Pebbles

Care | Education | Therapy



Thistlebank

Statement of Purpose

March 2023

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Introduction

Thistlebank is part of Pebbles Care Ltd, a private provider specialising in residential child-care across Scotland and England for children and young people from age aged six. Thistlebank provides care for children with complex needs who are unable to remain at home, in line with The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Children Act 1989.

Thistlebank believes that all children and young people have potential for growth and change. At Pebbles Care we exist to nurture and develop, so that any child or young person welcomed into our care will have the opportunity to flourish. We are aware that our placements are temporary, and that residential child-care rarely offers a route to permanence via a court order. However, we welcome the opportunity to be part of a child's journey for however long or short it may be.

Pebbles Care Ltd is the name of the parent organisation for which Radical Services Ltd and Partners in Care are subsidiaries.

Enhanced Care

Our care is enhanced through an understanding, from the outset, of the needs of those children and young people who come to live with us. Staff are trained to look beyond behaviours to identify the unmet need that lies behind it. The detail outlined in every individual's formulation helps us make better sense of how we can best care for a child and by focussing on human connection, nurture, and warmth we hope to create trust and safety through therapeutic parenting.

We know that there are no magical solutions for those who are unable to live at home. Therefore, we never underestimate the importance of human connection, ensuring that children and young people are being listened to and included, and are feeling a sense of nurture and acceptance. In an environment that is calm and embracing this 'enhanced care' is the conduit for change.

We also work closely with the psychology department to seek their advice, guidance, and involvement. Underpinning this approach are close working relationships with social workers and other partner agencies.

Description of Thistlebank

Thistlebank is registered with The Care Inspectorate and offers accommodation for two young people in a semi-rural location which is close to local amenities and has stunning views over the local town.

Thistlebank is a three bedroomed detached bungalow comprising of four bedrooms, two of which are dedicated bedrooms for children or young people. The third bedroom is a carers bedroom and the fourth is used as an office which also doubles as a bedroom for carers. The layout of the home has been designed to provide a healthy balance between safety, security, and privacy.

Young People residing within Thistlebank have the luxury of two lounges which allows the comfort of having their own space to relax, play games, watch TV, spend time with staff, family and friends without disrupting the other young person's routines or plans. Thistlebank has a large kitchen leading on to a conservatory that houses a large dining table. The young people and staff use this area to enjoy nutritional home cooked meal as a family unit. Thistlebank has bathroom with shower cubicle shared between two young people. Staff have separate bathroom and shower facilities.

The home is situated in a semi-rural location with easy access to a small town which offers various activities and clubs such as a swimming pool, gyms, Rugby and Football clubs, Youth Projects and clubs, angling clubs and lots of nature walks and parks.

At Thistlebank we take pride in the way we care and create a home which is nurturing, therapeutic and homely where young people and staff build positive and trusting relationships by showing interest in the young people's hobbies, using the outdoor space and local countryside. We allow young people to express themselves in a safe and therapeutic environment by having lots of fun with a range of therapeutic activities such as baking/cooking, learning musical instruments, arts and crafts, outdoor play/ learning and enabling young people to become involved within the local community due to the positive links we have with various clubs and employers.






Leadership & Management

Registered Provider

Pebbles Care Ltd
(Incorporating Radical Services and Partners in Care)
Sovereign House, Crossgates Road,
Halbeath, Dunfermline KY11 7EG
Tel: **0330 170 0111**
www.pebblescare.com

Thistlebank is registered with the Care Inspectorate at:
CS2007155419

Thistlebank is registered with the Care Inspectorate at:
Care Inspectorate, Compass House,
11 Riverside Drive, Dundee DD1 4NY
Tel: **0345 6009257**

The Registered Manager at Thistlebank:
Eileen Robson
Email: **eileen.robson@pebblescare.com**
Tel: **07557 261 415**

The Senior Area Manager at Thistlebank:
Annette Steedman
Annette Steedman is the Area Manager for Thistlebank. Annette Steedman is the Area Manager for Murraythwaite. Annette is a Qualified Social Worker and has over 20 years' experience managing Residential and Fostering Services for Children. Annette has worked as a Children and Families social worker and has also managed Through care and Aftercare and Mother and Baby services. Annette is passionate about ensuring children have the best outcomes and has responsibility for the external management of the service and direct line management for the Registered Manager.

Email: **annette.steadman@pebblescare.com**
Tel: **07747 707138**

The manager of the home possesses the HNC in Social Care, SVQ Level 4, A2 Assessors Award, and SVQ 4 In Leadership and Management. She has a total of twenty-six years' experience working in social care, 17 years of which have been in residential child care.

Each team member is trained in many areas as part of their role including:

- **Safeguarding**
- **Emergency First Aid at Work**
- **CSE/CCE**
- **Self-harm awareness**
- **Team Teach – De-escalation and Physical Intervention**
- **Health and hygiene**
- **Medication**
- **Infection Control**
- **Drug and Alcohol**
- **Fire Warden**
- **GDPR**

Training

Training will be sought in specific areas where it is deemed that this would benefit the young people placed at Thistlebank, such as autism awareness etc.

Care Team at Thistlebank

Care Team Structure

1x **Registered Manager**
1x **Deputy Manager**
8x **Residential Childcare Workers**

The full list of our team members, qualifications and experiences are on a separate Appendix, that can be shared with appropriate parties on request.

Performance Management

Performance management is achieved through supervision, an annual appraisal, and a six-monthly appraisal review. This ensures a minimum of ten face to face meetings each year between the line manager and employee.

Supervision at Thistlebank provides a safe space and regular contact between the manager and an employee. It is a supportive process of reflection and bi-directional communication allowing for critical reflection pertaining to practice issues; personal and professional development; role expectations, well-being, and training needs.

Supervision topics are agreed in advance between the supervisor and supervisee and supervision records are completed and agreed by the supervisee before they are safely stored.

Aims

Thistlebank provides a familiar environment where children and young people who cannot remain at home can be cared for in a way that allows them to experience a strong sense of nurture matched by clear boundaries and routines.

The children and young people at Thistlebank will be cared for by a minimum of two carers offering twenty-four hour wrap around care based upon the assessed need of each individual.

Adverse childhood experiences are likely to have informed the beliefs and attitudes of these children and young people. These can often result in maladaptive coping strategies which manifest in harmful behaviours toward self and others. Thistlebank aims to support young people to make sense of these past experiences and how they influence current behaviours, whilst ensuring a positive nurturing environment where children can feel safe, have fun and experience attuned and positive relationships.

This serves as a pretext for growth and development and allows individuals to develop and flourish. The Thistlebank team respect equality and diversity and ensure that as part of the care planning process, the individual needs of each child or young person are supported.

Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE) reflect the therapeutic parenting approach to care we offer.

Through attuned parenting and the development of trust we work to create safety and repair past damage. Creating safety is foundational if we are to support children and young people to affect positive change in line with G.I.R.F.E.C, SHANARRI Indicators of well-being.

PACE

Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE) reflect the therapeutic parenting approach to care we offer.

Objectives

Our therapeutic practice is based upon a belief that those we care for should experience a sense of belonging underpinned by an approach we refer to as 'Therapeutic Parenting'.

In our journey toward providing the following, we aspire to create a healthy healing environment through which we seek to fulfil the Health and Social Care Principles and Standards:

- **Promoting a belief in the potential for each person to recover from past harm.**
- **Developing meaningful, trusting human relationships as a conduit for development and personal growth.**
- **Creating high levels of nurture combined with structure and predictable patterns of care.**
- **Ensuring a warm, clean, and homely environment in which children and young people can feel a sense of safety and belonging.**
- **Providing opportunities for fun through which to create positive childhood memories. Promoting self-confidence and removing the sense of shame many young people feel by enabling them to make sense of past experiences.**
- **Actively listening and valuing what they have to say.**
- **Showing compassion, respect, and love.**
- **Responding to the underlying need beneath an individual's behaviour, which they need to process and make sense of before they can affect change.**
- **Caring at the developmental or cognitive age of the child and not their chronological age.**
- **Accepting presenting behaviour as reflection of learned behaviours rooted in previously learned maladaptive coping strategies.**

Meeting the Health and Social Care Principles and Standards:

My Support, My Life

Standard 1:

I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.

The home environment at Thistlebank is clean, tidy, well-equipped, and well decorated. Carers are attentive to the sensory needs of those who live there and aim to create a therapeutic environment in terms of how the home feels, smells and looks. Creating a home that fosters a sense of belonging is a priority. Children and young people are actively engaged in choosing colour schemes and designs for the home and are also encouraged to be involved in decoration and choosing soft furnishing for their own room. Thistlebank has a spacious garden which is used for may fun activities including sports and games, and social events. The home's garden accommodates a vegetable plot, and our young people will be actively engaged to tend to this.

Each young person has their own room and space at Thistlebank. A maximum of two young people will share bathroom facilities. Within Thistlebank there is bathroom with a shower cubicle shared by two young people. Staff have a separate bathroom and shower room. Each room has a safe space for the safe storage of personal belongings. Young people also have a key to their own bedroom to ensure that their right to privacy is respected, except in cases where this compromises safety. In such situations this will be discussed with the young person and significant adults to explore a mutually agreeable way of ensuring access to a private space. There are also communal areas which are comfortable, visually attractive, and relaxing. At Thistlebank the kitchen and dining area is the hub of the home where carers and young people can work together at times to prepare meals.

We respect diversity and ensure that as part of the care planning process individual needs of each child or young person are supported in relation to their cultural identity, age, background, gender identity, sexual orientation and language or faith, and will draw upon local community and other groups to support these. The initial planning meeting will consider the views, wishes and feelings of those we care for. We acknowledge the unique strengths and needs of each child or young person whose opinions about present and future will always be sought. We monitor and review practice to ensure that it is respectful, child-centred, therapeutic, and compliant with the requirements of legislation and standards set by regulatory bodies.

Standard 1:

I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.

Thistlebank will offer a safe and nurturing environment where acceptance and empathy are practised, and empowerment and a sense of agency are promoted through relationships that are equal and reflect compassion and love. These relationships will always aim to ensure that the young person feels involved and has their needs met by seeking their views and agreement.

Thistlebank actively welcomes the involvement of family, friends and the wider network of support and encourages their involvement in activities within the home, and under the direction of the Social Worker, at planning and review meetings. Any decision making will reflect compassion and care and, is based upon what the child or young person needs and wants whilst considering bests interests.

Pebbles Care are committed to forming meaningful connections and congruent relationships where children and young people can feel safe.

. Active listening promotes opportunities for individuals to talk about deeply rooted pain and situations that have and are impacting on how they feel. Such dialogue along with any therapeutic work will be child-led as carers work sensitively to value such expressions of emotion.

We are dedicated to supporting children and young people to have positive and meaningful experiences as well as having opportunities to discover more about the things they are good at and enjoy. We will promote opportunities for living-learning experiences through a range of daily activities.

We are committed to contributing to the social, cultural, and economic capital of the community since we are reliant upon community resources to provide opportunities for our young people to participate in activities which evoke a sense of achievement and pleasure. Creating opportunities for creativity, activity, social engagement, and learning allows for personal growth, and a sense of achievement and pride. Thistlebank liaises with several groups, organisations, and activities within the home and the local community to engage young people and ensure their participation in things that they might enjoy doing. This may include:

- **The provision of safe outdoor activities linked to achievable awards**
- **Involvement in physical activity.**
- **Being part of community and voluntary activities, which involve taking care of the environment and caring for animals and nature.**
- **Raising awareness of the outdoors and environmental issues.**
- **Arts, crafts, cookery, poetry, music, discussion groups, animal care, and the performing arts**
- **Self-care and well-being including massage, mindfulness, beauty therapy.**

Standard 1:

I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.

The below examples are just some ways in which we can support children and young people to try new things and hopefully learn to feel better about themselves.







All children and young people have an entitlement to 25 hours of education per week. This may be at school full time, at either a mainstream or a special school which meets their complex needs, via structured learning at home as part of a personalised education package, or a combination of school learning, home learning and access to alternative provision. It could include work-based learning, college, or community activities.

Standard 1:

I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.

Registered Managers and staff in the home have a responsibility for ensuring children and young people in their care access the appropriate education for them, and advocate for them to achieve to their potential. To do this, they will be supported by the Head of Education, where necessary, and work in partnership with Social Work departments, local authority Virtual Schools for looked after children, SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) Teams in local authorities (England) and local authority ASN coordinators (Scotland), and other agencies where appropriate.

To maximise the impact of their support, registered managers will ensure they and their teams:

- **Consider educational needs early in the admissions process so a plan can be made to engage in education at the earliest appropriate time.**
- **At the start of the placement ascertain the educational needs of the young person and enrol them in an appropriate setting in partnership with their social worker informed and supported by the Virtual School for children who are cared for away from home (England) and the Social Worker.**
- **Contribute to the planning process and maintain plans for engagement in education. All young people should have a plan in place for their education provision.**
- **Support the young person with their education at home; whether supporting homework, facilitating home learning, or recognising skills development during everyday activities in the home.**
- **Support conflict resolution to the best of their ability to reach the most suitable outcome for young people regarding education provision. Seek the advice of the Head of Education where necessary or in the case of any doubt about the provision offered.**
- **Ensure young peoples' Additional Support Needs (ASN) are met in line with legislation proportional to the reasonable expectations of the duties of all parents. This is particularly important if the young person has an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) (young people from England) or Coordinated Support Plan (Scotland). This could mean the young person should attend a special school and/or have enhanced support. The EHCP is a legally binding document, reviewed annually, to ensure young people have their needs met. The meeting of needs detailed in any local authority plan should be supported and advocated for by the manager and their team. The SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator - also Head of Education)/ASN Coordinator will be consulted where there is any dubiety over the provision being offered and the level of need detailed in SEND/ASN plans (including EHCPs).**
- **Support full attendance at school (or other provision), employing appropriate strategies.**
- **Update stakeholders (Social Worker, Virtual School, SEND Team, ASN Coordinators) on progress in education as required. Usually this will be through multi-agency meetings such as LAAC (LAC/CLA) reviews, PEP meetings (for young people from English local authorities), TAC meetings, EHCP reviews, Person Centred Reviews, and other planning meetings. Pebbles Care's school will prepare reports on parental/professionals' views for these meetings and reviews as requested by the local authority.**

Standard 1:
I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.

- **Attend parents' evenings, school events, information meetings, etc. in line with school calendars to ensure effective monitoring of progress at school. Effectively administer communications with school to manage the educational experience of the young person.**
- **Where there is no education provision for a young person in our care, the Head of Education is to be notified immediately so steps can be taken to contact the local authority to devise a plan for inclusion in education.**
- **Where necessary we will creatively and innovatively provide educational experiences for young people at home to ensure the entitlement to 25 hours of education per week is met.**
- **Contribute to the '24-hour curriculum' by monitoring and recording skills development in the home.**
- **Manage educational workload and expectations (of the young people and school/provider) to safeguard the mental health of young people while ensuring they reach their potential related to their circumstances. Communicate effectively with education providers to ensure they are aware of any circumstances affecting educational progress.**
- **Maintain plans for engagement in education in partnership with stakeholders and update these as they progress over time.**

The children and young people at Thistlebank have access to psychological support from Pebbles Care's Psychology team whose work is informed by a professional code of ethical practice.

Each child or young person is consulted about their involvement, and their views are listened to and acted upon. The team support Thistlebank with the creation of a Therapeutic Formulation for each child, which is specific to their individual needs and risks.

We are working towards providing an assessment and Formulation which will inform both the Care Plan and Risk Management Plan for each young person. As a 'work in progress', this process will take time to embed. It will however allow us to ensure that a clear evidence base underpins our care planning and risk management practice. Since the assessment process relies heavily upon accurate and up to date information about the young person, the home and the local authority will jointly agree the date by which this document is to be completed. Through the application of therapeutic parenting approaches, we work together to build effective skills in relation to e.g., emotional regulation and social skills.

The role of the Psychology team is extensive in providing support to the homes to enable them to understand more fully those they care for and what they need.

Standard 1:
I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.

Other areas of involvement include the following:

- **Working with commissioning to support placement suitability and matching young people appropriately.**
- **Providing support to managers with assessment and formulation for children and young people within twelve to eighteen weeks of arrival.**
- **Delivery of 'Therapeutic Parenting' training to all services to ensure 24-hour therapeutic care for our young people.**
- **Initial support for teams through training if they are experiencing some new behaviours or if there is a diagnosis of which they are unfamiliar.**
- **Support to understand and implement intervention techniques to teams such as therapeutic activities for specific skills building.**
- **Psychological assessments for individuals who may require this. e.g., cognitive assessment, social and emotional developmental age assessment, or trauma assessment.**
- **Other interventions can include group work for young people or family work.**
- **Additional therapeutic work can also involve one to one therapy. This would be informed by a psychological assessment, which depends on the reason for referral and the evidence of what therapy would best meet the needs of the child or young person.**
- **Forensic psychological risk assessment where concerns exist regarding the high risk of harm to self or others.**

Psychological Support

Direct input to support care teams via consultations are also made available by request to help develop their understanding of need and improve practice skills. Advice and guidance are also offered to carers regarding specific issues of concern, such as a diagnosis or crisis. How to best maximise the use of therapeutic activities in such cases is also addressed.

Pebbles Care's psychology department consist of four staff:

Psychologist
The Psychologist holds Psychology Degree; MSc Forensic Psychology; MSc Applied Psychology with Children and Young People. Viva pending for Professional Doctorate in Forensic Psychology.

Two Assistant Psychologists
The Assistant Psychologists hold degrees in Psychology and are undertaking the MSc in Forensic Psychology. They work to provide support to care teams and engage in psycho-education activities with children and young people.

Assistant Psychologist
One Assistant Psychologist holds a degree in psychology and the MSc in Forensic Psychology and provides psychological therapy for young people in the St Helens and Leeds Area.

Weekly supervision is provided for all Assistant and Trainee Psychologists.

In addition to this, the whole psychology team receive monthly clinical group supervision from a qualified Consultant Clinical Psychologist. Weekly individual forensic supervision is also provided by a Consultant Forensic Psychologist for the Head of Psychology.

The psychology team adhere to the British Psychological Society (BPS) Code of Ethics and Conduct, and the Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) Standards of Proficiency (SOP) which ensure that they practice within their knowledge base, and skills and experience lawfully, safely, and effectively. This encompasses the processes of assessment, formulation, intervention, and evaluation, which is dependent upon the needs of each child. Sessions are recorded in line with the HCPC Standards of Proficiency, which evidence their processes and ensures professional accountability.

A 'Progress in Therapy' report can be provided to local authorities in cases where it has been requested. Notes of progress and therapeutic sessions are always recorded and will be shared, but only where there is specific need and reason to have access. Our work with children and young people is confidential as is the case with adults. Where information is to be shared, consent is always sought before any therapeutic engagement, including psychoeducation activities, so the child is aware of the information we both will and will not share.

Standard 2:

I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support.

We respect diversity and ensure that as part of the care planning process individual needs of each child or young person are supported in relation to their cultural identity, gender identity, language or faith needs, and will draw upon local community and other groups to achieve this.

Pebbles Care's Central Commissioning Team follow a robust process to ensure that any young person has consented to a cross-border placement and that we are legally compliant and have copies of:

- **The young person's Care Order**
- **Evidence from the court order that the young person can be placed in Scotland.**

Referrals

Please see Pebbles Care's Referrals and Admissions policy for more information.

The views of young people living at Thistlebank are sought in relation to their care experience during discussions with carers, via external visitors (including senior managers) to the home, at our schools, with members of the psychology team and during the inspection process.

We want our homes to be respondent to their views and seek to genuinely embrace these. Thistlebank also seek the views of its young people in relation to service improvement and encourages individuals to feel safe and empowered to share both complaints and compliments. This promotes a sense of citizenship and communicates the value and regard we have for them. In addition, we also seek the views of friends, family, and partner agencies to promote a partnered approach to ensuring best outcomes for those children and young people who live with us.

Thistlebank is committed to recognising and ensuring the rights of children and young people living at the service as defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Articles 2, 3, 6 and more specifically Article 12, as well The Children Act 1989. At Thistlebank we are committed to both encouraging and enabling children and young people to actively participate in the daily life of the home and decisions that affect them.

We want those we care for to feel engaged in any decision-making processes whether it be what they eat, the home décor, how they spend their time or activities within the home. Thistlebank facilitates time for monthly meetings for its young people to informally come together to share any views, wishes or feelings they may have in relation to their lived experience there.

Standard 2:

I am fully involved in all decisions about my care and support.

We encourage discussions to promote communication and encourage mediation skills to equip them for life in general. By empowering young people to have their views heard and responded to, we promote a sense of agency and citizenship. Pebbles Care encourages care teams to support its residents to make use of Barnardo's and its advocacy support. All young people are encouraged to access this to ensure that they have another level of support to ensure their voice is heard. Empowerment promotes opportunities for the growth of resilience, confidence, and competence, and ultimately allows a young person to develop a stronger sense of self and their place in the world.

Thistlebank understand the importance of a young person's wider network of support and the need to promote engagement with it.

We actively encourage the relationships with family and welcome their participation in the life of their child or family member. We encourage their involvement in significant events including celebrations.

Continuity of relationships is important, and Thistlebank aims to support these for those children and young people living with us. We encourage the development and strengthening of long-term relationships between family and friends. We seek to keep families involved regarding any changes, developments and care plan arrangements and encourage visits home to be with family wherever possible unless specified by the social worker that this would not be in the individual's best interest.

Standard 3:
I have confidence in the people who support and care for me.

Pebbles Care are committed to forming meaningful connections and congruent relationships where children and young people can feel safe to create a sense of belonging based upon what each child or young person needs.

We know that active listening promotes opportunities for individuals to talk about deeply rooted pain and situations that have and are impacting on how they feel. Such dialogue along with any therapeutic work will be child-led and carers work sensitively to value the emotions shared. Carers will offer empathic care which reflects the fact that they are attuned to the young person.

Their communication skills i.e., open questions, summarising, and reflection will reassure and promote the development of a trusting relationship.

Carers will actively respect the bi-directional communication as they seek to understand and build a trusting bond. This starts from the moment they arrive. Carers understand the importance of giving consistent messages based upon predictable patterns of care. We aim to form safe, compassionate, and respectful relationships with children and young people, and respect the continued relationships with carers that might ensue after the young person has left Thistlebank.

Pebbles Care wants to fulfil its responsibility as corporate parents to work with local authorities and other partner agencies to ensure that in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, we can be flexible in offering care up to the age of twenty-one where it is appropriate for a young person to ‘stay put’. We will actively engage advocacy workers to ensure that further support is available in ensuring that the views of those individuals are heard.

Pebbles Care recognises the importance of promoting and role modelling positive relationships.

Carers demonstrate these during their daily interactions with children, and one another. They promote healthy interaction through communication which is informed by active listening, curiosity, and empathy. Carers use reflection, summarising and the use of open questions to engage with children and young people and are also mindful of the significance of non-verbal communication skills and their importance in creating safety and building trust. Carers will always seek connection before having to address unhelpful behaviours and as part of a restorative approach will also apologise and seek to repair any relationship where the feel their responses have been unhelpful. Attuned therapeutic parenting leading to safe healthy relationships will create opportunities for warmth, affection, and love, underpinned by healthy and educative discussions about the meaning of these words.

Standard 3:
I have confidence in the people who support and care for me.

Many children and young people have experienced unhealthy attachments resulting in an inability to form relationships easily and a tendency to damage relationships with others. Thistlebank promotes a restorative approach to enable children to learn that relationships can be repaired and that endings do not need to be negative. This is one reason why we look to always celebrate placement endings wherever possible.

We believe that for young people to be confident in the adults caring for them, they should have an opinion about who we employ.

Therefore, we involve young people in the interviewing process with prospective carers and seek their views on suitability through feedback.

All carers are fully PVG checked and appointments are only confirmed once this is done and references have been validated, in line with principles of 'Safer Recruitment' training which all managers complete. On-going training post-induction ensures a culture of learning and development.

New employees all receive a comprehensive induction, followed by a programme of learning and development during the first six-month probationary period before commencing vocational qualifications as required by the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Training includes:

- **Safeguarding and Child Protection**
- **Health and Safety**
- **Emergency First Aid at Work**
- **Fire Safety**
- **Food Hygiene**
- **Crisis Aggression Limitation and Management (CALM) before they commence their role**

A modularised course in 'Therapeutic Parenting' is delivered across all of Pebbles Care's homes. Based upon key child-development theories, this training provides all carers with a theory and knowledge base in relation to childhood trauma and attachment disorder and the relational practice skills and therapeutic approaches needed to address this.

Performance management is achieved through supervision, an annual appraisal, and a six-monthly appraisal review. This ensures a minimum of ten face to face meetings each year between the line manager and employee in addition to the many informal discussions. Supervision for carers at Thistlebank provides a safe space and regular contact between the manager and an employee. It is a supportive process of reflection and bi-directional communication allowing for critical reflection pertaining to practice issues; personal and professional development; role expectations, well-being, and training needs. Supervision topics are agreed in advance between the supervisor and supervisee and supervision records are completed and agreed by the supervisee before they are safely stored.

Safeguarding

As part of an organisational approach to safeguarding, Pebbles Care have policies and procedures which offer guidance in relation to bullying and whistleblowing.

Bullying is taken seriously at Thistlebank. Carer teams receive training in how to address bullying and an educative approach provides a pro-active way for Thistlebank to address issues of bullying. It is discussed within the home and clear message are communicated as part of the daily life of the home.

Mediation approaches promote empathy and is one of the main ways we address bullying, by promoting the non-violent resolution of conflict. All policies and procedures are now stored via the intranet and are centrally accessible. The company's policy on Whistleblowing is made known to all employees who sign to confirm that they have read and understand its content.

We are committed to ensuring that where any matter occurs that compromises the safety of children, young people, and carers, that appropriate action is taken to ensure a prompt response to re-establish safety. 'Safe-Call', an external helpline for staff wishing to raise concerns via whistleblowing, is commissioned to ensure greater transparency by creating an external conduit for raising issues relating to poor practice.

Thistlebank understands its responsibility to keep children and young people as safe as possible. Whilst doing this they are also mindful of the need to ensure that the environment feels homely and can help foster a sense of belonging for each young person.

Thistlebank has door alarms on all bedrooms and external doors. These alarms alert carers when the doors are opened. They remain inactive and any decision about the activation of door alarms are always made in conjunction with the social worker and other professional agencies, based upon the management of risk. Any decision to activate these is always explored in the context of the individual child or young person's need for privacy and independence. Local authority permission would always be sought since the use of surveillance techniques would only be used in circumstances where clearly identified risk would be more safely managed by this approach.

Window restrictors

Window restrictors are fitted onto all bedroom windows where a risk deems it necessary as a means by which to keep young people safe by preventing them from leaving the premises unnoticed.

This is also implemented by agreement with the placing local authority.

Child Protection

Child Protection training is introduced as part of the induction and is further embedded during the probationary period and via enhanced training. Child Protection involves protecting a child from abuse or neglect. Neither need to have taken place since it is sufficient for an assessment of risk to identify a likelihood or risk of harm from abuse or neglect (National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014).

Thistlebank ensures that a child-centred approach is taken in relation to child protection, in line with the principles of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and National Guidance on Child Protection (Scotland) 2014 and its forthcoming revision. Carers understand the importance of listening to what each child has to say and taking their views seriously. The effective sharing of information is crucial in identifying and responding promptly to keep children safe.

Thistlebank works closely with: Police; Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) or Area Child Protection Committees (Scotland); Social Worker; Emergency Duty Team (EDT) to raise a child protection concern. Child Protection Plans will highlight risk and the ways in which it can be best managed, and Thistlebank's own risk assessment and risk management plans will address the measures taken to keep the child safe. These will be reviewed as risks and needs change.

Contextual child protection can include addressing a range of concerns outside of the home environment including e.g., Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation, trafficking and the influence of extremism leading to radicalisation.

The care team are trained to understand signs and symptoms of harm and abuse and know how to act appropriately. They fully understand the need to tell a line manager and record accurately when they have a child protection concern. Carers have full access to the company's Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures via the intranet. In addition, Safeguarding and Child Protection are an integral part of supervision and are raised during team meetings and hand-over meetings.

Thistlebank's Designated Child Protection Leads are as follows:

- **Annette Steedman, Area Manager and Operational Designated Child Protection Lead**
- **Joy Wakenshaw, Head of Care and Strategic Lead on Child Protection**

The company's Designated Child Protection Leads are informed of every Child Protection concern, and a collective response involving a multi-agency approach is followed in line with national guidance.

Child Protection

Thistlebank aim to provide positive daily experiences for children and young people. In doing so we aim to develop positive authentic relationships that support growth. Carers are trained to understand that at times when a young person feels overwhelmed, they may choose to express their feelings through dysregulated behaviour or suppress them by internalising feelings and by managing the pain through e.g., substance misuse, alcohol, or self-harm.

We aim to support individuals to replace both self-harming behaviours with actions that promote self-care and healthier ways of coping and managing the complex mix of emotions they feel. However, this takes time and there are occasions when the presenting behaviours of a child or young person can pose a serious risk or threat to themselves or others. When this happens, it may be necessary, as a last resort, for a carer to intervene to ensure the safety of those present, resulting in a 'safe-hold' of a child or young person.

Thistlebank's care team have all been trained in Crisis Aggression Limitation and Management (CALM); an approved intervention model aimed at enabling carers to hold children and young people in the safest way possible. CALM provides an understanding of the causes of behaviour, along with respectful, supportive, and practical strategies for de-escalation and crisis intervention. All techniques that are taught are situated within an approach to behaviour management which seeks to minimise the need for physical intervention and aims to maintain positive relationships. In addition to CALM training, carers also participate in an annual refresher course.

CALM

CALM provides an understanding of the causes of behaviour, along with respectful, supportive, and practical strategies for de-escalation and crisis intervention.

Thistlebank aims to intervene in this way as a very last resort and only when there is significant risk of harm to the individual or carer.

We will actively seek to avoid the use of any restraint by using other ways of supporting children and young people at such times.

We are clear in the following guidance we give:

- **Safe holding of a child or young person should never be used to force compliance with requests made by carers, or as a form of punishment.**
- **Safe holding techniques should only be used when a child or young person is behaving in an unsafe and dangerous way to such an extent that it threatens the safety of the individual or others, and only when all other strategies to de-escalate the situation have been tried.**
- **Carers must never hold a child or young person in a manner that intentionally causes pain or is dangerous in any way.**
- **If it is necessary to safely hold a child or young person, then it will be done for the shortest time possible.**
- **Should holding safely be necessary, then discussion will always take place at an appropriate time afterwards, allowing an opportunity for the young person to share their views and ask questions. It is important that where restraint is necessary there is always an opportunity for the young person to understand the reasons why it was necessary, and for relationship repair, re-connection and learning to occur.**

Standard 4:
I have confidence in the organisation providing my care and support.

Pebbles Care has celebrated and continues to respond to the findings of the Independent Care Review in Scotland, 2020 by ensuring that its findings impact on our care processes in terms of our use of language, terms of reference and children's rights.

We are committed to eliminating any unhealthy power imbalance, strive to create environments where safe and respectful relationships are the norm and where children and young people access education, enjoy good all-round health and well-being, and enjoy a nurturing childhood filled with a sense of belonging.

A member of the psychology team is involved in deciding whether an offer in principle can be made. Wherever possible we encourage the pre-placement visits to allow for a safe and smooth transition for those staying at Thistlebank.

Our intention to support children with complex needs as best we can has resulted in the completion of a formulation at the point of placement which identifies how the team can best care for each child or young person using our therapeutic parenting approach.

With this in mind, we do everything we can using this approach to sustain placements. Whilst this evidence-based approach is known to affect positive change, deeply rooted thought, feelings and behaviours take time to resolve. On these occasions we can work with the psychology team to undertake psychological assessments to understand the functioning of the child and to adapt care / risk management plans to account for this.

During this period, our care is intensive, however sometimes issues or situations arise that can't be planned for and present as risk and need that we are unable to address. The presenting behaviours of some individuals' may mean that due to their intensity and, or our inability to keep other children or young people safe, we may occasionally need to support a placement move.

This will never be a decision made lightly. In these situations, we will work closely with our psychology team to ensure that their assessment of risk and need always informs the decision-making process.

Three Stage Commissioning

Pebbles Care operate a three-stage commissioning process to ensure that children and young people are safely matched to living environments where their needs can be best met.

Please see Pebbles Care's Referrals and Admissions Policy.

Health & Well-being

All young people are registered within seven days with a General practitioner: Dentist and Optician.

The Doctors surgery for Thistlebank is based at the following address:

Tanyard Medical Practice, 2 Tanyard, KA18 1BF

01290 421157

GP appointments and any subsequent actions are recorded in the young person's file. In the event of a serious illness, the young person's social worker, those with parental responsibility and any significant others are notified at the earliest opportunity.

Thistlebank operates a no smoking policy, for carers, residents, and visitors to the home. We acknowledge that whilst young people may smoke, it is our aim to help them reduce or stop smoking by actively discouraging it. We do this by making them aware of the dangers, ensuring that carers act as positive role models in this regard, and by seeking support from local smoking cessation services.

Thistlebank actively promotes good health and well-being. Health promotion materials are made available on matters including diet; smoking; alcohol and substance use; sexual relationships and sexually transmitted infections; relationships; general health; hygiene, and emotional well-being.

The care team observe high levels of hygiene and are robust in this regard when dealing with spillage of body fluids and open wounds. Additionally, all carers receive training in health and safety; emergency first aid at work, and food preparation and hygiene as part of their mandatory training.

Thistlebank can access specific psychological interventions via the company's Psychology Team.

Parents/Guardians may be consulted on the treatment of young people in emergencies, and a medical consent form is completed as part of the admission process.

Medication is kept in a locked cabinet in the home's office. Where appropriate, young people are supported to take responsibility for regularly taking any prescribed medication; the records of which are robustly maintained.

In the event of an accident occurring involving a young person or member of the care team, an 'Accident Form' is completed and filled accordingly, and appropriate agencies are notified. Should there be any dubiety regarding the notification process, the company's Health and Safety Officer will be consulted.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Carers understand the need for sensitivity and reassurance, specifically in relation to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

They are sensitive to a climate where personal protective equipment may cause distress and hamper the quality of communication and are mindful of this and where exemptions may apply. Thistlebank has implemented processes and practices to ensure that risk of cross infection is minimised regarding the cleaning of the home and the safe management of clothing, waste, and household linen.

Anxieties are well managed through supportive relationships where children and young people are encouraged to express concerns and talk about how they feel, since it is understood that the situation may well compromise their sense of safety. Restrictions are implemented sensitively and reasons for them are explained fully. Plans during this period will be respectful of the views, wishes and feelings of the individual and will maximise opportunities for the development of trusting relationships, positive interaction, and physical activity.

Encouragement to take part in activities that strengthen relationships and enable a sense of identity will help create safety. Reassurances will be given around the need for restrictions on time with families. Amidst this situation the care team will be creative and pro-active in finding alternative ways to ensure communication with them. Thistlebank will continue to work with Public Health Scotland, GP's, and other health organisations to ensure a prompt response to any positive diagnosis including the requirements for self-isolation. Contingency plans are reviewed and updated as required to support the changes and ensure that staffing levels remain commensurate with the needs of children and young people.

Carers meetings, supervision and general discussion within the home will create opportunities to provide support to carers, review plans for infection control and facilitate opportunities for on-going learning in relation to the pandemic. Guidance from regulators is followed and adhered to, and to facilitate opportunities for on-going learning in relation to the pandemic. Guidance from regulators is followed and adhered to.

Where additional carers are sought from other homes, the home's manager will ensure they have a clear understanding of those they will be caring for and their needs and will work flexibly under national guidance for as long as is required.

As part of Thistlebank's commitment to ensuring that quality standards are met, quality assurance audits are conducted as part of a cyclical process of monitoring and review. These are done at different levels across the organisation and incorporate the views of wider stakeholders.

Pebbles Care recognises its duty to be transparent and socially responsible. It aims to always comply with formal processes in line with our Duty of Candour and accountability to the Care Inspectorate and stakeholders.

Standard 5:

I experience a high-quality environment if the organisation provides the premises.

Thistlebank provides adequate space for a two young people to live supported by a minimum of two adults in a small group living environment.

The home environment is warm and nurturing. Health and Safety measures are in place and regular checks and audits are conducted to ensure the home's safety including those relating to e.g., health and safety; fire safety; food hygiene; infectious disease; vehicle safety, and the administration of medication.

Young people have access to a telephone, radio, and TV. Secured internet and wi-fi access also exists.

For any additional information please see Pebbles Care's internal Policies and Procedures (updated 2020). These are stored centrally on the company's intranet and are fully accessible to care teams.