



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Sunflower House

Statement of Purpose 2026



Short breaks residential home for children with physical disabilities and complex health needs

***A child friendly version of this
Statement of Purpose is available on request***



Author: Sally Summers

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Contents

Introduction	4	Positive Relationships	20
Quality and Purpose of Care	4	Promoting Contact between Children, Families and Friends	20
Statement of the Range of Needs	4	Protection of Children	20
Aim and Ethos of the Home	5	Approach to Monitoring and Surveillance	20
Accommodation Offered	6	Arrangements for the Protection of Children	20
Location of the Home	8	Behaviour Support	24
Arrangements for Supporting the Cultural Linguistic and Religious Needs of Children	8	Leadership and Management	25
Complaints	9	The Registered Provider	25
Important Contacts	10	The Sunflower House Team	26
Access to the Home’s Child Protection and Behaviour	11	Staffing Structure	32
Views, Wishes and Feelings	11	Promoting Appropriate Role Models within the Home	35
Consulting with Children and Young People	11	Care Planning	35
The Home’s Policy and Approach to Anti Discriminatory Practice and Children’s Rights	14	Admission to the Home	35
Education	15	Emergency Admissions	38
Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs	15		
Supporting Education and Educational Achievements	15		
Enjoyment and Achievement	16		
Activities within the Home	16		
Health	17		
Healthcare provided within the Home	17		

Introduction

The Statement of purpose is a requirement of the Children’s Homes (England) Regulations, April 2015.

It is not a brochure; it is a manual that is used by those who have an interest in the service. It performs a task for those internal and external to the home.

- It connects the needs of the child with the aims and objectives of the setting.
- It connects the home’s definition of good practice and the clear objectives. through which that practice can be achieved.
- It connects policy with practice.
- It connects the quality and range of services provided.

The statement of purpose is formally reviewed annually and approved by Bedford Borough Council’s Executive Director for Children, Education and Families on an annual basis.

There is a more accessible guide for children.

Quality and Purpose of Care

Statement of the Range of Needs

Sunflower house is a short breaks residential home for children and young people with a physical disability, associated Learning difficulties and complex health needs aged seven to eighteen years of age. Shared care and long stays may be provided following an impact risk assessment and an accessed need.

Each referral is assessed on an individual basis to ensure the needs of the individual child could be met and relevant training is available for health care tasks etc.

The needs of the young people are reassessed through the duration of the placement at Sunflower House, at times young people’s needs change as they physically and emotionally develop. Should a young person’s needs significantly change, and we are unable to meet their needs we will fully discuss this with parents/carers and social worker to look at what resources may be needed to support them, or what other short break or long term care services may be more appropriate.

Aim and Ethos of the Home

Every person has a right to a life which respects the independence of the individual, safeguards privacy, offering real choices and the opportunity to enjoy and contribute to society, in which their personal, social and cultural needs are met.

We believe in a user led service where all are seen as individuals, acknowledging and respecting other's merits and skills and valuing diversity. The service evolves around partnerships between staff, children, carers and the wider professional team. We believe children and young people should be encouraged to make their own choices in order to enjoy their life to its full potential in an open, safe, living and working environment. Children's rights are actively promoted.

We provide regular training for staff and facilitate their development so that they gain increased knowledge which is geared to meet the needs of the children.

Aims

- To provide planned short breaks for children and young people attending the home who have physical and learning disabilities. Many have complex needs which may require the need for gastric feeding, management of seizures, moving and handling and oxygen.
- To assist the young people with support to develop optimum independence and positive self-esteem in a safe, supportive and stimulating and nurturing environment, including access to social and leisure opportunities.
- To provide opportunities for young people to socialise with their peers, ensuring that the needs of young people staying at any one time are compatible.
- To meet the assessed needs and regularly review the needs of the young people and their careers and family members.
- To promote an understanding of young people's rights and advocacy services, assisting young people to make choices and communicate their needs.
- To maintain a holistic approach, we work within the multi-agency model to ensure the needs of young people are met, we aim to deliver a consistent approach to all aspects of their care plan including behaviour management.
- To work in partnership with families and other agencies to meet the needs of young people. Offering stays which enable the family to continue to function effectively.

- To create a warm, safe, welcoming and nurturing environment ensuring that young people have access to their own space where they can keep their personal possessions safe.
- To provide an environment that is free from discrimination, and which respects the young person's rights and individuality.
- To ensure that all the staff team offer a positive and caring attitude, and that they are appropriately qualified and trained in all areas as necessary to the needs of the service and, its young people.



Accommodation Offered

a) Sunflower House is a 5 bedroom bungalow which is fully wheelchair accessible apart from the kitchen. An alternative can be provided if needed by the raised work tops and cooking equipment in the dining room. There is also a small laundry, 2 offices, a lounge, a conservatory, kitchen, bathroom, shower room, storeroom and staff sleeping in room. There is an enclosed garden with a car park at the front and adequate shade at the rear.

All the facilities are adapted for use by children and young people with disabilities. This includes a hi / low bath, shower trolleys and call system in the bedrooms, toilets and bathrooms. There are fixed track moving and handling hoists in the bathrooms and in one bedroom. There is an intercom system in the bedrooms. Beds are electric and easily raised and lowered. They have safety rails that are closely fitted to the beds with bumpers. There is equipment available to move and handle children, including the use of a portable electric hoist. There is an adapted minibus for outings.



b) All children have their own bedroom when staying at Sunflower House and can choose which of the bedrooms they would prefer. We concentrate on peer and friendship groups when organising the bookings. Children choose their own bedding and have individualised pictures to personalise their bedroom.

Young people can access the service up to their 18th birthday. Occasionally a young person may stay for a short period after their eighteenth birthday in line with a best interest decision and as part of a planned transition into a named adult service which would fund the extended stay. If this should occur Ofsted will be consulted but this is reflected in our certificate of registration.

(c) Following an impact risk assessment, we may be able to accommodate shared care or long stay placements if appropriate.

There is a sleeping in room at the end of the building for staff when a sleep in staff member is required, but most time there is two waking night staff on duty each night



Location of the Home

Sunflower House is in a residential area of Bedford with a green nearby.

There are shops, health centre and chemist in close proximity. There is also a local bus service into Bedford which is about a mile away. In Bedford there is a park, cinema and river with a picturesque embankment.

The bungalow is within walking distance of a small parade of shops. The town centre is about a mile away and has a cinema and theatre. Trips are also organised further afield, such as to Milton Keynes and places of interest such as bowling in St Neot's and barge trips in Hemel Hempstead.

The home has a review of premises report. This report makes sure that the premises are appropriately and suitably located, so that the children are effectively safeguarded and are able to access all the services to meet the needs of the child (as identified in the child's placement plan). The assessment has been informed by consulting and taking into account the views of appropriate local bodies or services e.g. LSCB, Health, and Police etc. This assessment is reviewed 6 monthly or when required.

Arrangements for Supporting the Cultural Linguistic and Religious Needs of Children

All staff recognises and respect that religion plays an important part in many people's lives. The role of the staff will be to ensure that all children are able to follow the religion of their choice and/or their parent / carer's choice.

If required, staff may help children to make contact with local religious establishments. Positive steps are taken by staff to provide facilities for children to follow any special requirements of their religions, e.g. special dietary needs, individual prayer areas.

All necessary efforts are made by staff to ensure that all important aspects of a child's religion and culture are met.

We believe that it is important for children to have the opportunity to learn about and experience different religions and beliefs and, where possible will be given the chance to visit places of religion/worship and experience different celebrations and ceremonies.

Complaints

Our philosophy and working practice is based on equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. All children have the right to be treated fairly and with respect and have the right to complain if they feel this is not happening.

They also have the right to complain about any aspect of the service and staff will give advice and help to do this, if required. Complaint leaflets are freely available, and a 'simple' complaints procedure is explained to the child or young person. We actively encourage feedback about the service

We have a 'Grumbles' book which we use to acknowledge and learn from any 'grumbles' from parents or professionals.

We treat any complaint seriously. All staff are aware of how to receive and process complaints. There is a written complaints procedure which follows Bedford Borough's guidelines. Once a complaint formal or informal has been received it will be recorded and processed and responded to within a maximum timescale of 10 working days. Copies of the complaint's procedure can be downloaded from the website.

If someone did not feel it is appropriate to approach staff or the Manager at Sunflower House directly, in the first instance, then people would be advised to contact the Responsible Individual, Head of Service or Regs 44 inspector.

Important Contacts

Christian Weatherley

Responsible Individual, Principal Social Worker / Manager for Social Work Practice,
Bedford Borough Council, Children's Services
5th Floor, Borough Hall,
Caudwell Street,
Bedford, MK42 9AP

Telephone: 01234 276746 (44746) / 07540 704985

christian.weatherley@bedford.gov.uk

Children and their families are also able to make a complaint to Ofsted or to the Children’s Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza (appointed March 2021) at:

Office of the Children’s Commissioner

33 Grey Coat Street,
London, SW1P 2QF Telephone: 020 7783 8330
advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD Telephone: 0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Beth Donachie

Independent Visitor (Regulation 44 inspector)
NYAS Telephone: 0808 808 1001 help@nyas.net

Childline

www.childline.org.uk
Telephone: 0800 1111 (free to call)

Access to the Home’s Child Protection and Behaviour

Child protection and behaviour management policies are available within the unit. There is also further Safeguarding Information available on the Bedford Borough Safeguarding Children’s Partnership website www.bedfordscp.trixonline.co.uk

All children have a behaviour support plan on file. This behaviour policy will have been devised with the involvement of the child, their parents/carers, and their school and health colleagues (if appropriate).

We encourage positive reinforcement and don’t use restraint techniques.

Views, Wishes and Feelings

Consulting with Children and Young People

At Sunflower House, we involve young people as much as possible in developing their care plans which tell us how we should care for them and meet their needs. Families are also involved and the young person and their parent/carer are asked to sign the residential placement plan. All residential placement plans are a live document and are updated and reviewed regularly.

Sunflower House will find out about each young people's interests and hobbies and encourage them to take part in activities and social events within Sunflower House or out in the community.

Sunflower House are keen for the young people to take part in local and national fund raising events. We have a range of toys, books and arrange in-house activities such as baking, art, crafts, games, videos and music. We also have access to a minibus to enable young people to go out on trips to the cinema, local parks and other activities whenever possible.

We place a big emphasis on young people having opportunities to spend time with their friends and encourage young people to develop skills in socialising, making choices and spending time with other young people and adults. We encourage young people to be part of the local community whilst at Sunflower House. This includes using local leisure facilities, shops and community resources such as parks. We also support young people to learn about the local community and to sponsor a local organisation.

Young people's placement plans include goals for them to develop their independence. These will vary according to the young people's needs, abilities and interests. When young people reach the age of 14, we will work with them, their parents/carers, social worker and other professionals on planning their transition to adult life. We do this by ensuring we know what their transition plan says about the help and support they will need, and by contributing to any update of their assessments of needs. With the young person and their parent/carer's permission we are also able to share information about their care needs or placement care plan with any adult services provider that might be identified. The manager has

regular tracking meetings with Transitions Coordinator in the Adults team and we have regular informal coffee mornings.

Appropriate staff from Sunflower House will attend statutory Looked After review meetings and Child in Need meetings for the young people who receive a service. Information the young person has asked us to share in the meetings will be provided. The key worker will provide a written report about the young person's needs and the level of support required in order for them to reach their individual potential and celebrate the progress made.

Young people who are new to Sunflower House have a planned introduction to the home at a pace that suits them. Initially young people are invited to come and look round Sunflower House with their family/carers to establish whether the service meets their needs. Then there is a progression from shorts visits for example staying for tea, day care, before building up to overnight stays.

An individual children's guide, is available in three different formats according to communication need, for each young person when making a transition into the service. During their stay children and young people are able to choose their bedding and can bring along any of their personal possessions in order to create a homely environment.

We encourage young people to make choices on an everyday basis while they are at Sunflower House, recognising that for some young people they may need a lot of support or structure to do this. Young people are encouraged to use the communication system appropriate to them including use of objects, symbols or photos and providing schedules of 'now and next' boards to help young people understand and make choices.

We also hold regular monthly 'Voice Groups' children's meetings, where groups of young people can feedback about their time at Sunflower House, make suggestions and shape the development of the service. We recognise that not all of the young people staying at Sunflower House are able to meaningfully take part in more formal meetings, and so we seek their views in creative and more individual ways. We also have a 4 weekly visiting advocate from NYAS who visits the home and can support young people with raising issues that are important to them.

We hold regular one to one keyworker / consultation sessions, where the children are given opportunity to give feedback individually about likes and dislikes and to talk about achievements. We are creative about implementing these according to individual's communication needs.

We strive to engage parents/ carers with improving our service. We have a suggestion box and a regular newsletter and encourage families to email any feedback.

We support young people when they wish to spend money, for example on shopping trips or outings. This can help them understand the value of money and learn skills in choosing and paying for items. Young people's placement/care plans will identify the support they need in this area, and any goals for learning new skills.

Young people are encouraged to develop independent living skills which will prepare them for their adult life. This could include taking more responsibility for their physical care as well as learning skills such as cooking, using transport, and studying for school or college qualifications or skills. This will also be included in the Transition Plan for those 14+. Individual education plans and Education Health and Care plans will be included by the key worker in the child's care plan. Achievement of the associated objectives will be monitored in key worker sessions with the child. This information will be shared with all the team. Achievements for the children that attend Sunflower House could vary from learning how to clean their teeth to taking an active part in a voice group, to build confidence. As the abilities of the children can vary considerably there is always an emphasis on celebrating the achievements that are important to that individual young person.

The Home's Policy and Approach to Anti Discriminatory Practice and Children's Rights

In line with Bedford Borough Council's 'Non-Discriminatory Practice and Equal Opportunity Policy' Sunflower House celebrates diversity and offers choices to ensure each young person has the opportunity to reach their potential. All practice within the home will take into consideration the 6 equality strains of age, disability, gender, race, religion/ beliefs and sexual orientation.

Children's Rights

We have a booklet, which we give to children who stay at Sunflower House. This booklet explains about how we look after children and the sorts of things we do on a day-to-day basis. We also give information about how to contact an advocate from NYAS, Child Line and the Children's Commissioner for England. The latest Ofsted report is made available also. There are various communication tools in place to enable understanding and communication for the young people. An independent advocate from NYAS visits every four weeks, and the Reg 44 visitor visits the young people every month. These visitors observe the staff with children and young people and also take opportunities to speak to the children if that is what they want.

The key worker will act as the main link between Sunflower House and home/school and will ensure they advocate for the young person's best interest at all times. Keyworkers are allocated to children according to particular skills the staff member has, at induction, this can change over time as staff relationships with a child develop. They will endeavour to ensure that the entire young person's needs will be addressed while staying in the home.

Education

Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs

All the children and young people attending Sunflower House have special educational needs. Sunflower House has a close working relationship with the schools that young people attend. Key workers visit young people in schools to observe them and gather information. We will also talk with parents/carers and school staff to agree how Sunflower House can ensure a consistent approach to learning and behaviour support. Young people's placement plans will identify the support they need with learning, homework, preparing for the school day and how these needs will be met while they are staying at Sunflower House. Key workers will make sure that they are familiar with the Individual or Personal Education Plan and the Education, Health and Care plan for the young person and make sure that Sunflower House supports the goals set for the individual young person.

Sunflower House will support every young person / child in its care in completion of any homework set from school. The young person will be provided with a quiet space with a desk to ensure they are able to complete this work in an appropriate environment.

Supporting Education and Educational Achievements

Young people's placement plans will identify the support they need with learning, homework, preparing for the school day and how these needs will be met while they are staying at Sunflower House. Key workers will make sure that they are familiar with the Individual or Personal Education Plan and the Education, Health and Care plan for the young person and make sure that Sunflower House supports the goals set for the individual young person.

Sunflower House will support every young person / child in its care in completion of any homework set from school. The young person will be provided with a quiet space with a desk to ensure they are able to complete this work in an appropriate environment.

The children are transported to school either on the Sunflower House bus or on transport organised by Bedford Borough transport department.

Enjoyment and Achievement

Activities within the Home

Children's residential care plans reflect their individual interests and activities they enjoy. We forward plan around individual preferences and also provide opportunities for the children/young people to experience new activities.

This can be done on a day to day basis with the children and pre-arranged for longer trips. We seek to ensure the children have the chance to enjoy community-based activities as we recognise this can build their self-esteem and confidence e.g. playing in the park or visiting places of interest, bowling, cinema, swimming.

All the activities have relevant risk assessments and are geared to the abilities of the children that will be involved.

For in house activities, we have arts and crafts equipment, games, books, DVD's, musical instruments, play stations, a Wii and Xbox, and a computer with internet connection (with internet protection software). There are televisions, DVD players and Tonie boxes available in each room. We now have wi-fi which enables children/young people to access their own communication devices e.g. iPad (appropriately supervised).

Health

Healthcare provided within the Home

a) There are no health professionals on the team, Sunflower House is a social care setting. All relevant protocols / care plans are obtained from a health professional and Community Nurses deliver training and offer advise/support when necessary as well as delivering training and sign off competencies.

b) We work in partnership with parents/carers and other professionals to ensure we are aware of young people's health needs and know how to meet those needs. Every young person will have a residential placement plan which includes the young person's health and personal care needs and the support they need. This includes how staff will support with general health issues such as dental care, but also specific health needs, such as epilepsy or diabetes. The young person, parents/carers and other professionals (as necessary) will be involved in completing and agreeing the plan.

Prior to young people coming to Sunflower House, we ask parents/carers to give written permission for emergency medical treatment, administration of prescribed medication and first aid if required. This is done with the young person's social worker and any health professional involved and is completed on the relevant paperwork.

For those young people receiving a short break service at Sunflower House who usually live with their parents/carers, we do not arrange routine health appointments. Children /young people who are staying long term at the unit are accompanied to appointments, which we organise along with health colleagues.

Where young people have specialist health requirements, we also have an additional health plan or protocol which tells staff how to meet that particular need, e.g. for epilepsy, VNS, respiratory chest physio, adrenaline pens and administration of emergency medication.

We maintain links with both school and community nurses and the NHS

Community Learning Disability Team and are able to seek their specialist advice if needed. School nurses are involved in training our staff in specialist health tasks, such as the recording and, administration of medication; the management of and

the procedures for young people who have medical conditions such as epilepsy.

All staff receive training in first aid, epilepsy awareness and administration of emergency medications, safe handling of medication, oxygen administration, oral suction, gastro and jej . A percentage of the team are also trained in blended diet and catheter. All of these are reviewed and assessed on a regular basis. We source training on an individual need.

We aim to be as flexible as possible and adapt to each individual child's requirements. However, as a social care setting, our main priority is to be able to safeguard the children effectively. Therefore, after careful consideration, if we assess any health tasks identified in the referral to be too high risk, we won't be able to offer a service; examples of these may include if a child has a central line in situ or a tracheostomy tube.

We ask that if your child has had a general anaesthetic they stay at home for 24 hours for monitoring.

We encourage children and young people to participate in exercise and be active whilst at Sunflower House. We have a garden with a play equipment. The garden is adapted for wheelchairs users and has shaded areas.

We have a policy on the storage and administration of medication to ensure that we comply with the law and best practice. All medication is kept in a locked cabinet and there is a written record kept of all medication received and administered by the home. In order for us to administer medication safely parents/carers must send any medication in its original container provided by the pharmacist and clearly labelled with the pharmacy label stating the young person's name, the dosage to be administered and how often. Occasionally the labels may differ if for example the child is being weaned off a certain medication or there is a regime in place to introduce a new one, in this instance we would require a letter of explanation from GP or Consultant. All staff are trained to administer medication.

Sunflower House can meet a range of dietary needs. We have a cook who cooks 5 days a week. Care plans identify young people's dietary needs, including cultural, allergies, intolerances and likes/dislikes, our staff team are experienced at planning

menus and providing a range of nutritious meals, offering alternatives if young people do not like the planned meal. Sunflower House have developed visual menus, which will enable young people to be involved in planning menus and making choices. A high percentage of children/young people are gastric fed so the protocols we require are obtained and we liaise regularly with the dietician and other health professionals as required.

We also place importance on young people's emotional wellbeing and self-esteem and any particular needs in this area will be included in their residential placement plan. We think it is important to offer young people opportunities to make choices, develop confidence and raise self-esteem, and in learning skills in independence, socialising and making relationships.

Should a young person become ill whilst at Sunflower House, we will contact the parent/carer to advise them and discuss whether it is necessary for the young person to go home. If it is felt necessary, the young person's GP will be contacted. Should the young person require hospital treatment during a stay, a member of staff will, where ever possible, accompany the young person parents will be contacted and expected to attend the hospital at the earliest opportunity and resume the care of their young person.

If a young person is ill prior to coming to Sunflower House for a stay, we will discuss with parents whether the stay should still go ahead, taking into account whether the young person's illness is infectious and the potential impact or risk to other young people. We ask for a clear period of 48 hours following any vomiting or diarrhoea before a stay.

If your child requires a General Anaesthetic , we ask that you keep them at home for a 24 hour monitoring period if they are due for a stay.

Positive Relationships

Promoting Contact between Children, Families and Friends

The majority of the children access the service for short breaks. We recognise that the children and young people may wish to have contact with their families and their friends, when they are here and we would encourage that contact. We regularly have phone contact with parents. We support our Young People in attending clubs and recreational facilities if their night of residence at Sunflower House coincides with this.

We strive to engage parents with improving our service. We have a suggestion box, a regular newsletter and monthly Voice Group for the children as well as keyworker sessions.

Protection of Children

Approach to Monitoring and Surveillance

In order to ensure the unit is secure there is a door code and swipe card system for staff and all visitors are checked on arrival to the building and have to sign in the visitor's book. Maintenance workers have ID checks and also sign themselves in and fill in any relevant logs e.g. asbestos log. All visitors are made aware of the fire procedure, which is identified in the visitor's book on arrival to the unit.

Children can call for help in their rooms, the toilets and bathrooms by pulling a buzzer cord. Children and young people can also be monitored in their rooms by the use of an intercom, with an indicator light that shows when the intercom is being used. The intercom is primarily used to be able to hear children that may need staff but are unable to use the buzzer. Its use is recorded on care plans to ensure that we balance children's rights to privacy with the need to keep them safe. Non recording monitoring cameras can also be used if consent obtained and in the best interest of the child.

Arrangements for the Protection of Children

Children have a right to protection. The procedural guidance for staff clearly demonstrates the systems required to safeguard children and minimise the risk of abuse. The home has developed communication tools to encourage the young

people to communicate their wishes, feelings and concerns.

The manager and two Residential Workers are the Designated Safeguarding Leads currently.. Safeguarding concerns and procedures to follow are discussed in supervision, team meetings and management meetings. Any safeguarding issues are given the highest priority and advice is sought from relevant professionals.

Staff receive child protection training and follow Bedford Borough Local

Safeguarding Children's Board policies which outline what action staff should take if they have reason to believe a young person may be at risk of harm.

All staff, (including agency staff if we use them), undergo rigorous checks prior to employment at Sunflower House, including DBS checks. Medical checks, references and a full career history is obtained. During interview we seek out whether staff have the right values including their attitude and understanding regarding working with young people with disabilities.

At Sunflower House, when taking any new admission to the unit, an assessment of the young person's needs is carried out. Within this process we will consider if the young person is compatible with the other children and young people who access the service. When completing allocations for short breaks and taking new admissions (if required) to long term care, an assessment will be completed to ensure that the new young person and the current young people are not put at any known risk. If known risks are likely to occur, then appropriate measures will be put into place to manage the risk.

At Sunflower House the young person will be allocated their own room for the duration of their stay. Children/young people staying long term or for shared care have their own room.

In the unfortunate event if a young person was to go missing from the home, Bedford Borough Council has a policy in place, to guide and support staff during this situation, the policy works jointly with Bedfordshire Police.

A supporting document 'Safeguarding Children and Young People Who Run Away and go Missing from Home and Care' gives a step by step approach to staff if a young person was to go missing. This joint policy includes the safeguarding boards from Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. There is also guidance for

assessing vulnerability and risk. The manager will always be informed immediately of such events and, in the absence of the manager the deputy manager or the on call person will be informed to take an overview of the situation ensuring policy and procedures are being adhered to.

Alongside the above policy, Bedford Borough also has a Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention and Intervention Strategy. Working with partner agencies to raise awareness among its staff of the risks to children and young people of sexual exploitation; ensuring that staff are able to recognise the signs and symptom indicating that children and young people are at risk and what action to take. This includes:

- Ensuring that Sunflower House staff receive appropriate training including attending the LSCB multi-agency training where appropriate to their role.
- Ensuring that Sunflower House staff are aware of the CSE Panel and of the need to refer all children and young people thought to be at risk to CSE Panel as well as making the necessary child protection referrals and other multiagency mechanisms to share intelligence, identify “hot spots”, plan and implement multi-agency interventions to protect children and young people and prevent and disrupt sexual exploitation.
- Ensuring that any intelligence about possible activity indicating sexual exploitation is referred to the Police.

We ensure the building and equipment at Sunflower House is appropriate for young people’s needs and is safe and well-maintained. Checks of the facilities and environment are carried out in line with Bedford Borough Procedures; this includes weekly health and safety checks and tests of our fire alarm. At Sunflower House we carry out regular fire evacuations with the young people to ensure they are aware of the fire procedure and how to stay safe. All our children/young people have Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP’s) in place.

Sunflower House have regular inspections from the local fire service according to Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, where they review the internal system in place which includes our Fire risk assessment and training.

All accidents/incidents or ‘near-misses’ are recorded and signed off by a manager who will identify any action that needs to be taken to reduce risk and prevent a reoccurrence.

They will also make sure any statutory notifications required for looked after children are made.

The building has key pad access and an enclosed rear garden.

Research

Research on the protection of disabled children indicates that they are more at risk of being abused than non disabled children. 1, However, they are less likely than other children in need to become the subject of child protection plans. 2, this suggests either that risks to disabled children are not well identified or that support effectively reduces risks and helps to keep them safe. The Ofsted thematic inspection (2012) found evidence that low level risks were managed effectively through timely multi agency early support but that children who were in receipt of child in need services too often had child protection needs which went unidentified. When children were made subject to child protection plans good progress was usually made in reducing risks.

Disabled children are more dependent than other children on their parents and carers for:

- Helping them access services that they need to ensure that their health needs are met.
- Ensuring that they are living in a safe environment

Impact of neglect on disabled children is therefore significant. This is not always recognised in time and in many child protection cases examined by Ofsted neglect was the key risk, children had previously received support as children in need for a long time Despite the lack of improvement for the child there was delays in recognising that the levels of neglect had met the threshold for child protection. In Many of these cases the impact of poor parenting on the child was not clearing seen and the focus on the child was lost.

1. Sullivan and JF Knutson 'Maltreatment and Disabilities: a population based epidemiological study. Child abuse and neglect 24 (10) 2000 pp 1257-1273
<http://childabusemd.com/disabilities/disabilities-resourceshtml>
2. Children in need census as of 31 March 2011, department of Education, 2011
www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d001025/index.shtml

Behaviour Support

(a) We do not use physical restraint within the home. We recognise though that children and young people with disabilities can at times exhibit behaviours that place themselves, their peers and staff at risk. Sunflower House staff work closely with other professionals and family to look at possible causes or triggers and look at the level of risk that behaviour presents. We then work with the young person, parents/carers, school and other professionals as appropriate to agree strategies to support the young person with their behaviour, and may include behaviour management plans.

We will always try to de-escalate any situation by distracting the young person which may include:

- Time away from the peer group under supervision of staff.
- Change of environment and/or activity.
- Avoidance of situation.

Aided by:

- Clear boundaries and routines.
- Positive reinforcement and praise for desired behaviour.
- A commitment of safety and security for all.

Some of the children that attend Sunflower House use wheelchairs with postural straps. They will have straps around the waist, chest and to keep their feet in place. This could be regarded as restraining the children as it limits their movement but it is done to ensure their personal safety and that their posture is correct, and has been previously agreed by a health professional. We ensure that the children sometimes get out of their wheelchairs, so they can move around freely within a safe environment.

We also have double handles on some doors e.g. the laundry door to prevent children who could be at risk entering those rooms. A few of the children have custom made signs reminding them they shouldn't access specific areas, e.g. the kitchen, as they may be at risk if unaccompanied.

(b) Staff are not trained in restraint.

Leadership and Management

The Registered Provider

The home is provided by:

Bedford Borough Council,
Borough Hall, Caudwell Street,
Bedford, MK42 9AP
Telephone: 01234 363222

Bedford Borough Council elected members are the Registered Provider.

Responsible Individual:

Christian Weatherley
Principle Social Worker / Manager for Social Work Practice
Bedford Borough Council, Children's Services
5th Floor, Borough Hall,
Caudwell Street,
Bedford, MK42 9AP

Telephone: 01234 276746 (44746) / 07540 704985

christian.weatherley@bedford.gov.uk

Registered Manager:

Sally Summers
Sunflower House,
6 Woodcote,
Bedford, MK41 8EJ
Telephone: 01234 718107

sally.summers@bedford.gov.uk

The Sunflower House Team

The Responsible Individual - is responsible for the supervision of the Registered Manager and the quality and delivery of a safe service.

The Registered Responsible Individual's qualifications are:

- Qualified Social Worker

Christian has over 20 years' experience in a variety of social care settings. He qualified as a social worker in 1995 and went on to work within Local Authority child protection, looked after children and children with disabilities teams. He has had a variety of experiences in his career, working in several local authority areas as a Manager for Child in Need and Child Protection. He joined Bedford in August 2015 as the MASH manager and became the Principle Social Worker in December 2020. He is also the Head of Service for Children with Disabilities Team and the Social Work academy.

The Registered Manager is responsible for the day to day operational management of the unit. The Registered manager is Sally Summers.

The Registered Manager's qualifications are:

- MCI Level 5 in Leadership and Management
- NVQ 4 Registered Managers Award
- Foundation Degree in Care Management

Sally has over 30 years' experience of residential work, working with people with a vast range of needs. She has had a variety of roles including residential social worker, Team leader and Deputy Manager She was successful in securing the acting up role as Manager in August 2015 on a secondment basis and had previously been the Deputy Manager since 1997. She was registered as Manager with Ofsted in January 2016 and has been in the Permanent Managers post since December 2017. She has all the mandatory training for residential work in addition to Health and Safety for Managers, Safeguarding, recruitment and selection, conflict management, supervision and appraisals. Her qualifications include NVQ 4/ Registered Managers Award, Foundation Degree in Care Management and MCI level 5 in Leadership and Management. Working at Sunflower House as deputy for so many years has given her management experience to lead the team to ensure the children and young people receive consistent and high quality

The Deputy Manager is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the unit and assisting the registered manager. The deputy manager is Helen Fox.

The Deputy Manager’s qualifications are:

- Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare
- BA Hons in Applied Social Science with Women’s Studies
- NVQ 3 in Health and Social Care, Children and Young People
- GNVQ 2 and 3 in Health and Social Care

Experience: Helen has worked at Sunflower House since 2006. Helen worked as a Residential worker for 10 years before becoming deputy manager. Helen has extensive experience of working with children with disabilities and young adults in an education a special needs school setting and residential college for 18-24-year-old with disabilities.

Staffing Structure

Sunflower House has a manager, deputy manager, domestic, cook, 7 full-time residential workers, 7 part-time residential workers and 5 relief residential workers.

The Manager is accountable to the Manager of Social Work practise who is the Responsible Individual, and ultimately the Executive Director of Children Services.

Residential Workers

DS - Residential Worker – Full time

D has considerable experience of working with children / young people and adults with a vast range of needs in a variety of roles and in various settings. She has been at Sunflower House since 2001. Dawn has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ2, 3 and NVQ4 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People. Dawn has keyworker responsibilities.

RC - Residential Worker – Full time

R has experience of working with children in a variety of settings. R has worked at Sunflower House since 2006. He has training relevant to residential work and holds a Degree in Health & Social Care. R has keyworker responsibilities and the Diploma level 3 in Residential Care.

SW - Residential Worker – Full time

S has 25 years' experience of working in various residential settings also with children and young people in various school settings. S holds an NVQ3 qualification in children's learning and development 0-19yrs. S joined Sunflower House in April 2018 and has keyworker responsibilities as well as being the designated safeguard lead. She has the Diploma in Residential Care qualification level 3 .

MK - Residential worker Full time

MK joined the Sunflower Team in April 2018 as a relief RW. She was successful in securing a 32 hour post in September 2019, then full time in July 2020. She worked at St John Special school for 12 years so has a vast amount of experience and has also worked at Mencap Play scheme and done home and community care with Children with Disabilities. She holds a Bachelor of Arts and has completed all mandatory training as required. She has completed her Diploma level 3 in Residential Care.

SB - Residential worker Full time

SB has worked at Sunflower House since 2025. She has vast experience working for the community nursing team and special needs schools. SB is enrolling in the level 4 children's, young people and families practitioner diploma in June 26.

LP - Residential worker Full time

LP has worked at Sunflower House since 2025. Before this she worked in the local special school and has lots of experience in working with children with disabilities . She is currently undertaking the level 4 Children's, young people and families practitioner diploma.

ER - Residential worker Full time

E has worked at Sunflower House since 2021. He is a trained lifeguard and has experience of working for a young man with complex health needs. He has a level 4 in Children's, young people and families practitioner.

KH - Residential Worker – Part time

K has worked at Sunflower House since 1993, she has a wealth of knowledge in residential settings. K has worked part time, relief , acting deputy manager and then on waking nights for a number of years. She has all the mandatory training for residential and in addition recruitment and Selection and Supervision and Appraisals.

CMc - Residential Worker – Part time

CMc has work experience in other residential settings. C started work at Sunflower House in 2006 as a full timer; she is now part-time since having her family. C has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ3 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People. C has keyworker responsibilities. She has also completed her Diploma level 3 in Residential Care.

HH - Residential Worker – Part time

H has worked at Sunflower House since 2016, previous to this she has a wealth of experience working with Children with Disabilities, working as a learning support assistant in Special schools

She has also been a specialist community nursery nurse, supporting health technology dependent children in their homes, school and to various appointments. Providing emergency medical care, and supporting with personal care and play activities. She has an NVQ in Childcare and has completed the Diploma level 3 in Residential Care.

AA - Residential Worker – Part time

A has previously worked at a special needs school and at Foxgloves as a full time Residential Worker. She has many years' experience working with children with disabilities and has completed all the relevant training. She has worked at Sunflower House in a relief position and then in a part time position since 2024.

SH - Residential Worker Waking Nights – Part time

Sarah spent many years as a nurse and midwife before joining the team at Sunflower House in 2005. Sarah has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ3 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People. Sarah also holds a People Handling Skills Trainer qualification and provides our in-house Manual Handling training.

TC - Residential Worker Waking Nights – Part time

T has many years' experience in a variety of settings before joining the team at Sunflower House in 2001. T has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ3 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People

HW - Residential Worker – Part time.

H has worked at Sunflower House since 1990. She started in a full time position then went to relief following being on maternity leave. She has recently been successful in securing a part time Residential Worker post. H has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ3 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People.

Relief Residential Workers

JC - J has worked at Sunflower House since 1994. J has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ3 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People.

RD - R has worked at Sunflower House since 2001. R has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ3 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People.

LS - L has worked at Sunflower House since 2001. L has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ3 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People.

NS - N has worked at Sunflower House since 2006. N has training relevant to residential work and holds the NVQ3 in Health & Social Care, Children and Young People. N also worked at Foxgloves another Bedford Borough Residential unit and had a role for a year as an independence travel trainer.

LB - L has vast experience working with young people between the ages of 10 and 18 years old and works within the youth offending team at Bedford Borough Council. L has undertaken relevant training to support young people in a residential setting. L joined the Sunflower team in April 2018.

All Residential Workers have completed mandatory training in:

Safeguarding children, equality and diversity, oxygen, oral suction, gastro feeding, Medication, epilepsy and administration of buccal midazolam, moving and handling, first aid, infection control, food hygiene, fire awareness in addition to NVQ level 3 or equivalent (or working towards). 10- day staff also drive the minibus so need to complete and regularly update Midas training.

Between them they have the following qualifications:

- NVQ level 2 and 3 in Health and Social Care.
- Level 3 Diploma in Residential Childcare.
- BA (Hons) degrees in: Health and Social Care and Social Sciences as well as History.
- 7 Residential workers currently hold the Level 4 Children, young people and Families Practitioner
- 1 is enrolling in June 2026.

DH - Cook – Part time

D has worked at Sunflower House since 2023. She has many years of experience in the catering sector in education and other care homes.

The Cook's qualifications are:

- Nutrition.
- Food safety 1 and 2.
- First aid.
- Infection control.
- Health and safety.

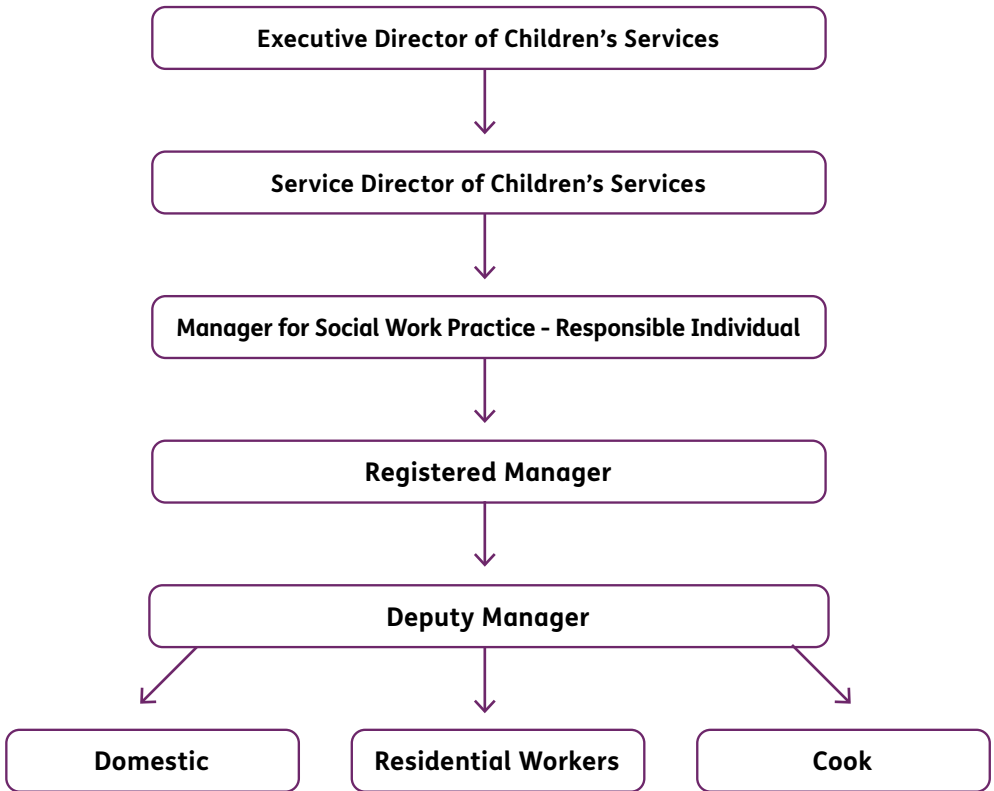
CA - Domestic – Part time

C has worked at Sunflower House since 2025. She has lots of experience in cleaning schools and care homes.

The Domestic Qualifications are:

- Health and Safety
- COSSH
- Risk assessments
- First Aid

Line of Accountability



Staff are recruited according to Bedford Borough Council Recruitment and Selection Process. This includes a rigorous selection process and vetting. All staff, including agency staff, undergoes rigorous checks prior to employment including Disclosure & Barring Service checks (formerly CRB). Medical checks, references and a full career history are obtained.

During interview we seek to find whether staff have the right attitudes and aptitudes to working with young people with additional needs. Following recruitment staff complete an extended period of induction which lasts for 6 weeks. This includes a 6-month probationary period.

Sunflower House recognises that staff are a most valued resource. We aim to build on and develop their existing skills and see this as a vital ingredient in the provision of a quality service.

Each residential staff member is either qualified to NVQ level 3 in Health & Social Care/Diploma or equivalent or working towards this qualification. Staff have varied experience of working in the care sector and have specialist knowledge about different disabilities. Staff undertake regular training to keep them informed about new ideas and professional practice and developments; which covers the areas of managing epilepsy, first aid, child protection, medication administration and moving and handling. Specialist courses such as autism awareness are also delivered and staff are encouraged to develop their skills and knowledge.

The training that is proposed for the next 6 months is safeguarding, Midas, speech and language therapy, health – shunt awareness, gastrostomy, buccal midazolam, stoma and VNs.

Supervision

All full time staff receives formal monthly supervision with one of the management team (fortnightly for new staff on their probationary period)

Part time staff receives supervision every 2 months and relief / agency staff every 2nd month.

During the month of August, due to the school summer holidays, supervisions may be postponed in order to meet the staffing needs of the service. If this is the case, then supervisions will be held in the first 2 weeks of September.

Occasionally group supervisions may take place for waking night staff if all in agreement.

All staff have an annual PPD review of their development, which enables them to set goals and identify training needed for the year ahead. A written copy of their Personal Progress Discussion is kept on the staff members support and supervision file.

There is Performance Improvement policy in place to help manage and improve poor performance.

On Call Arrangements

There is an on call system for out of hour's emergencies. Staff can call the on call manager during the evening and at weekends; they can be contacted via the on call mobile. Details of the manager who is on call is notified on the rota and hand over sheet.

Number On Days: the rota is compiled around the individual children/young people staying in the unit, there will usually be a minimum of 2 staff in the building when children are present (occasionally 1 for short periods for 1 child if risked assessed for short periods). More staff may be required depending on the needs of the children, occasionally there will be 4 staff on shift if children/young people have very complex needs 1 to 1 ratio.

Agency Staff: due to having an excellent team of relief staff, we very rarely use agency staff but in order to comply with regulations no more than 50% of staff, on any one shift can be from an external agency. All agency staff would have the same rigorous checks as permanent staff and an induction to the unit. We would ensure we use a 'core' of staff that are known to the home so they are familiar with the work and the children that stay. Due to the children's communication and complex health needs, consistency of care is vital. All agency staff need to meet minimum standards regarding training e.g. training in manual handling, safeguarding etc.

Numbers at Night: there will always be a minimum of 2 staff on duty at night. Night staff work from 21:30 until 07:15. This may be 2 waking night members of staff, or one waking night and one sleeping in dependant on the need of the children/young people staying at the time.

Ancillary Staff: there is a domestic in post who ensures the building is cleaned to a high standard and all rooms are personalised for individual children staying.

Management of Staff: the management team covers from Monday to Friday 09:00 to 17:00 and some evenings and weekends. This is flexible on the need of the service, allowing time to spend with children and staff during their "working week". On each shift, a benchmark residential worker is identified as the shift leader and is responsible for the overall management of that shift and identifying tasks at handover/shift planning. Managers also cover on call duty on a rota basis.

Staff in the Building: (when children are not present) there are usually 2 people in the building. On occasions this can be reduced to one person and, rarely, the building is empty.

Promoting Appropriate Role Models within the Home

Our team is predominately female. We have two male residential workers. The majority of the children and young people are staying with us for short breaks and so spend time with their families who may have role models of both sexes. They also spend time at school and in the community where they witness different role models. We discuss issues regarding role models with the children and young people according to their level of ability.

Care Planning

Admission to the Home

Sunflower House offers short breaks for young people with physical, associated learning disabilities and complex needs aged seven to eighteen years of age. Many have complex needs which may require the need for gastric feeding, management of seizures, manual handling and oxygen. If appropriate following an impact risk assessment, we can offer shared care or long stay.

When a young person is referred to Sunflower House we will allocate a key worker who will take the lead in planning care for the young person to be provided at Sunflower House. They will liaise with the family and social worker along with meeting the young person and spending time with them. We obtain information from the social worker which includes a panel decision, children and family assessment and the short breaks care plan. The paperwork and review process varies according to whether the child or young person has short breaks or shared care which means they are a looked after child.

Admission to Sunflower House is via referral to Integrated Front Door who then refer on to the children with disabilities team, if appropriate, and then the social work team contact Sunflower House. On the basis of assessed need, the young person's social worker will then complete a recommendation to a panel to consider approval of the placement. On referral from the social worker we

will complete a residential placement plan, this will consider individual needs of the young person being referred, peer compatibility, environmental needs and availability to provide the service required. We also carry out a visit to the child's home and a school visit. We do not offer stays within the short break service that exceed 28 days, unless it is deemed in a young person's best interest and advice and an agreement for an extended stay has been sought from Ofsted. The number of nights allocated per month is approved through the allocation panel or ARP (Allocation Resource Panel) they take in to consideration the assessments completed and resources available. Within this process the key worker will gather information on the young person religious and cultural background and will put in place any measure to support the young person during their time at Sunflower House.

The key worker will keep risk assessments, guidance, and allowances up to date alongside the residential placement care plan.

We have to keep a number of records at Sunflower House, including a general log of the activities of the home, daily records of the young person's wellbeing, records of administration of medication, and records of accidents and incidents. Wherever possible young people will be asked to contribute to these records where they are able to do so. Communication tools have been developed to encourage and enable young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.

We also complete a Home/Sunflower House communication book for some children, to give parents/carers and social workers an overview and feedback of how the young person has been during their stay. All records are kept securely, and young people have a right to request access to their records.

Statutory reviews for looked after children will take place in accordance to the Looked after Children guidance. The review is chaired by an independent review manager, and involves the young person, their parents/carers, school, key worker and any other relevant professional. Children in need (under section 17 i.e.

having short breaks) will be reviewed by their social worker, the family and other professionals. This decision is reviewed at least every six months to ensure the provision still meets the need of the young person and their family. Any change to allocation of nights is approved through this process.

Needs of young people are re-assessed through the duration of the placement at Sunflower House, at times young people's needs change as they grow. Should a young person needs significantly change and we are unable to meet their needs we will fully discuss this with parents/carers and the social worker to look at what resources may be needed to support them, or what other short break or long term care services may be more appropriate.

Transport to the home from school is provided by Sunflower House. Transport is not provided to or from home during school holidays or weekends by Sunflower House. Families who have additional travel needs can discuss them with the young person's social worker.

Working in partnership is an essential aspect of our role as a provider of residential care, to enable us to provide a consistent and person centred support package, it is necessary for all professional documents to be provided by the young person's social worker prior to admission. The review of needs, ARP/ MAP documents, updated plans and assessments must be provided throughout the duration of admission to the service. We are unable to offer a care package to young people where these documents are not in place.

Whilst we at Sunflower House endeavour to meet requests for admission dates, please be reminded that school holidays and weekends are highly sought after so we try to operate a fair system for admissions to ensure all children and families benefit from respite care over these periods.

Emergency Admissions

We do not routinely take emergency admissions, following the advice in the Quality Standards:

‘Emergency admissions should not be taken unless the home’s Statement of Purpose and its capacity and support systems mean that it has the capability to care for children admitted at very short notice while continuing to offer quality care to children’

The quality and purpose of care standard, 3.6

Where a child needs to access the unit at short notice the unit manager would need to ensure that the children/young people meet the admission criteria for the home, that the home has undertaken an assessment process and that the relevant paperwork is supplied to the home prior to the child/young person being admitted. There would also need to be a consideration of the needs of the children already accessing the service to ensure minimal disruption to their care, physically and emotionally.

We do not usually offer just a day care facility, but individual situations would be looked at if the need arises and all relevant information / documentation obtained and impact assessment completed.

Notes

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please contact us at our address below.

Për Informacion

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Informacija

برای اطلاع

Za Informacije

Per Informazione

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Sunflower House

6 Woodcote

Putnoe

Bedford

MK41 8EJ



01234 718107



Info.SunflowerHouse@bedford.gov.uk