

Leading the way in bespoke therapeutic  
care for young people

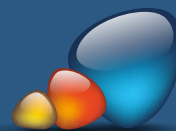
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# Pebbles

Nurture. Develop. Flourish.



JAN – MAR 2022

## Welcome to the

# Pebbles Newsletter

With so many wonderful things happening within the Pebbles family, a space was needed to share all our amazing news and updates, so welcome to our first quarterly newsletter – we hope you enjoy it!

Therapeutic Parenting at Pebbles  
*Learn more on Page 4*



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## Opening remarks

by CEO Michael Walsh



**“I am delighted to see the newsletter come to life, and hopefully it will prove to be a positive communication piece for you.”**

We are grateful to have finished last year in a good place after what was a testing year or two. The efforts and commitment of all teams across our business have been second to none.

It is now an exciting time for our organisation as we are offering 'Adapt Learning', our new education model launched in February. This unique approach is ground-breaking, and I look forward to seeing it develop further over time. Alongside education, the consistent training around Therapeutic Parenting has become key for the care we deliver and is ultimately resulting in better outcomes for our young people.

Over the past months, it has also been great to see our teams continuing to grow and look at ways to improve, such as Psychology, Property Maintenance, Training and Development, Marketing, Commissioning and Recruitment.

Our four core values remain central to how we work, and by filtering every decision we make through them, we will

continue to grow and offer outstanding care and education to our young people. In everything we do, we'll always be:



### Accountable

We accept responsibility for our own words, actions, and results



### Collaborative

We work together to be more effective, efficient, and fulfilled



### Progressive

We approach everything with a 'can do' attitude



### Considerate

We are respectful in every relationship we build

## Adapt Learning: Innovating Education



**We are excited to announce that our groundbreaking Adapt Learning model is now offered to children and young people, providing bespoke, life-changing education pathways.**

Elements of this new approach came about through necessity during Covid-19, where it became evident that blended learning led to pupils' improved outcomes and accelerated progress, particularly online learning and education at home supported by skilled care professionals.

By combining key learning pathways, our unique model offers full-time education to young people whose traditional school placements have broken down or been ineffectual, often due to severely traumatic past experiences. Alongside supporting young people who receive care at Pebbles, our doors are open to pupils on a day placement basis.

Underpinned by the Six Principles of Nurture, the Adapt Learning five-part curriculum focuses on academic, enrichment, engagement, and social, emotional and mental health so that every learner can be guided to develop and flourish according to their individual needs.



Classroom Learning



Remote Learning



Therapeutic Approach



Vocational Development



Outdoor Education





# Therapeutic Parenting at Pebbles Care



Words by Joy Wakenshaw, Head of Care Practice at Pebbles Care

“Nourish hope in a child and the world flourishes.”

Those who know me well are aware that the above quote is my favourite. I think it reflects the very heart of residential child care, which is about giving young people who feel helpless, a sense of hope for a better future. It creates a wonderful mental image of a world that flourishes where happy and nurtured children are at its core.

Therapeutic Parenting has a need for both hope and nurture to be at its heart. Whilst we know that clear boundaries and predictable patterns of care are essential for our young people, they also need complementary and equally nourishing experiences which stem from a safe environment where they can learn to feel that adult carers are trustworthy. They don't need us to be friends. However, they do need adults who can fulfil their responsibility to provide consistent care through unconditional positive regard, honest and trusting relationships, and, of course, affection. We have these people in abundance working at Pebbles Care.

Residential Child Care Workers have often instinctively provided nurturing care without fully understanding why they are doing it.

**At Pebbles Care, we are determined to support our care teams to not just know 'what' they are doing, but to understand 'why,' when it comes to caring for young people.**

Understanding the theory behind a young person's experience will transform the way we view and respond to their needs. It prevents us from personalising behaviour and will allow us to focus on being compassionate and empathic carers, as we support young people to feel safe and more positive about themselves.

Thanks to Sharron Reilly, our Head of Psychology, and her team, we are starting to embrace principles from psychological assessment to inform our own residential assessment process, known as Formulation. This is an assessment process aimed at supporting us to make sense of a child's experiences and behaviours. A written formulation narrative allows us to produce



Therapeutic Parenting at Pebbles',  
Drawing by Young Person

Care Plans and Risk Management plans that directly address the specific needs of each individual and guide our practice in terms of how we can best care for them.

Through our newly adopted Therapeutic Parenting approach, we are supporting care teams to join us on our journey to become therapeutic practitioners. The positive response has been so encouraging from those wanting to learn more. Our responses need to be those of attuned parents who are sensitive and committed to establishing safe environments.

Along with others, I am excited about working more closely with care teams to help embed these principles and develop new ways of working therapeutically. When we nurture hope, the possibilities are endless.



## Creativity in action!

### Crafty covers

Our teams always find so many brilliant ways to bring a smile to young people. Paul, Maintenance Officer, recently created this amazing piece of craftsmanship to cover the fireplace in one of our homes' playrooms (see above). It was a big surprise, and everyone was over the moon with the result!

### Bringing the night-sky inside

We love encouraging our young people to develop their creative ideas. This brilliant bedroom decoration, see right, is the work of D., who did it all by themselves, with the support of his caring and nurturing local team.

A huge well done to D.!





# Our Growing Psychology Support

Words by Sharron Reilly, Head of Psychology at Pebbles Care

**At Pebbles, we have a unique in-house team of psychologists who support young people to make sense of their traumatic experiences and to realise their enormous potential and worth. Every Pebbles home has an assistant psychologist or trainee forensic psychologist as part of their team.**

This is uncommon for a company of our size and is testament to our commitment to enhancing positive outcomes for the people in our care and education.

## Psychological input

Pebbles' psychology team works closely with the Head of Care Practice, Area Managers, Registered Managers and Education to ensure that our children receive therapeutic support that is underpinned by psychological and systemic principles that aid trauma recovery. We provide three levels of psychological support.



### Level 1

Standard psychological support for all the teams caring for the children who are placed in our care. This includes:



Psychology input during the referral process to ensure a robust matching process for all young people



Psychoeducation for young people and team to stabilise placement while Assessment and Formulation are completed



Development of the therapeutic parenting training and supervision of the therapeutic parenting approach



Psychologists' monthly consultations for the team



Completion of a 12-18 week therapeutic assessment and Formulation following admission



Employees' development days centred on presenting the needs and risks of young people



### Level 2

Enhanced care for young people who can participate in group work based on their needs and risks identified from assessment and formulation. This includes:



#### Seasons for Growth

This is an eight-session group that aims to strengthen the social and emotional well-being of children and young people who are dealing with significant life changes, by exploring the impact of the change and loss on everyday life and learning new ways to respond to these changes



#### Mellow Ready

It is a trauma informed 12-session group programme carefully created for young people between the ages of 14 and 18 years; potential parents of the future. Enabling young people to make sense of their experiences and how they shape them will support them to form and build better relationships



#### Violence Is Not The Only Choice

VINTOC is a 12-session group that aims to teach relevant skills to manage, eliminate or reduce harmful behaviour to self and others



### Level 3

Standard psychological support for all the teams caring for the children who are placed in our care. This includes:



Trauma, mental health, social and emotional developmental age level assessments



Cognitive functioning, Executive functioning, and memory assessments



Forensic psychological risk assessment (high risk of harm to self or others, e.g., violence, harmful sexual behaviour, general offending)



Neurodevelopmental profiling (requires classification of mental disorders from DSM - V, e.g., ASD, ADHD, SALT, ODD, LD, etc).

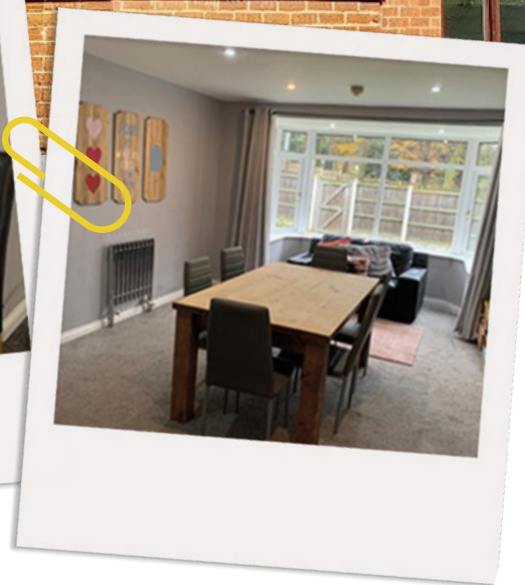
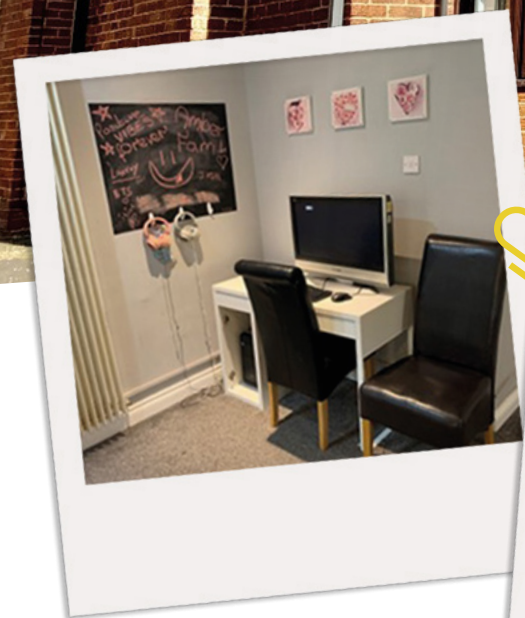


Individualised therapy options, such as hourly **1:1 therapy**; **Change for Good**, which is a programme that addresses criminogenic needs underpinning harmful sexual behaviour; and **VINTOC**



We aim to see all the children and young people flourish at Pebbles, so please feel free to get in touch if you would like to learn more about our psychology support.





## Amber House: Rated Outstanding by Ofsted

It's with great excitement that we announce that Amber House, one of our welcoming homes in Yorkshire, was rated **Outstanding** in all areas after a February inspection by Ofsted.

The tremendous commitment of the home's team towards providing outstanding care to children and young people proves what amazing things our people are capable of. We are proud of this incredible result and look forward to receiving the official report to learn more about Ofsted's feedback.

## A Sea Cadet in our midst

We are delighted to share that among our children there's a wonderful Sea Cadet. Our nurturing team supports J., whose understanding has been affected by ASD since a young age, to attend the local Sea Cadet unit twice a week.

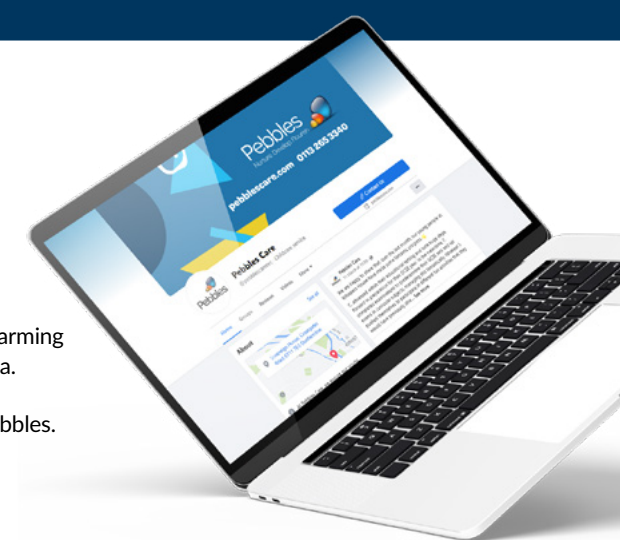
Last November, J. did something extraordinary by joining a march with the unit as part of the Memorial Day parade. Our young person impressively managed to stand to attention and follow the orders given throughout the march.

The outstanding effort demonstrated was recognised by the Sergeant, who highly praised J., making our Sea Cadet overly proud of their work and commitment. This is truly inspirational and demonstrates how empowering the integration into the local community is for our children and young people.

## Find Pebbles on social media

We are sharing many happy news, inspiring stories, and heart-warming updates from across our teams and young people on social media.

Give us a follow to stay up-to-date with the latest news from Pebbles.





## Positive Feedback

**It's always encouraging receiving positive feedback, and this motivates us to keep striving for excellence.**

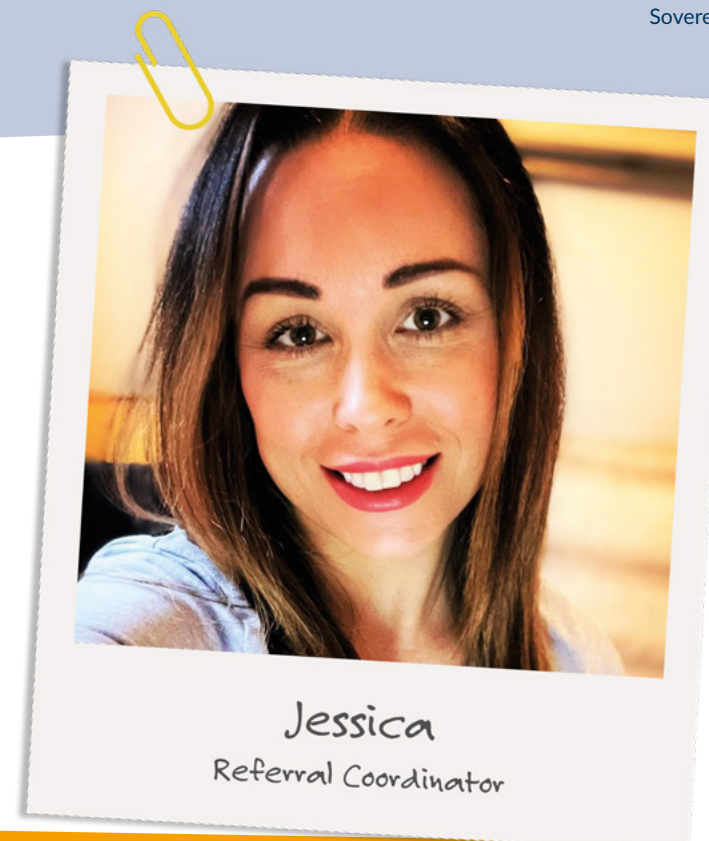
Here's what an Independent Reviewing Officer recently told us upon visiting one of our homes:

**“The manager and the team are doing a brilliant job. The manager has been able to balance a serious risk against child focussed interventions and I can't fault the team.**

D. is extremely vulnerable, a risk and a challenge. The home has worked tirelessly with the placing authority, and they evidence everything and try to do to keep D. safe and well. They work together brilliantly with CAMHS and the social worker who visit D. at the home frequently.

The care and compassion at the home is brilliant. They are perfect at using distraction techniques with D. and they are more than capable of caring for her. D. feels valued as a result.

**Risks are starting to reduce now due to the excellent communication, commitment and care that is second to none.”**



## Growing Opportunities at Pebbles Care

**Our nurturing team members are the thriving core of Pebbles, and while they strive to brighten young people's lives, we love empowering them to develop and grow.**

Jessica's work journey is just one example of the many inspiring career paths possible within our organisation.

Upon graduating in Psychology in 2016, Jessica decided to join Pebbles as a Residential Child Care Worker and was immediately offered the opportunity to also become a Trauma Pathway trainer to assess behaviours and create suitable management plans for our children.

She found supporting young people to achieve positive outcomes extremely rewarding, and at the end of 2021, she was ready to take on a new challenge, joining the commissioning team as Referral Coordinator to ensure every child and young person is best placed within our family to develop and flourish.

**“The most rewarding aspect of the job for me is the strong, positive relationships I have built over the years with many young people.”**

To read Jessica's full story, visit [www.pebblescare.com](http://www.pebblescare.com)





## A Reminder to be Brave

The lovely bottle here showcases an owl, which in mythology represents the sacred animal of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and strategy.

It was chosen and created by one of our young people as a symbol of the connection between wisdom and soul.

Through this artwork, our budding artist reminds us that sometimes we need to push ourselves to do things we are not completely comfortable with, because once we get past the fear, better things will happen.

This is such a wonderful message that reflects the incredible bravery of our children and young people.

## Father & Son Reunited After Years

After four years at our Highview home, a young person went back to his local authority, The Wirral, to be reunited with his father, whom he hadn't seen in years.

It was fantastic supporting this young man to work towards this wonderful outcome, and the local team and social worker recently met with him for lunch, reminiscing on his time at Highview.

Reuniting our young people with their families remains a priority for us, and we'll always strive to make it happen where suitable.



*Highview*

## Keeping 'The Promise'



One of our Scottish homes, the Paddock, recently hosted a young person's mother and five siblings for a two-night break, after seven months of being apart. The family cooked for everyone, and they had a lovely trip to Dumfries House.

This proved to be very positive for our young person, and it is one of the many ways we continue to keep 'The Promise' set by the Scottish Government to provide a place in the world where children are 'loved, safe, and respected, and achieve their full potential.'



*The Paddock*



## A Heart of Gold

**T. has been enjoying doing voluntary work at a charity shop, supporting vulnerable people in the local community.**

Our young person attends at least twice a week, including all day Saturday, which is such an impressive commitment. Touched by the Ukrainian situation, T. has recently baked to raise money for the refugees.

This shows that, despite what our young people have been through, they each have a heart of gold.



## An Impressive Education Progress

**H., one of the young people from Amber House, has shown amazing progress and a strong attitude towards learning. This young person previously expressed negative feelings towards going to school, however, there has been a shift in their attitude and H. is now excited about education.**

H.'s teaching team is extremely impressed with their approach and believes that they're a great role model to others, especially younger students who may also have—or currently are facing—similar difficulties to what H. experienced.

While completing work to a high standard, our young person started helping younger students within the primary sector of the school. Both H. and the younger pupils loved this, and, thanks to the positive impact it has continued to have on both, H. obtained a regular job during school time to help with the primary sector.

**H. takes this job very seriously and has used it to reflect on their own behaviours and choices to be a positive role model.**

Our young person shares that they cannot believe how far they've come. The team at Amber House couldn't be prouder and find the willingness to help others to be a great display of H.'s progression within their own confidence and overall development.

Our children and young people often don't know what they are capable of due to years of abuse or neglect. Through our nurturing approach, they can finally start looking inside themselves and realise what incredible human beings they are. H.'s story proves this wonderfully.







## Rainbow Colours:

# a Message of Hope from a Pebbles Pupil

One of our wonderful young people from the Pebbles Muirkirk school recently submitted a touching song poem, titled Rainbow Colours, as a piece of English work, that they'll also perform to go towards their Expressive Arts ASDAN short course.

Rainbow Colours contains an inspiring message of hope, and it warms our hearts knowing that we have provided its young author with a safe space where they've been able to freely express themselves.

### Verse One

Lost faith, no hope, your love was poison! Inflicting pain, can't give a reason.  
My body my soul, you had no right, a child! No strength, the shadow of night.  
No love, light fades, my heart the ache, a soul destroyed, not yours to take!

### Chorus

The light ahead, I won the fight, the rainbow colours shine so bright.  
As the darkness fades, I sleep, no fear! So much in life I hold so dear.

### Verse Two

I'm paralysed, I'm torn and bruised, my love you missed, now stand accused.  
My life ahead, still friends to make, determination you can't take.  
My smile, look forward, I will move on, healing, smiling, growing strong.

### Chorus

### Bridge

Future plans, new friends who care, confidence grows, new love is there.

### Chorus

### Outro

The rainbow colours shine so bright!  
The rainbow colours shine so bright!

## Final thought

We hope you enjoyed our first newsletter and look forward to sharing with you the upcoming editions with more stories from the Pebbles family.

As a closing, we'd like to share with you what K., one of our young people, recently told us:

“I feel well supported, especially emotionally, and this is important. They [Pebbles' team] are good at that.”



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