a high impact on each young person's development. We aim to maximise the use of our own resources and of those available locally. We also have access to the careers service as needed for both children and staff.

In compliance with the Children's Homes (Wales) Regulations 2007 each child is allocated an education link worker to ensure that all their education needs are met whilst at Afon Goch. For all three children the education link worker is manager Lynsey Evans.

## 14. The arrangements to promote the participation of children in hobbies and recreational, sporting and cultural activities

Afon Goch benefits from its rural, picturesque location in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park. As a licensed Adventure Activities Centre (AALA), participation in adventurous activities is an integral element of the programme. The participation in outdoor activities becomes an assessment tool for the staff and child and acts as a measure of performance and skill achievement. It forms part of our therapeutic ethos.



Afon Goch offers a wide range of adventurous activities including indoor and outdoor climbing, bouldering, mountaineering, kayaking, hill walking, gorge walking and coastering. These activities form part of the outdoor education programme. Each child has a personal logbook detailing their achievements in each discipline and receives a certificate when they complete a level. Each discipline has nine levels to work through and is used as a therapeutic tool for building self-esteem, teamwork, trust, confidence, and the ability to question, in particular, decisions about safety and how the child feels in a high risk situation.



Children also participate in other activities such as fishing, camping, swimming, ice-skating, rollerblading, quadding and go-karting. Children are encouraged to read and to participate in art, crafts, music, keep fit and sports. There are educational visits to places such as, museums, galleries, libraries and even the shops.



Children are also encouraged to develop interests and hobbies around the home. Afon Goch is situated in approx 1/3 acre of landscaped gardens set out to provide several distinct areas of interest. Gardening can be a source of great interest to children and adults alike and promotes a caring, nurturing outlook which may be both new and inspirational to the child. The opportunity to eat fresh fruit and vegetables, grown and maintained by the children, is an added benefit.

The children are also encouraged to develop interests in other home-based activities, properly supervised, such as baking, DIY and vehicle maintenance. In addition, there are games such as cards, Monopoly, videos, books, etc for the children to look at and play. Games are useful in assessing the child within a group setting and how s/he copes with rules in an informal setting.

Children are actively encouraged to partake in the choice and formulation of activities that take place. If a child has a great interest in a particular activity then there is the opportunity to attend a specialist venue for that activity. The children are supported and actively encouraged to partake in cultural and religious festivities.



Children are encouraged to read; to participate in art and crafts (including Art Therapy). Children are encouraged to explore their artistic potential through art and craft, music, poetry, song, creative writing, computer design.

There are educational visits to museums and galleries. Children are encouraged to join in community activities such as youth club or climbing club, army and navy cadets and other interest groups.

Risk assessments are carried out for high-risk activities, including activities outside the scope of the Adventure Activities licence. There are stringent procedures in place relating to safety arrangements for children and staff and to leaving details of whereabouts and reporting in after an activity.



## **15. The arrangements made for consultation with the children accommodated in the home about its operation**

An integral element underpinning Afon Goch's philosophy is that children are empowered by decision-making regarding 'their' lives. We believe that children should feel comfortable with making decisions regarding their future and that they are listened to and heard through the appropriate forums and throughout Afon Goch. The development of 'self', through assertiveness and taking responsibility for what happens to them is very important to the growth of the child. At Afon Goch our programmes are designed to bring a sense of order, with an element of predictability to the children; but this does not mean adherence to a rigid programme.

Children are respected and treated as individuals and given autonomy and choice within the boundaries of the programme. The child is encouraged to exercise choice in areas where they can and as the programme progresses the element of choice and control by the child grows. The child will always exercise choice over basic areas such as, food preferences (within basic healthy food choices). Children can





choose how they manage their life space, within the confines of creating and maintaining a clean and comfortable environment. Children are encouraged to personalise their life space.

The child has the opportunity to discuss his/her progress at the end of each day with a member of staff. The child's views are always recorded on their daily record. There may be occasions when the child does not agree with an issue that has been recorded about them, by discussion with staff the record may be changed, but this is always signed and dated by the staff and young person at the time of the entry.

The children are encouraged to exercise self-discipline and to take part in formulating and maintaining the house rules. They are also encouraged to formulate and partake in the production of their own Placement Plans and attend and meetings in respect of them, including Looked After Statutory Reviews.

Each child has access to an Independent Children's Advocate who visits at regular, planned intervals. The young person has the opportunity to seek independent advice and support regarding issues that directly affect them in their daily living. The Advocate can advise the child further if they feel their voices are not being heard.

In all cases it is the policy of Afon Goch that the child or young person will be invited to attend and participate in planning meetings and reviews, with outside support if requested. At each meeting the child or young person will be reminded of their right to invoke the formal representations procedures if they are unhappy or have concerns

There are weekly House meetings, and the children are encouraged to take part, and so contribute to the way the home is run.

Children are respected and treated as individuals and given autonomy and choice within the broad outline of the programme. The child is encouraged to exercise choice in areas where they can and, as the programme progresses, the element of choice and control by the child grows.

Children help choose the menus, within a range of healthy eating options.

Children can choose how they manage their life space, within the confines of creating and maintaining a clean and comfortable environment. Children are encouraged to personalise their own rooms.

The children are encouraged to exercise self-discipline and to take part in formulating and maintaining the house rules, including setting consequences for unacceptable behaviours.

Each child has two nominated key workers. The keyworkers responsibilities include ensuring that the views of the child are heard. Formal keyworking sessions are scheduled at least weekly.

Part of the Afon Goch programme is to bring a sense of order, with routines that ensure safety and satisfaction. Where children are in crisis an element of predictability may be calming. Children need to know what to expect. However this does not mean adherence to a rigid programme. Children are respected and treated as individuals and given autonomy and choice within the broad outline of the programme.

We never forget that Afon Goch is the children's home. The children have a say in décor. They have a say in who works with them. Applicants for posts are interviewed by children, as part of our day-long interview process. The children are listened to. It is instructive how often their preferences and decisions about potential staff coincide with our own.

An integral part of the Placement Plan is the consideration of whether Social Services should be requested to appoint an Independent Visitor for the child. Robin Barker, the Regulation 32 Visitor, spends time in private with the children on each visit.

## **16. Details of –**

### **a) The home's policy on behaviour management and the use of restraint**

### **b) The methods of control and discipline that may be used in the home and the circumstances in which, and by whom, they may be used**

Maintaining control and discipline is of the highest importance. Our aim is to provide a safe, happy, warm and caring therapeutic environment for the children living with us. That is only possible with understood structures in place.

All staff undertake a full training programme in Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI), and all personnel receive regular refresher courses and practice during Team meetings. An important part of this training programme is focused on the de-escalation of potentially violent incidents by talking to the child; restraint is used as a last resort. Our qualified Instructor, Robin Barker, provides TCI Training. The University of Cornell approves TCI.

Physical restraint is used only to increase safety if there is grave danger to people or property. All staff are trained in the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention model of early interventions, de-escalation techniques and restraint in order to maintain the safety and dignity of all involved. In the event of a physical restraint full support is given to all those involved in the incident and a full written report is made by each member of the team that is involved with the incident, copies are then forwarded to the child's social worker.

There are detailed recording requirements that must be followed in every case. There will always be a management overview of the effectiveness of the measures used following a restraint.

If staff become aware that a confrontation or conflict with a young person is likely or has occurred, then they are advised;

**To remain calm, and to be confident in their response to the young people.**

**To continue talking to the young person in a quiet calm voice.**

**In order to reduce the situation the staff member should be aware of their body language and take up a less threatening stance.**

**The member of staff should never turn their back on the young person.**

**They should allow the young people to reason for themselves and allow them to regain control.**

**If it is apparent that the young person is about to hit out, or injure someone or to put themselves at risk then they should be restrained using the maximum amount of caring and minimum amount of force before an injury is caused to another person. Restraint should only be used as a last resort.**

**When restraining a young person the method used at Afon Goch will protect the young person whilst making them feel secure and controlled.**

A restraint is about taking control of a situation and minimising risk to the young person and to others. Restraint is a method by which children can be empowered to regain self-control. All restraints should be undertaken within the techniques set out in the approved training.

After a restraint has taken place, a senior member of staff will speak to the child to ensure their well-being. The members of staff will complete a restraint report, this will be forwarded to the placing authority once the Manager has approved and signed it. A meeting will be held with all those involved in the incident, this meeting will be convened by the Manager who was not involved in the restraint. This meeting will be used to debrief all staff involved.

A pattern of restraints may become apparent with one particular young person. In such a case a method of intervention will be discussed in the Risk Assessment Plan meeting and a plan of appropriate intervention agreed.

The safety and well-being of the child is the prime consideration.

All restraints are followed by a Life Space Interview.

Good behaviour occurs in situations where a high quality of care exists with good relationships between children and staff. This includes creating a pleasant physical environment, providing structure, discipline and supervision and creating opportunities for experiential learning and success.

**“A house that smiles,**

**props that invite**

**and space that allows”**

**Fritz Redl et al.**

Reasonable and appropriate boundaries and expectations of conduct are set and adhered to. Good behaviour and achievements are given positive reinforcement. There are Points systems where children can work towards specific goals. Children can also earn additional pocket money.

At Afon Goch we recognise that moments of crisis provide both danger and opportunity. By appropriately managing the danger we create an opportunity for growth. We help the child through the crisis in a way that restores the status quo, balance or order and we teach the child better, more constructive, effective ways of dealing with stress or painful feelings.

We define crisis as a time when the child has run out of or has never learned effective, rational, constructive ways of coping with interpersonal problems and difficulties.

Unacceptable behaviours are discouraged. In most circumstances verbal disapproval or reprimands are sufficient to maintain good order. When consequences are used they must be appropriate, just and relevant. For example, if a young person deliberately breaks a window contributing towards the cost of repair and/or helping to replace the broken pane helps them to understand the consequences of their actions.

Other consequences could be the loss of privileges or treats, curtailment of leisure activities, additional chores or increased supervision. In all cases where consequences are used they are fully recorded in the log and approved by the senior member of staff on duty. The Manager frequently reviews the consequences log.

There are detailed recording requirements that must be followed whenever a consequence is imposed or there is a safety intervention involving physical restraint. There will always be a management overview of the effectiveness of the measure and whether alternative techniques could have been used. We also monitor overall use of interventions within the home, and regular guidance is given to staff in debriefings, in supervision, in team meetings, and in training.

## **POINTS SYSTEM**

At Afon Goch we attempt to promote positive behaviour by the use of a points system. This system has been developed so it can be adapted for each child placed in our care. The system awards a number of points for routine tasks throughout the day and may be adapted to discourage particular negative behaviour. The points, which the child gains, can be spent in a number of ways, i.e. special activity, a meal in a restaurant, a trip to the cinema, bowling,

go-carting, ice skating etc. The points are laid out in the individual points programme

## **17. The arrangements for child protection and to counter bullying**

Afon Goch is committed to promoting and prioritising the welfare, health and development and protection of harm of children placed in our care. Child Protection is central to our operational philosophy and ethos of the organisation and in all cases where child abuse is alleged or suspected, there is a duty to share all information. All child protection matters are initially dealt with by relevant inter-agencies under section 47 of the children Act 1989.

### **Child protection**

Afon Goch operates within the Arena of Safety and Aware Culture and rigorous recruitment procedures are followed. Staff are supervised, supported and monitored. One to one working is controlled. There are clear lines of communication should any staff have any misgivings about any aspects of practice.

There is provision for 'no fault' suspension of staff following the guidance in 'Choosing with Care'. There is also a whistleblowing policy stating lines of communication if any staff have misgivings concerning any aspect of practice. Failing to report abuse or suspicions of abuse amounts to gross misconduct under our staff disciplinary procedures.

All staff receive training in child protection procedures and whistleblowing upon induction. There is a copy of All Wales Child Protection Procedures within the home, and Afon Goch's own complementary Child Protection procedures are set out in the written guidance to Staff. Staff are advised of the importance of not asking what might be interpreted as leading questions to the child

Concerns about child protection issues are reported to the Manager or on-call Senior, if the Manager is not available. It is the manager's responsibility to make any referral to the Child Protection team. The child's Social Worker will also be informed.

### **Bullying**

Consequences are imposed for bullying. Children have participated in agreeing the appropriate consequence to be imposed. Staff promote respect for others, and this is included in the Children's Brochure. Staff are careful how individual incidents of peer aggression are handled to ensure that a strongly disapproving message of the behaviour is sent without alienating the 'victim' from his/her peers. Staff are aware of transitional times where bullying is more likely to happen, and are vigilant. Horseplay and play fighting are not tolerated.

## **Involving the children**

Children are encouraged to speak to management about staff. They have free access to their Social Worker and are encouraged to raise any concerns with the Regulation 32 Visitor. Risk assessments (both generally and for the particular child) specifically address the risk of abuse, or of bullying, and risk management plans are followed.

Children receive specific guidance on keeping themselves safe; including how to safeguard themselves from abuse and bullying, both inside and outside the home.

### **18. The procedure for dealing with any unauthorised absence of a child from the home**

There are detailed written procedures for dealing with children missing from the home. In addition to this there is a risk assessment for each individual child detailing the likelihood of the child attempting to abscond; and the risk of harm to the child and others should he/she go missing. The risk management strategy will include levels of supervision, and action to be taken should the child go missing.

In the event of a child or young person being absent from Afon Goch without authority an immediate record is made of the time and circumstances of the child's absence and the senior staff informed. It may be appropriate in some circumstances to allow time for them to return of their own volition. In most cases there will be an identified degree of risk to the child or others and accordingly efforts are made to return them as soon as possible. Depending on the circumstances, staff may look for the child themselves. In most cases they will also report the child to the police as a missing person. Social Services and (where appropriate) the child's parents are also informed. All the steps that are taken are recorded.

On the child's return all relevant parties are informed of this. Staff should ascertain full details from the child as to where they have been, with whom and why they were absent. Should the police wish to interview the person an "appropriate adult" must accompany them.

Every effort is made to settle the child back into the home. If consequences are appropriate they are applied and recorded and all paper work completed and reported as above.

The child is always offered an interview with an independent person, and consideration is given to whether the child needs medical attention.

Any allegation of abuse within the home would be referred under the child protection procedures.



## **19. Details of any means of surveillance of children which may be used in the home**

The children accommodated at Afon Goch require a high level of supervision for their own safety. This has to be balanced with their rights to privacy.

The child's Risk Assessment will contain all relevant details of risk in relation to the child, others and the environment. When children are admitted to our care they receive a programme of close supervision, remaining in eyesight of staff at all times, with the exception of privacy, time away and bed times.

The child may work toward gaining free time away from staff for set periods of time. However, the caring, nurturing, element will always remain.

During the night the house is alarmed for reasons of safety of the property and to ensure that the child is within the home and safe. If a child attempts to leave the property or enter another room during the night then an alarm will sound in the staff bedroom. This allows the child a higher degree of privacy, whilst ensuring that staff are alerted should the child attempt to abscond, possibly with another young person. This type of surveillance, although specifically designed for the rational of safety, will be included in the particular Child's Placement Plan. Mutual agreements with the placing authority would be sought prior to the commencement of the placement for the use of this type of surveillance measures.

In the early stages of placement the child is unlikely to be permitted free time alone outside of the home. If an area outside is chosen as a 'time away' place then, clear, consistent boundaries are always given to the child. The information is shared between all staff and recorded on the child's Placement Plan, which is reviewed at regular intervals and any necessary changes made. If the child leaves the designated chosen area this is treated as absconding and the procedures as stated above (Section 18) are deployed.

Following risk assessment, children may work to negotiated freetime.

The child is made aware of his/her parameters and this is communicated in an open and honest manner, ensuring that s/he understands the expectations.

We recognise that children are entitled to, and it is a basic human right for privacy to be respected, therefore, there is opportunity throughout the day for the child to have time to him/herself. The amount of time, and location is monitored and agreed by staff and child so as to ensure s/he is safe.

It is the aim of Afon Goch to teach children better, more effective ways of coping with a variety of situations by taking responsibility for ones own space, actions, environment and time. To achieve this philosophy the staff team work in partnership with the child to empower him/her into appropriate decision-making and taking responsibility for their actions by receiving a less restrictive programme. Therefore having the opportunity to reduce surveillance measures.

All risk assessments are formulated using information obtained from Social Services, the child, parents, carers, previous placement etc. The child's risk assessment document is reviewed and updated by the keyworker at regular intervals during placement. Continual and changing risk is a key factor to the child's independence of our services.

Sections of the premises (internal and external); outhouses and vehicles may be protected by security sensors and alarms. The intention is to deter intruders, or alert to their presence. Staff vehicles on the premises may also be protected by alarms. Fire doors (internal and external) may be fitted with alarms that sound when the door is opened; depending on the agreed requirements of the Fire Service.

Children's bedroom doors are fitted with sensors that can be adjusted to alert staff if the door is opened. The sensors will be activated if their use is indicated on the child's risk assessment and Placement Plan.

Reasons for use include:

- **A non-intrusive way of monitoring that no-one (staff or child) enters the child's bedroom at night (this removes the need for visual checks by staff which can be disturbing for the child and run counter to our aims to replicate a family environment)**
- **The child feels safer: staff will know if anyone enters their bedroom**
- **The child will not need to approach the staff sleep-in accommodation if they need assistance in the night. Staff will be alerted by the sensor, and will get dressed and come to the child.**
- **Staff will be alerted if a child tries to abscond**

All children are aware of the use and purpose of door sensors, and that, depending on their Placement Plan and that of the other children in placement, these may be in use.

## **20. The fire precautions and associated emergency procedures in the home**

Afon Goch has a comprehensive Health and Safety policy that pertains to all matters relating to the health and safety of all children and employees. The operations of health and safety are taken very seriously and are monitored by the designated Health and Safety Officer (Hayley Knowles) who provides an advisory service to such activities throughout the company. Additionally, all staff receives training in health and safety. It is every individual's responsibility to ensure that all health and safety is carried out at a personal level. All staff are made aware of the Health and Safety policy as part of their induction training.

Staff receive training in dealing with fire hazards. They are fully aware of the procedures to undertake as they are practiced on a regular basis. Afon Goch has a Fire Policy, which is contained in the staff guidance handbook. All new employees must make themselves aware of the policy as part of their induction programme. Afon Goch operates a no smoking policy for all staff, children and visitors.

Afon Goch carries out fire drills at least monthly. Staff are fully aware of the procedures, escape routes and meeting points. All fire fighting equipment is checked on a weekly basis and recorded in the Day Book.

Staff are fully trained in first aid to HSE standard and can administer basic emergency care. Any medical emergencies are dealt with in a calm manner so as not to raise the emotions of the child. Accident and Emergency will be utilised at the soonest. There is always a minimum of a quarter of a tank of fuel in each of the vehicles so as to prevent any delay in having to refuel. If the accident is of such severity, an ambulance will be called to the scene.

There are also daily checks of all premises to ensure that exits are clear and uncluttered, and that there is no obvious damage to fire extinguishers etc. It is the responsibility of the shift leader to ensure that staff and children know the procedures to be taken in the event of a fire.

All staff receive training on how and when to make an emergency call on induction. There is also a major incident procedure detailing action to be taken in emergency situations. This includes following a standard checklist.

Staff away from Afon Goch on expeditions or activities have to provide grid referenced locations and phone in at set times. There are set protocols for action where the contact call is not made

Afon Goch is fully equipped with modern fire prevention, detection and fighting equipment in accordance with the Fire Safety Risk Assessment, national guidelines, and professional advice. All fire extinguishers are checked annually by a qualified person. The emergency lighting system and all smoke detectors are checked every six months by a qualified person.

Fire poses a threat to life through fume, smoke, burning and structural collapse. The aim of the fire safety policy is to minimise the risk of fire by taking adequate fire precautions.

So far as is practicable, staff must ensure that children and young people on placement with Afon Goch and any visitors are aware of any aspects of the fire safety measures which affect them. Any concerns must be drawn to her / his attention immediately; it is equally important to take measures to contain the effects of fire once started.

## **21. The arrangements made for the children's religious instruction and observance**

Afon Goch is not affiliated to any religious group and welcomes admissions of children and young persons of any religious persuasion. Every effort is made to ensure that the children and young people may follow their religious observances. E.g. by attending church or temple or following dietary rules.

Enquiries are made into the religious and cultural backgrounds of the children or young people as part of the Admissions Procedure and this is recorded on the case record. The child's Placement Plan details arrangements for meeting the child's religious needs. The importance of facilitating continuity of religious observance in accordance with the wishes of the child or young person and their family is recognised; family and past carers are consulted as appropriate and may be involved in advising on dietary and clothing needs, attending religious services etc.

We have a firm policy of promoting tolerance for religious and cultural diversity and seek to ensure that children and young people are aware of and respectful of the individual's right to follow their own beliefs in their own way. The intention is to ensure that at all times the prevailing atmosphere within Afon Goch will positively support an individual in practising their religion without embarrassment.

The individual's needs for privacy will be respected and supported and special attention will be given to ensure that dietary and other particular needs are met.

It is recognised that the religious observances of an individual may be outside the direct experience of staff and our links with local groups. In such cases we will promote their rights to religious observance involving families, external individuals or organisations or an Independent Visitor as appropriate.

Enquiries are made into the religious and cultural backgrounds of the children or young people as part of the Admissions Procedure and this is recorded on the case record, this is then reviewed regularly. The importance of facilitating continuity of religious observance in accordance with the wishes of the child and their family is recognised; family and past carers are consulted as appropriate and may be involved in advising on dietary and clothing needs, attending religious services or festivals, etc.

All staff are expected and required to fully promote Afon Goch policy on equality and diversity of religious and cultural elements of daily living within the home and within society. It is recognised that resident children and their visitors may, through life experiences, harbour their own intolerance to others and may respond inappropriately. Such intolerance will always be addressed sensitively and in an age appropriate manner.

Afon Goch is designed to provide care for a limited number of children. It is recognised that on occasions the religious observances of an individual may be outside the direct experience of staff and links with local groups will be sought and utilised. In such cases we will promote their rights to religious observance involving families, external individuals or organisations or an independent visitor as appropriate.

## **22. The arrangements made for contact between any child accommodated in the home and his or her parents, relatives and friends**

Afon Goch has a significant role to play in making contact arrangements work; in assisting the Local Authority to come to informed decisions about contact; and in facilitating informal contact between the child and significant others.

Where children are placed outside their home area, there is specific focus on practical arrangements that need to be put in place to ensure that children maintain supportive contact with their social workers, with their families and friends; and with their home area.

Arrangements for contact, and any restrictions in contact, will be agreed with the Local Authority prior to admission. We will record details of contact visits in accordance with the regulations; these will form part of the case record and be available to the Local Authority. We will keep the Local Authority informed of our views on the contact arrangements.

Where restrictions on contact have been agreed (e.g. that it should be supervised) Afon Goch will provide the necessary staff and facilities. There are ample facilities within Afon Goch to make contact arrangements work, ranging from accommodating private contact within the child's own space to supervised contact. Parents, family and friends etc are welcome to share meals provided that this does not conflict with the contact arrangements or impede the smooth running of the home. Afon Goch aims to ensure that a welcoming and congenial setting is available for all visits.

There are facilities to monitor calls, but this only takes place with the knowledge of the child, the prior approval of Social Services and as part of the child's agreed Placement Plan. Each child can have ten minutes a day from the house phone to their family. Each week the child will receive a £5 phonecard for any extra calls they would like to make. This is in addition to their pocket money. In individual cases the telephone allowance can be increased in order to facilitate contact.

In addition to the telephone allowance; children have planned access to free use of the telephone. Children can always phone their Social Worker. Contact

with family members is particularly encouraged provided this is included in the child's placement plan.

We will facilitate arrangements for contact; including providing separate escort services where necessary.

Under no circumstances will refusal or restriction of agreed contact arrangements be used as a consequence.

Where a child or young person refuses contact we will discuss this with them and offer counselling but will not facilitate contact against their expressed wishes. In such cases referral will be made to the placing authority.

### **23. The arrangements for dealing with complaints of the children accommodated there**

Afon Goch recognises that some children in the care system are amongst the most vulnerable and powerless people in our society. Adults that are supposed to be appropriate role models may have oppressed discriminated and abused these children. Children may carry such experiences into adulthood and may have difficulty in confiding in or trusting any adult involved in their lives, let alone care staff. Many young people feel they are not heard or receive appropriate responses to issues they face as a child. For this reason alone we must ensure and provide appropriate, adequate and accessible channels for resolution and redress of any problems a child may have.

At Afon Goch we believe that it is the right of every individual to make representation or a complaint if they are unhappy regarding any aspect of his/her care. This right is applicable to any child, parent, Social Worker, other professionals or staff. There are no restrictions relating to the issues that constitute a complaint. All complaints are addressed and approached in a professional, serious, manner without delay. We are committed to ensuring that no child is discriminated, disadvantaged or subject to any consequences or service reduction as a result of making a complaint.

Afon Goch recognises the vulnerability of children and young people living away from home and how difficult it can be for them to make complaints, especially against adults caring for them. The atmosphere at Afon Goch is conducive to children and young people expressing their concerns and staff are committed to solving problems as they arise.

If the child is in agreement, comments and complaints can be made on their behalf; for instance by their independent visitor, through an advocacy service; or through their family.

Afon Goch has a full written complaints and representation procedure, which is shown and explained to every child on their admission; they are subsequently reminded of their right to complain.

In most cases the concerns of the individual can be resolved informally, without invoking formal procedures. Additionally children and young people are actively encouraged to seek outside support through their families,



referring social services department, the CSSIW, Regulation 32 Visitor or services such as 'Childline' if they have concerns that they wish to discuss.

There are child friendly comments and complaints forms. All staff have training on how to deal with a complaint, and who to report the complaint to. Staff are aware of the role of the CSSIW and the Regulation 32 visitor.

There are procedures in place for addressing complaints made about the Manager or the Managing Director.

A log is kept of all complaints made and is available for inspection by the CSSIW, the Regulation 32 Visitor and the children's social workers. The Manager reviews all complaints and records outcomes.

## **24. The arrangements for dealing with reviews of placement plans**

All children placed at Afon Goch are subject to regular Statutory Reviews under the Review of Children's Cases Regulations 1991. It is an expectation that the placing authority provide an Independent Reviewing Officer to chair the reviews. It is our expectation that the Reviews will take place within the child's own current life space. Afon Goch will be responsible for providing the appropriateness and location for the review meeting.

Staff from Afon Goch will attend and produce reports for Local Authority reviews as required. The child is encouraged and supported to attend their Statutory Reviews and has access to documentation prior to the meeting. Guidance is provided in completing the consultation document for the Review. The child may request his/her Advocate or other representation to be present. Such a request will always be complied with wherever possible.

The placing authority is required to provide full details on admission, including their own Care Plan, PEP and the last review decisions. A detailed risk assessment is carried out at, or as soon as possible after, placement. Where possible, the child is involved in this. This information is used to inform the detail of the Placement Plan.

The child's keyworker is responsible for ensuring that the Placement Plan is kept up to date, and reviewed as necessary. The views of the child are always taken into account, and the placing authority is consulted about any changes.

The initial Placement Plan is circulated and agreed within 7 days of admission. Thereafter it is updated as necessary.

In addition to Placement Plans, Afon Goch provides Review Reports for the child's statutory review. Afon Goch will also take a proactive stance in reminding Social Services where reviews are delayed. It is our expectation that reviews are held at a place convenient for the child; preferably within the child's own life space.

In all cases it is the policy of Afon Goch that the child or young person will be invited to attend and participate in planning meetings and reviews, with outside support if requested. At each meeting the child or young person will

be reminded of their right to invoke the formal representations procedures if they are unhappy or have concerns.

**25. The type of accommodation and sleeping arrangements provided (including details of any zones for particular types of children) and the circumstances in which children may share bedrooms**

Afon Goch is a stone-built former farmhouse located on the outskirts of the village of Deiniolen within the Snowdonia National Park. It is accessed down a quiet country lane, and surrounded by fields. There are attractive views across the Welsh mountains, and down to the harbour at Caernarfon.



There is easy access to the amenities of the local towns of Bangor and Caernarfon. The main road and rail networks are nearby.

Afon Goch has been sensitively converted to a children's home; and presents a warm, family environment.

There are five bedrooms; two of which are for staff sleeping in overnight. Each child has their own bedroom; and would never be expected to share. Children are encouraged to personalise their rooms; including choosing colour schemes. Children are encouraged to view the room as their own private space; and children are not permitted to enter each others' rooms.



There is ample space in each bedroom for private study; although children often prefer to the kitchen table or the main lounge. Children have TVs in their bedrooms, but usually prefer to watch the TV in the main lounge. The main lounge is a comfortable size for three children and staff and contains a TV and a selection of board games.

Children have the choice of a bath or shower. There is a separate shower room for staff. Children have been offered the option of basins in their own rooms; and this work is planned to be completed soon.



There is a large family kitchen, where children can help prepare food. Staff and children share meals at the large kitchen table; which is often the focal point of the home with children doing schoolwork, arts and crafts, playing games, or simply sitting chatting.

Staff will never share a bedroom or a tent (if out on camp or expedition) with a child. However, on occasion, when using bunkhouse or bothy accommodation, typically on outdoor pursuits, the child/ren and staff may share one sleeping room. Bothy accommodation is only used on a short-term basis, e.g. overnight if out in the hills and the weather suddenly changes for the worst.



During holidays from school or education children attend expeditions together in order to develop teamwork, group work, trust, confidence, learn how to share equipment, fear and anxieties in a controlled, safe, caring setting. The purpose of this is to develop appropriate peer relationships and to assess the individuals in a group setting and how they cope in such situations and in preparation for

moving on, which may be into a bigger group living environment. When children are in a group they will not share bedrooms or tents and the staffing ratios remain unchanged.

## 26. Details of any specific therapeutic techniques used in the home and the arrangements for their supervision

Therapeutic Crisis Interventions (TCI) is used with the children on a daily basis and is monitored by the Managers and Directors as they too have received such training.

When working with children in crisis it is important that we use our relationship, knowledge and professional judgement of certain situations. Using TCI methods provides staff with specific therapeutic models and interventions for dealing with potentially violent situations. Once a child is highly aroused, s/he is on the brink of an outburst. It is essential to use skills that are neither instinctual nor intuitive in order to de-escalate the issue. Choosing an approach in a potentially violent situation requires a rapid assessment and decision making as to contain or de-escalate the situation.

According to Bailey (1977) there are four elements of a potentially violent situation. Therefore, staff must make a hasty assessment of which element to remove in order to reduce the opportunity of an outburst or escalation of the situation.

The first element is a **trigger**. The trigger may be an object or a person that heightens stress levels. A person can trigger the violence by invading the young person's life space, threatening consequences or use of other verbal strategies adding to the child's emotional condition.

The second is a **target** for the violence. The target may be the child him/herself, another child or a member of staff. The target should be

removed. If the target is the member of staff present it may be an option to request a neutral worker to manage the situation.

The third is the potential of a **weapon**. The weapon may be an object or the young person's fist, teeth or feet. It is important to ensure that the environment is free from objects that may be used as a weapon. If there are objects that could be used as a weapon then they should be moved discreetly so as not to create further arousal of the child.

Finally there is **stress** or a highly aroused young person. In most situations (i.e. reactive aggression) we have a highly aroused young person who is interpreting events as threatening and perhaps attributing negative motives to the intent of others. In a few cases the young person may be trying to achieve a goal. These motives are not always clear cut and can change rapidly during the interaction.

Elimination of any of these elements will reduce the risk of violence.

Children in crisis can be greatly influenced by our response to them. In order to calm and reduce arousal levels staff must use de-escalation techniques in order to divert the crisis. The techniques that are taught in TCI are **I ASSIST**.

The first step is to **isolate** the situation, if at all possible. An audience will complicate the situation, increase the likelihood of non-compliance or resistance, to save the child 'losing face'. At this point staff should remove all others from the area.

**Active listening** should be used throughout the issue. The young person may not have the capacity to verbally express emotions of anxiety, anger, frustration, fear, etc. and may be communicating by acting out.

In crisis situations it is essential to **speak calmly, assertively and respectfully** at all times. Staying in control and being respectful helps to reduce stress. When making directive statements we must be mindful of being polite and respectful. Staff must avoid raising their voice or blaming the young person. Staff must be aware of their own personal space as it is sometimes difficult to remain calm when a child is verbally abusing us.

Before young people can respond to requests it is important to communicate that we understand how they are feeling, therefore, **statements of understanding precede requests**. Once we have communicated understanding we can then request their co-operation. This may be achieved by using apologising techniques, (i.e. I understand that you feel disappointed about your contact being cancelled and I am sorry about this as I know how much you were looking forward to it). Requests of the young person must be to do something positive to lower the level of arousal (i.e. sit down, talk about issues, go for a walk, a drive in the car, etc.)

**Invite young people to consider positive outcomes and behaviour.** By providing children with the opportunity to consider the results of their actions this may create an environment for appropriate decision making for positive

results and outcomes. When a child is angry we can de-escalate the situation by creating expectations and co-operation by presenting positive behaviours and outcomes. (i.e. ‘When you speak calmly, we can talk together’)

Giving the young person **space reduces the pressure** and stress of the situation. If it is safe to do so, we can remove ourselves from the young person’s sight for a short while. If this is not possible then we should not invade their personal space. The use of silence enables space and is effective at this time.

For young people to consider the current situation, think about their choices and comply with us, **time helps the young person respond to requests**. If the interaction is ceased the young person will not have anybody to argue with or continue resisting by maintaining opposition to us.

The first three principles of I ASSIST should be applied in all crisis situations and interactions (subject to safety considerations). The remaining four techniques are not necessarily sequential, nor do they all have to be used. Therefore, it is essential to assess the situation based upon sound, professional judgement and use options that are appropriate to the individual incident at any given time.

Additionally, Life Space Interviews (LSI) are carried out within the therapeutic milieu, which enables the young person to learn from life events. The LSI takes place within the child’s own life space or natural environment rather than in the formal, clinical, therapeutic setting. The purpose of the LSI is to teach responsibility for self control and ones own values.

The LSI is a therapeutic tool that utilises verbal strategies when intervening with young people. It uses young people’s reactions to difficult situations as a vehicle to change their behaviour and expand their understanding and insight into their own and others’ behaviour and feelings.

When an incident escalates into a crisis between an individual and/or others, it is an optimal time for learning. Young people become upset, angry, frustrated due to life events, which opens doors to our intervention. At this point we can intervene and provide the necessary tools and opportunities to enable the young person to:

**Understand that we can see the incident from their point of view**

**Enable them to see the connections between their feelings and behaviour**

**Encourage them to become responsible for their actions**

Once the young person is able to talk calmly and think things through, we have an opportunity to help them learn more effective coping skills. Following an outburst, the child may not have a clear understanding of what happened. S/he may be feeling angry at staff and that we are upset or disappointed with their behaviour. The child may be feeling exhausted, depressed, helpless,



hopeless or even suicidal. Therefore, it is essential, not only to teach, but to address all of these other needs within the LSI.

When conducting an LSI staff must be fully trained in order to gain the maximum benefit for the child. The goals of the LSI are to:

**Return the child back to baseline functioning.** It is important to allow him/her to vent and tell their story. This process provides an opportunity to rid themselves of unwanted 'baggage' regarding the issue (or any underlying issues) empowering the child to return to rational cognitions

The child may be confused regarding the actual and factual events of the outburst, therefore, providing an opportunity to clarify these. The LSI will provide the young person with a clearer picture of what happened and how things occurred. If there are any misconceptions regarding our intent or intervention, this can be discussed and shared

**Restoration and repair of the relationship** that exists between staff and child. Any trust that may have been lost during the incident can be rebuilt by making effective use of active listening

**Teach new coping skills.** We can provide the opportunity to empower the young person to explore alternative behaviours and more effective skills to deal with stressful, difficult feelings and situations

**Reintegrate the young person back into the programme.** The LSI provides staff with the skills to reintegrate the child into the current activity successfully with hope that s/he is able to cope in a positive, more effective manner

The LSI is an ongoing therapeutic approach and intervention, which is used to teach young people the necessary skills to deal with painful feelings and stressful situations.

### **Art Therapy**

Where this is part of the child's Placement Plan, Art Therapy will be arranged with Pete Russell, Art Therapist at Afon Goch. He employs a range of accredited techniques, depending on the needs and feelings of the child. The Art Therapy space offers a wide range of materials for the child to explore including 2D and 3D computer art workshops. All sessions are conducted in private, and material is kept confidential (except under established protocols where a child protection matter is concerned). Pete contributes to review reports and Placement Planning and assessments and treatment.

Pete Russell is registered with the Health Professions Council and is subject to supervision by Les Sloan, his psychoanalytical mentor at the University of Derby.

**Art therapy** is the use of art materials for self-expression and reflection in the presence of a trained art therapist. Children who are referred to an art therapist need not have previous experience or skill in art; the art therapist is not primarily concerned with making an aesthetic or diagnostic assessment of the child's image. The overall aim of its practitioners is to enable a child to

effect change and growth on a personal level through the use of art materials in a safe and facilitating environment.

Through creating art and talking about art and the process of art making with an art therapist, one can increase awareness of self, cope with symptoms, stress, and traumatic experiences, enhance cognitive abilities, and work towards change.

**The relationship** between the therapist and the child is of central importance, but art therapy differs from other psychological therapies in that it is a three way process between the child, the therapist and the image. Thus it offers the opportunity for expression and communication and can be particularly helpful to people who find it hard to express their thoughts and feelings verbally. As relationships reflect patterns of attachment behaviours the art therapist has the role of enabling the child to build and form new, positive, safe attachment figures (which is essential for any child and children in care with an insecure attachment style). The therapist is seen as an emotional secure base through which the child can safely explore his or her past attachment relationships.

**The therapist's approach** is an eclectic child-centred approach so the young person feels valued, seen and heard in a non-judgmental way. Much of the clinical thinking is from an attachment perspective working in a style that the child responds to best. Many children who are in the care system have experienced some level of trauma in their past; many arrive with symptoms of P.T.S.D. (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). In these cases we find it helpful, for the child, to use a cognitive behavioural approach to help them to manage and break old cycles of thinking (cognitive distortions) and work towards re-creating new ones.

This approach is very useful for young people who self-harm; self-harm is a big issue for many adolescents in care, this is something that often manifests itself when a child attempts to manage un-manageable feelings without the help of others. Our staff team are trained in understanding and treating self-harm and can access regular clinical supervision when they are working with children displaying these behaviours.

**Assessment:** A core psychological assessment is made over a period of three to six months and this informs clear direction in ways to meet the child's needs and enable correct treatment.

***John Bowlby (1977, 1980) described his attachment framework as “a way to account for the propensity of a person to form lasting affectional bonds to particular others, and to explain psychological disturbances, including anxiety, anger, depression and emotional detachment, that could result from disruptions such as separation, loss or threat of separation.”***

**Music Therapy** can be provided with the child and therapist using state of the art computer software in the Mac studio. Music therapy allows the child to explore their life story through adding vocals. The background music is created with the guidance of the therapist (who is a keen musician familiar with all the latest sounds). This intervention often leads to personal discovery and a growth spurt in the child's self-confidence. All the work is recorded and a personal CD is created to document the audio experience. The child can then reflect upon their journey in therapy via the music that they have created. Some children enjoy the process so much that it can lead them to talking up music or singing lessons, developing their skills and increasing self-esteem. This creative intervention is one in which the child feels less defensive and does not feel overwhelmed by the word 'therapy'.

Throughout the child's placement, photographs can be used to work with the child's life story and attachment figures. Photographs are also taken throughout the child's placement and a visual photographic journal is created for the child and given to the child once the child moves on. This enables positive reflection and safe, secure memories at Afon Goch. This can be seen as a valuable tool to help the child in the future, as it should reflect stability and safety in their life.

## **27. Details of the home's policy on anti-discriminatory practice as respects children and children's rights**

Afon Goch is committed to promoting anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive practice and children's rights. We aim to provide equal opportunities to both children and staff regardless of their race, ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, or sexual identity.

All staff are expected and required to fully promote Afon Goch's policy on equal acceptance of the diverse religious and cultural elements of daily living within the home and within society. It is recognised that resident children and their visitors may, through life experiences, harbour their own intolerance to others and may respond inappropriately. Such intolerance will always be addressed sensitively and in an age appropriate way. However it will be addressed; whatever the circumstances.

There is advice in the Children's Guide that Afon Goch requires respect and will not tolerate abuse or bad language. Children have been involved in setting consequences for discriminatory language or behaviour. Although we believe in freedom of expression it is critical that racist/sexist and otherwise discriminatory remarks are always addressed. Staff have to be good and appropriate role models, and would be failing in this if such behaviour went unchallenged.

We have a firm policy of promoting tolerance for religious and cultural diversity and seek to ensure that children are aware of and respectful of the individual's right to follow their own beliefs in their own way and supported and special

attention will be given to ensure that dietary and other particular needs are met.

We recognise that children from minority groups have particular needs relating to their racial origin, identity, cultural background, religious beliefs, language, diet and customs. Consideration of these needs, and in particular, how we can meet these needs of the child is our prime concern at the referral stage. If a child has a particular need that Afon Goch is not able to meet then we will only admit that child into our care if relevant advice and support from an outside agency can be assured. This might include appointing an Independent visitor for the child.

Planning for care in a therapeutic environment is essential that we meet the following particulars:

**To enhance the child's self-esteem and identity**

**To provide opportunities and forums to develop necessary strategies for dealing with racism and diversity**

**To give time for the development of the child's religious, cultural, linguistic, spiritual, emotional and psychological skills to enable the participation in their 'community'.**

**To address the impact of trauma or abuse they may have suffered and the impact this may have upon their cultural practices**

**To address the impact of how the care and education system affects the child in his/her development**

There are specific policies requiring staff to adhere to Afon Goch's policies on equal opportunities, valuing diversity, and anti-discriminatory practice.

**Revised March 2009 and approved by Responsible Individual**

