

# My Choice Information Booklet



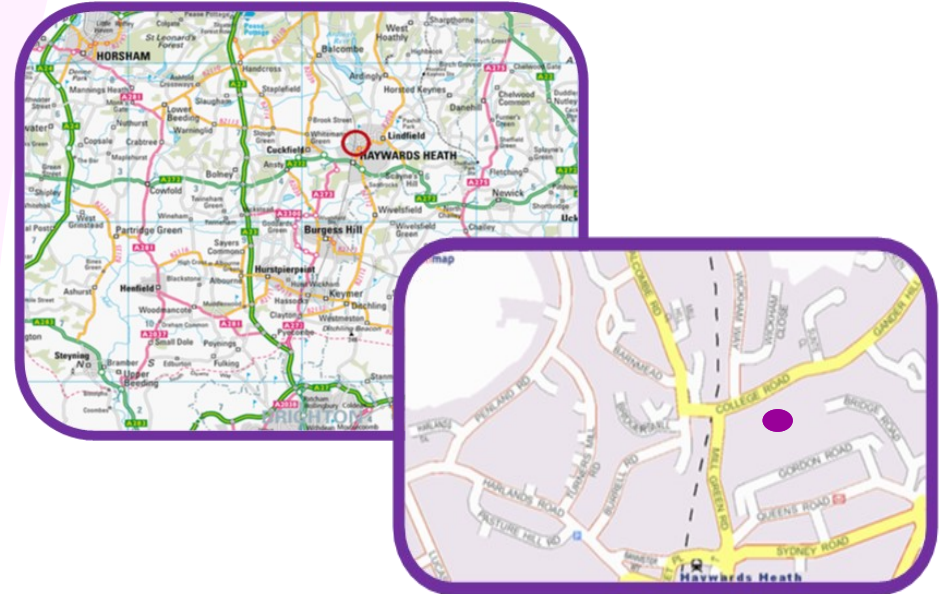
**2017**

# “Proactive Approach to the Development of Young People”



## Where to Find Us

Sussex is situated in the South East corner of England. It has over 80 miles of coastline incorporating some of England's finest beaches. We are fortunate to have lovely gardens and an abundance of history and heritage including castles, abbeys, stately homes and historic houses. There are family amusement parks and several wildlife centres and a wealth of museums, steam railways and caves. Sussex boasts numerous theatres and arts festivals, sporting opportunities and leisure centres. Sussex has many large areas of outstanding natural beauty including the South Downs and the Ashdown Forest.



For further details, please visit our website  
at  
[www.my-choice-homes.com](http://www.my-choice-homes.com)

## Reference – Abbreviations (Acronyms)

ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AQA	Assessment and Qualifications Alliance
ASC	Autism Spectrum Condition
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorders
BESD	Behavioral, Emotional Social Difficulties
BILD	British Institute of Learning Difficulties
CAMHs	Children and Adult Mental Health Service
CBT	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CWDC	Children's Workforce Development Council
CYPW	Children and Young People Workforce
CP	Child Protection
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families
DDP	Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy
DoH	Department of Health
DFE	Department for Education
EBD	Emotional Behavioral Difficulties
EMDR	Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing
HT	Head Teacher
ICT	Information Communications Technology
ICO	Information Commissioners Office (data protection)
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
LA	Local Authority
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LAC	Looked After Child
MOMO	Mind of My Own App
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
NWG	National Working Group
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PAC	Professionals Around the Child
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
RCM	Registered Care Manager
RI	Responsible Individual
RSW	Residential Support Worker
SEBD	Social Emotional Behavioral Difficulties
SECOM	A security alarm system
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SFT	Solution Focused Therapy
SMSC	Moral, Social and Cultural Development
VIG	Video Interactive Guidance
YOS	Youth Offending Service

## About Us

We founded My Choice in January 1999, to provide residential care for 'Looked After Children' and have established an environment that is child orientated and needs led. We provide positive life enhancing opportunities for young people who are unable to sustain a placement in parental homes, foster homes or conventional children's homes.

Our experience of working in and managing residential homes and schools has led us to believe that children grow and flourish in small family style homes. We therefore provide a safe and secure environment, supporting children and empowering them to face issues both in their past and present that may have caused difficulties.

Our homes provide a comfortable, non-institutional environment for young people to begin to work towards their future and independence.

All of our homes are registered and we have established a very positive working relationship with Ofsted. We work in partnership with all our Placing Authorities, believing that open, clear and constant communication between the home, the young person, parents, families and the social worker is essential to ensure effective and safe childcare. Where appropriate we will always support and encourage a young person's return to home or to alternative carers.

At My Choice, the young people are encouraged to make positive choices with their lives with staff support. The choices they make can influence their future plans and goals. The staff team, with other professionals supporting each young person, guide and encourage these life choices within the boundaries of the home and society.

We believe all young people bring with them unique life experiences and as such we treat each as an individual, being very clear about their specific needs. We look after the young person, not the perceived problem.

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the Quality Standards, form the basis of the regulatory framework of the Care Standards Act 2000.

## Our Homes

### OUR HOMES ARE 2, 3 & 4 BEDDED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10–18 YEARS WHO DISPLAY CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR



#### Ivy Cottage

is a large 3 bedded home located in a quiet area of West Sussex. The home is close to local facilities and road and rail networks. The home is within easy reach of the main East and West Sussex towns and all amenities there, for example, stables, leisure centres, cinemas, library and shopping centres.

#### Osprey House

is a large 3 bedded home in a residential area of Surrey. The home is close to local facilities and road and rail networks. The home is within easy reach of the main West Sussex and Surrey towns and access to all amenities, for example, stables, leisure centres, cinemas, library and shopping centres.



#### Kingfisher View

is a 3 bedded home located in a quiet rural area of West Sussex. This period property has extensive gardens set within three and a half acres. The three bedrooms are all double sized. There is a very large kitchen and dining room.



#### Oak House

is a large 4 bedded detached property located in East Sussex. Set within extensive gardens which ensures privacy for the home. The home has good access to road & rail networks. Many taxi firms and a bus service are in operation near by.



## Disclosure & Barring Service

As an organisation using the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) to assess applicants suitability for positions of trust, My Choice Children's Homes Ltd complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants fairly. We undertake not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or other information revealed.

As a registered provider of both children's homes and schools with Ofsted all persons employed, concerned with the provision of care or who carry out their duties wholly or partly on the premises where such provision takes place are obliged to disclose any criminal convictions, conditional discharges, bindovers or cautions that they have been subject to **at any time in the past** (both current and spent). All applications forms detail this requirement

My Choice require all staff to be the subject of an enhanced disclosure via the Disclosure & Barring Service prior to the commencement of employment and yearly intervals thereafter. We require candidates/employee's to provide, upon request, relevant valid documentation with regard to such checks.

## Employee Reward Scheme



As part of your employment package at My Choice, you are also entitled to a range of discounts, money off vouchers and offers on a range of areas of interest, such as shopping, eating out and entertainment along with a host of other great options as part of the employee reward scheme that we run in conjunction with Perkbox. Once you have worked for My Choice for a month you will be provided with details of how to obtain these great savings and offers.

*"The smiley house people"*

**My Choice Children's Homes Ltd**

## Recruitment & Selection Statement

Due to the nature of the position this allows My Choice Children's Homes Ltd to ask questions about your convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings as defined in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and associate orders. The amendment to the exceptions order 1975 (2013) provide that certain spent convictions are 'protected' and are not subject to disclosure to employers, and cannot be taken into account. Guidance and criteria on the filtering of these cautions and convictions can be found at the Disclosure and Barring Service website.

### Induction

Induction is the process by which an employee is introduced to:

- The job role, responsibilities and standards of performance/ conduct expected through an induction training programme
- How the Organisation operates.
- Immediate colleagues and other relevant employees and the environment.
- Organisation policies and procedures.
- The general rules and conditions relating to employment.

The induction supports individuals in a way that is appropriate for the role for which they have been employed. It provides opportunities for a new member of staff to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities; and enable the person's line manager or mentor to recognise any concerns or issues about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately.

An Induction Checklist covers all the main issues which need to be considered during the induction programme. To comply with Health and Safety regulations all necessary steps must be taken to protect the health and safety of our employees. During the induction process, employees are made aware of our arrangements for ensuring that safe working practice prevails and their attention is drawn to such matters as the location of fire appliances, fire exits accident book, risk assessments etc.

We wish you luck with your application.

If you have any questions, please contact us on 01444 446920

## Our Homes



### Maple House

is a pleasant family sized home in West Sussex. There are two bedrooms for young people, a large lounge, a separate kitchen and dining room. Maple House is a short walk from the local town centre which provides all amenities. A main line railway station, swimming pool and the South Downs are all nearby

### Ocean Pearl

is a large 3 bedded home located in a quiet West Sussex village. The home has a modern Scandinavian design with an upstairs conservatory overlooking the garden. The home is close to local facilities and road and rail networks.



### Pebble House

is a pleasant family sized home in West Sussex. There are two bedrooms for young people and two sleeping in rooms for staff. The home has a large lounge furnished to a high standard and a modern kitchen.

### Kestral House

is a pleasant 4 bedded detached three story home in West Sussex. Built in the 1800's, the home has been modernised to a high standard. The home is located close to the local amenities and is near the main line station.



### Neptune House—To be Registered

is a large four bedded home located West Sussex. The property is a large semi detached family style home. It has seven bedrooms altogether, four young people rooms and three staff sleep-in rooms. The home is located near the town centre and train station.

When young people are placed at the home they arrive through a planned or emergency admission. The home provides a safe environment for them often at times when they are in crisis in their lives. We support children with their past experiences and give them the opportunity to build a more stable future.

## Our Homes

In general our service provides care for young people with emotional/behavioural difficulties which often culminate in challenging behaviour. We look after young people on the Autistic Spectrum and with mental health issues, involved in Youth offending, CSE, self harming tendencies.

## Accommodation

All bedrooms for young people are solely for their use and as such no rooms are ever shared. The rooms are all double sized and furnished with a single bed, wardrobe, chest of drawers and any other appropriate furniture. There are sleeping in rooms for staff and adequate bathrooms for the whole household. Each home has a large kitchen next to which is the dining room where everyone sits to have meals together.



Each home has a lounge which is furnished to a high standard and the place where young people can spend time together and with staff to watch television, play games or generally relax. The school room is where young people who are not in mainstream placement spend their set daily hours with the homes teacher.

Each home has a working office which provides a secure area for staff to complete record keeping and store confidential information.

**We view special days for the young people (birthdays, cultural/religious festivals) with great importance. We involve the young people in planning for these days.**



Young people are actively encouraged to share their wishes and feelings within the home. They are aware that they can talk to staff at any time.

Weekly Young Persons Meetings provide an opportunity to share feelings regarding the day to day running of the home, and discuss current issues as well as things they think are going well.

Each young person has an individual Key worker, with whom they meet on a regular basis. The young people discuss how things are going for them, looking at specific areas they would like to work on or develop for themselves. For example: in relation to behaviour.

## Recruitment & Selection Statement

They explore any gaps in the candidate's employment history; and concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or a referee. The panel also ask candidates to confirm the details they have written on their application and if they wish to declare anything in light of the requirement for a DBS Disclosure.

The interview panel will give full consideration to whether to appoint or not. Comprehensive notes of the interview will be kept together with the reasons for invitation to second interview or refusal of appointment.

Following the selection of the candidate(s) to whom you wish to shortlist for second stage of selection, you need to take the following action:

- **Successful candidates** – we arrange second interview
- **Unsuccessful candidates** - we send a suitable letter saying that they have not been successful but thanking them for their interest.

### Conditional Offer of Appointment

An offer of appointment to the successful candidate will be conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least three satisfactory references (two employment and one character)
- Verification of eligibility to work in the UK
- Overseas checks where required
- Satisfactory Enhanced DBS Disclosure

DBS checks form part of the recruitment process for all positions at My Choice Children's Homes. At application stage we encourage all applicants to provide details of their criminal record. We request that this information is sent under separate, confidential cover, to a designated person within My Choice Children's Homes Ltd and we guarantee that this information will only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. Only successful job applicants will have their completed Disclosure application processed or permission will be given from the successful applicant to allow My Choice Children's Homes to access their on-line certificate with the DBS Update Service.

## Recruitment & Selection Statement

References for teachers will be sought on all short listed candidates and will be obtained before interview so that any issues of concern they raise can be explored further with the referee and taken up with the candidate at interview. References for support staff and all other staff will be sought at job offer acceptance stage.

### Interviewing and Selection

Interviews aim to assess the merits of each candidate against the job requirements and to explore each candidate's suitability to work with challenging young people. The interview will normally consist of the following:

#### Standardised written task appropriate to role

- A face to face interview with an appropriate Manager/ Director and Recruitment Manager
- An opportunity to learn more about My Choice and the vacant post
- Details of the terms and conditions of the post
- Details of the candidate's present job i.e. Responsibilities, achievements, key tasks etc.
- Why were they attracted to this job?
- What do they know about the Organisation?
- Questions to thoroughly check out the information provided on the Application Form or CV, verify dates, claimed previous employment record, responsibility levels, experiences and if they can confirm whether they have any current or spent police cautions or convictions that are not protected
- What have been their achievements?

#### Information about their academic and work qualifications

All Care Staff have interview questions devised as appropriate to the job role and all teachers have interview questions reviewed by the Head Teacher and Recruitment Manager. The questions should be consistently asked to all candidates. The panel explores the candidate's attitude toward children and young people; their ability to support the company agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

## My Choice Referral Procedure

- Initial enquiry is usually in the form of an email from Local Authority Commissioning and Placement Teams
- Initial enquires are considered by the Operation & Senior Managers
- Further information requested, for example; education reports, health reports, psychologists assessments, chronology, CAMHS information, Youth Offending reports etc
- Providers Response completed
- Introductions planned when appropriate
- 24 hour management plans, essential information and risk assessments completed
- Room organised with Welcome Pack



## Therapeutic Intervention

We support any ongoing therapeutic arrangements & have established links with Beacon House Psychological Services, CAMHS, LifeTrain UK and Christine Bradley.

Beacon House offers a team of professional, friendly and highly experienced Chartered Psychologists and Psychotherapists. Please refer to our Statement of Purpose for full details.

LifeTrain UK offer specialist training for staff, 1:1 and group therapy for young people.



## Care Structure of the Homes

Directors (Responsible Person)  
 Senior Managers  
 Registered Care Manager  
 Deputy Care Manager  
 Senior Residential Support Worker  
 Residential Support Worker  
 Teacher

## Example Rota

The shift pattern for all full-time Residential Support Workers will be two days on followed by three days off.

		RSW 1	RSW 2	RSW 3	RSW 4	RSW 5	RSW 6	RSW 7	RSW 8
Wed	01-Jan		RSW 2	RSW 3				RSW 7	
Thu	02-Jan			RSW 3	RSW 4			RSW 7	
Fri	03-Jan				RSW 4	RSW 5			RSW 8
Sat	04-Jan	RSW 1				RSW 5	RSW 6		RSW 8
Sun	05-Jan	RSW 1	RSW 2				RSW 6		
Mon	06-Jan		RSW 2	RSW 3				RSW 7	
Tue	07-Jan			RSW 3	RSW 4			RSW 7	
Wed	08-Jan				RSW 4	RSW 5			RSW 8
Thu	09-Jan	RSW 1				RSW 5	RSW 6		RSW 8
Fri	10-Jan	RSW 1	RSW 2				RSW 6		
Sat	11-Jan		RSW 2	RSW 3				RSW 7	
Sun	12-Jan			RSW 3	RSW 4			RSW 7	
Mon	13-Jan				RSW 4	RSW 5			RSW 8
Tue	14-Jan	RSW 1				RSW 5	RSW 6		RSW 8
Wed	15-Jan	RSW 1	RSW 2				RSW 6		
Thu	16-Jan		RSW 2	RSW 3				RSW 7	
Fri	17-Jan			RSW 3	RSW 4			RSW 7	

### Full Time Shift Pattern

Shift one starts 10.00—23.00  
 Sleep in shift one 23.00 - 08.00  
 Shift one ends 08.00 - 10.00  
 Shift two starts 10.00 - 23.00  
 Sleep in shift two 23.00 - 08.00  
 Shift two ends 08.00 - 10.00  
 Off 3 days from end of shift 2

## Recruitment & Selection Statement

It is our duty as the employer to ensure that the recruitment and selection process does not discriminate against any individual on the basis of their Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin) Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation any other personal circumstance unrelated to their ability to do the job. This is true for all aspects from the initial advertisement, to the selection and appointment of the successful candidate. We endeavour to maintain a transparent recruitment process with the decision making process to be open and fair.

### Safer Recruitment and Selection Training

One member of the interview panel has completed the Safer Recruitment Training successfully prior to the start of the recruitment process.

### Pre-recruitment Process

The objective of the recruitment process is to attract, select and retain staff who will successfully and positively contribute to the future development of My Choice. The first experience an individual has is important, therefore the experience should be positive and all those responsible for recruiting will:

- Leave a positive image with the unsuccessful applicants
- Give successful applicants a clear understanding of the post and what is expected of them.

### Application Form

A standard application form will be used to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants.

### Job Description and Person Specification

An accurate job description is required for all posts. A person specification, which is a profile of the necessary requirements for the post is also required for all posts.

### References

The purpose of seeking references is to obtain objective and factual information to support appointment decisions. They will always be sought and obtained directly from the referee.



# Recruitment & Selection Statement

## Introduction

The aim of our recruitment and selection process is to recruit competent people capable of making a significant contribution to the achievement of our business objectives. To help recruit candidates who have the skills, knowledge and aptitude to work in this sector and to deter, reject or identify people who are unsuitable. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is an integral factor in our Human Resources management. Organisational and management arrangements are made in line with the principles of Employment Law, Department of Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education Settings, The Regulations for Children's Homes 2015. We recognise these arrangements as an essential part in creating a safe environment for children and young people.

This statement is relevant to all employees and our recruitment process takes into account issues to do with child protection and safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at every stage. Where the post is advertised, ensure all adverts make clear our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. As such no home/school addresses are divulged and all posts are subject to satisfactory references and Enhanced DBS checks. The process must be consistent and thorough, obtaining and collating, analysing and evaluating information from and about the applicant.

The following principles are encompassed in this policy:

- All applications will receive fair treatment and a high quality service
- The job description and person specification are essential tools and will be used throughout the process
- Employees will be recruited on the knowledge, experience and skills needed for the job
- Selection will be carried out by a panel with two members. At least one panel member will have received appropriate training on the recruitment and selection process as recommended by the DfE
- Selection will be based on a minimum of completed application form, shortlisting and interview
- All posts will normally be advertised

# Child Protection, Safeguarding & Child Sexual Exploitation

My Choice Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is written in line with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, Regulation 12, the Protection of Children Standard.

Young people need to feel safe and be safe. They are protected from significant harm including neglect, abuse and accident.

The welfare and wellbeing of the young people at My Choice are always our priority. There are clear procedures and guidelines for staff in the event of a child protection incident. Staff receive training not only in child protection but also signs and symptoms of child abuse and the potential effects this has on the young people they work with.

My Choice Policies and Procedures in regards to Child Protection have been completed in line with the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures that have been produced by the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards of Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex.

It is our ethos to always work in partnership with the young people's placing authorities and where appropriate their parents.

The young people are aware that they can talk to any member of staff on duty at any time. In addition to this they can request contact with their Social Worker at any time and have access to telephone numbers (e.g. Childline, NSPCC) to contact. My Choice endeavours to be a safe place through placing great emphasis on strong communication between the staff and young people. Staff have clearly defined boundaries within their relationships with the young people. The staff teams develop an open atmosphere where young people feel confident about sharing difficulties with staff.

## Child Sexual Exploitation NSPCC Guidelines

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status.

## Child Protection, Safeguarding & Child Sexual Exploitation

Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

## My Choice School



### Education

My Choice Children's Homes aims to support the educational achievement of all young people in the setting that is the most appropriate to their needs.

Young people who attend external education provision such as local authority schools, other independent schools, Alternative Centres for Education or Learning or colleges will be supported to maintain their placement at their educational setting.

Young people placed at My Choice who are unable to access local authority or other independent provision due to their complexity of emotional and behavioural needs, their level of risk in larger settings or their difficulties engaging in a larger school setting will be able to access **My Choice School**.

### My Choice School

My Choice School is managed by the Headteacher.

My Choice School is available at 4 sites:

**My Choice School Arundel:** a small school site in West Sussex that can serve young people from our children's homes in the West and young people at Osprey House, Maple House and Kestral House. My Choice School Arundel has a core team of 2 teachers and two HLTAs with other My Choice teachers providing additional teaching and workshops as their availability dictates.

**My Choice Osprey House:** a school within the children's home that serves young people at Osprey House who are not yet ready to engage in a larger environment such as My Choice School Arundel or alternative school settings.

**My Choice School Maple House:** a school within the children's home that serves young people at Maple House and Kestral House who are not yet ready to engage in a larger environment such as My Choice School Arundel or alternative School settings.

## My Choice Senior Management

### **ANNIE MURPHY — HEAD OF EDUCATION**



Annie has a BSc (hons) in Experimental Psychology and a PGCE from the University of Sussex. Annie has 26 years' experience of managing services for children and young people in residential, play, training and education settings including over 11 years as Head Teacher of My Choice School. As Head of Education Annie is responsible for statutory duties relating to the education needs, provision and outcomes for all young people looked after at My Choice. This includes the strategic development of My Choice School and ensuring that Ofsted and Department for Education (DfE) regulations and requirements are maintained and exceeded.

### **SUSAN EVANS – HEAD TEACHER**

Susan has over 20 years' experience of working in the education sector with children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Her qualifications include MA in Education, Post Graduate Certificate in Education, Post Graduate Professional Studies in Education and the NVQ Level 4 Leadership & Management for Care Services. Susan has worked in mainstream and SEBD settings and has experience of managing staff teams in excess of 25 people.



### **STEVE WILLIAMS – RECRUITMENT MANAGER**



Steve is our Recruitment Manager and has over 10 years experience of working within Human Resources, Recruitment and Selection. Training within a variety of work settings from Recruitment within the Not for Profit sector, Media and Professional Services. Steve has been with My Choice since April 2014 and is based at our Head Office and manages all aspects of the recruitment and selection process of our staff.

## My Choice Senior Management

### MARK DAVIES — EAST TEAM MANAGER



Mark has been working with children in social care settings for 27 years. He started his career in a residential school for hearing impaired children aged 11-19 years. Mark has also managed a children's home for looked after children supporting young people with complex learning difficulties.

Mark's last role was Deputy Head Pastoral at a school for children on the autistic spectrum and with challenging behaviour. Previous to this, Mark was a Registered Care Manager for a children's home for three years.

Mark has an NVQ 4 qualification and the Registered Managers Award. Mark is also a Team Teach trainer. Mark's approach, when managing, is focused on building and maintaining positive and committed staff teams to ensure a high standard of care for all young people.

### ED GLAVES — WEST TEAM MANAGER



Ed has over 8 years' experience working within residential childcare services; having developed his career within My Choice Children's Homes from Residential Support Worker, Senior Residential Support Worker, Deputy Care Manager at Kingfisher for a year leading to Registered Care Manager for three and a half years. Ed has successfully been promoted to his new position of Team Manager for the West Team which commenced on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017. Ed is responsible for the line management of the

five Children's Homes in West Sussex. These are Ocean Pearl, Pebble House, Ivy Cottage, Kingfisher View and Neptune House. He has worked with a variety of different young people with complex needs. Ed has completed his Level 3 Diploma in Residential Services and Level 5 Diploma Qualification in Care, Leadership and Management; completing his West Sussex Child Protection training. Ed will work closely with Senior Management to ensure high standards are maintained within the homes.

## My Choice School

**My Choice School Oak House:** a school within the children's home that serves young people at Oak House who are not yet ready to engage in a larger environment such as alternative school settings. My Choice School Arundel is not available for young people who may need to transition from My Choice School Oak House due to the geographical constraints. My Choice Schools at Arundel, Osprey House, Maple House and Oak House are DfE registered and have separate policies and procedures to the children's home policies and procedures. My Choice School has the following policies:

- Admission policy
- Assessment policy
- SEN policy
- Curriculum policy
- Exam policy
- Computer and internet policy
- Health and safety of students on educational visits policy
- Behaviour management policy
- Anti bullying policy
- Preventing extremism and radicalisation policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children policy
- The Disclosure and Barring service
- Whistle blowing policy
- Complaints policy
- Student complaints policy
- First aid policy
- Work experience policy
- EAL policy
- Exclusion policy
- Health and safety policy
- SMSC policy
- Risk assessment policy

My Choice Schools at Arundel, Osprey House, Maple House and Oak House have individual prospectuses which are available to all and detail the aims and expectations and curriculum of the school. All students are expected to wear uniform and follow the school expectations of behaviour and attendance.

## My Choice School

My Choice School admits young people from Yr7 to Yr11 however young people join our school at any point in the year.

My Choice School views each student as an individual with the potential to succeed. We provide an individualised plan to meet the needs and abilities of all students and have a holistic approach to learning, recognising their emotional and behavioural needs as an essential element in their educational achievement and progression. My Choice School can act as a transition school where we prepare students for a transition to a larger school setting (such as a local authority or other independent provision) or for college if students are admitted late in their Yr11.

My Choice School will **assess** each student on admission in English, maths and ICT using the BKSb assessment tool. This provides levels, suggested targets and a progression route. The assessment informs the development of the Individual Education Plan. The **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** will form the student's personal curriculum for each term and will have details of academic targets and supports. The IEP will be reviewed at minimum twice a term and adjusted accordingly. Each student will undertake regular assessment (at minimum twice a term) to ensure that progress is on target.

My Choice School uses the **AQA Unit Award Scheme, ASDAN awards** and **AQA GCSE English and Maths** and **Functional Skills English and Maths (L1 and L2)** as the basis for the curriculum with variations where necessary. Our curriculum is not prescriptive as it is continually being reviewed and adapted for the needs of each student. Each student may commence their IEP from a different starting point depending on ability to engage in the learning process and levels indicated by assessments.

The **AQA Unit Award Scheme** curriculum covers:

- Mathematics
- English
- Science
- History
- Geography
- Art, Craft and Design
- Cultural Studies
- Physical Education
- PSHE
- ICT
- Life Skills



## My Choice Senior Management

### DEBBIE WOODGATE — PRACTICE MANAGER



Debbie has over 10 years experience working within residential child care services which includes 5 years service at My Choice Children's Homes. Debbie has developed her career with My Choice from Deputy Care Manager to her current position of Practice Manager. Debbie has achieved her Level 5 Diploma Qualification in Care, Leadership and Management and the NVQ level 3 (Children and young people award) and holds a certificate in substance misuse early

intervention with young people. Debbie's role is to work directly with the homes staff teams and managers reviewing strategies, plans, risk assessments and to ensure effective intervention and high quality care is provided at all times.

### LISA LAWRENCE - POLICY & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER



Lisa has a Diploma in Social Work with the Post Qualifying Year & Management Qualification. With over 13 years' experience within a residential setting, 10 years at senior/management level, Lisa worked initially at a residential school for young people with emotional & behavioural difficulties. Lisa holds the NVQ Assessors & IV Award, develops and implements our Policies

& Procedures and co-ordinates our training programme.

### ANGELA JOHNSON - DIPLOMA ASSESSOR



Angela is the company's Diploma Assessor. She holds a BSc in Social Science, Cache Diploma, PTTLS and A1 Award. Angela has over 20 years' experience in the childcare field as an experienced childcare practitioner. Her previous roles have included working as a childcare consultant, childcare recruitment and managing childcare provisions. Angela has experience supporting childcare and teaching assistants to achieve their NVQ qualification in schools and nursery provisions. Angela will

be working across all the homes in My Choice ensuring the support staff achieve their Diploma 3 for Residential Childcare. Angela will also be working with the homes Managers who are registered on the Diploma 5 Leadership and Management Award.

## My Choice Senior Management

### PETER KAZMARSKI—DIRECTOR



Peter has over 25 years' experience working with older adults with neuro-disabilities and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. He has managed homes and was Deputy Head of Care within a special needs school for children with a statement of special educational needs. He is a graduate from the University of Sussex in Applied Psychology and also studied the Advanced Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling. Peter is the Responsible Person for the Company and Ofsted.

### ALEX HYLAND—DIRECTOR



Alex has over 24 years' experience working with children who display emotional & challenging behaviour. His professional experience includes working with adults who have left Local Authority care & those experiencing mental health difficulties. Alex has worked within the voluntary, public & private sectors. He has considerable management experience of various residential homes ranging in size from 3 to 7 bedded. Trained at Caldecott College (accredited by Greenwich University) he achieved a Graduate Certificate in Therapeutic Childcare.

### DAWN IVES — OPERATIONS MANAGER



Dawn has over 13 years' experience working in childcare and is qualified with the Registered Manager Award, NVQ Level 3 and 4 in Child Care and NVQ Assessor's Award. Dawn has developed her career with My Choice from Residential Support Worker to her current position of Operations Manager. Dawn manages and supports our Registered Care Managers and undertakes regular visits to the homes as part of our quality assurance procedures. She works closely with Ofsted, Local Authorities, co-ordinating and managing the company referrals with the Directors, placing young people in our homes.

## My Choice School

All students can follow the AQA unit award scheme (foundation, intermediate and higher level) as appropriate to their needs and abilities. Key Stage 4 students are encouraged to work toward higher level AQA Unit Award Scheme in all subjects and may also access work experience as appropriate. Key Stage 4 students are also prepared for accessing college placements or other training providers in Yr10 or Yr11.

My Choice School also uses **ASDAN** courses to provide additional or alternative means of study. The ASDAN courses can complement the AQA units or be offered as alternatives to AQA units.

### ASDAN Excelsis Award

This award is offered at 3 levels:

**Foundation:** for Yr7 to Yr10 or those at GCSE D-G (nc5)

**Intermediate:** for Yr10 to Yr11 or those at GCSE A-C (nc6)

**Advanced:** for 16+ (Yr11 leavers or those at AS/A level at college)

The Excelsis award covers:

- Leadership and Teamworking
- Self Management
- Problem solving and creative thinking
- Presentation Research

**ASDAN Short Courses:** Offered at a range of subjects, both academic and vocational including Science, PSHE, Citizenship, Humanities, Personal Finance Education, Key Steps and Careers

**ASDAN Stepping Stones:** PSHE and Citizenship based

**ASDAN Workskills Online:** Assessments in employability skills

**Variations to the curriculum** will be made where:

- students are unable to engage with or see the relevance of learning or routine and are at risk of disengaging from education and becoming long term NEET
- students emotional and behavioural needs overwhelm their ability to engage with learning or with routines and expectations of My Choice School and their home

## My Choice School

- students are experiencing a crisis in their time with us and need additional intensive emotional and behavioural support
- students needs are too complex to be met by an academic programme and require a developmental programme that provides opportunity for play and nurture in order to access learning in an academic or social context
- students are placed in Year 11 without a history of previous school engagement or learning to build on students remain on roll (dual registered) at their previous school in order to access GCSEs as agreed with the partnership school and the students' Virtual School.

**ICT** is used throughout the curriculum at My Choice School and each school location has access to a computer. Internet access is restricted and supervised at all times in accordance with our policy.

Community facilities are accessed for **Physical Education** and include swimming, gym and horse riding. The Arundel Lido is used regularly during the Summer term.

Group lessons for **musical instrument tuition** and practice are available weekly with a visiting music teacher.

**Educational visits** are encouraged to support all areas of the curriculum both academically and socially.

Additional **on line learning** can be used to cover First Aid, Health and Safety and any other area that the student is interested in.

**Workshops** are arranged each term for arts and crafts, Fire Safety, PSHE topics such as SRE, CSE, teamwork, personal development.

All students' achievements are celebrated at the end of each term with an activity week and a **Certificate Day**, where students receive Certificates of Achievement and prizes.

## Children & Young People's Rights

Staff are required to contribute by:

- not discriminating against fellow employees, customers, suppliers, service users or members of the public with whom you come into contact during the course of your duties
- not inducing or attempting to induce others to practice unlawful discrimination; and
- reporting any discriminatory action to your line Manager or the Human Resources Manager.

My Choice does not tolerate discrimination under any circumstances that may occur on grounds of race, culture, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, sexuality, class or disability. We value diversity and as such all our work is underpinned by our commitment to delivering a service based on anti-discriminatory practice.

We recognise that all people are unique and have different, but equally valid life experiences. Our ethos and values in relation to children's rights are based on the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. These are:

- Everyone has a responsibility to support the care and protection of children and young people.
- Children and young people must be protected from all forms of violence and exploitation.
- Children and Young people have the right to be listened to and their views respected and responded to.
- Children and young people should be encouraged and enabled to fulfil their potential.
- My Choice endeavour to challenge inequalities for children and young people.
- Every child must have someone to turn to.

Children's rights are always a priority at My Choice and the young people are made aware that in addition to having staff available to talk to, they can have contact with social workers as well as family and friends.

**My Choice Children's Homes is committed to safeguarding & promoting the welfare of children**

## Training & Development

Keeping at the forefront of developments in social care; showing commitment to continual professional development is fundamental to My Choice's success.

Opportunities for progression and promotion are available following our supervision and appraisal structure. A formal six month probationary review and annual appraisals facilitate discussion of individual levels of performance, setting targets and agreeing training needs and how to meet them. Staff are also expected to attend a 6/8 week Induction Review at the home.

Diploma workshops are facilitated by our Diploma Assessor. These sessions take place at Head Office throughout the year.

As a growing organisation we pride ourselves on listening to our staff and service users; adapting and implementing bespoke training and support measures, responding to feedback.

## Equality Inclusion and Diversity Anti Discriminatory Practice

We are committed to building an organisation that makes full use of the talents, skills, experience and different cultural perspectives available in a multi-ethnic society, and where people feel they are respected and valued and can achieve their potential regardless of race, nationality, national or ethnic origins, sex, married status, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristics, health, age, or religion / belief.

As part of our equal opportunities policy we are committed to promoting a harmonious working environment, where every worker is treated with respect and dignity. No one should feel threatened, intimidated or degraded on grounds of race, nationality, national or ethnic origins, sex, married status, sexual orientation, disability, physical characteristics, health, age, or religion / belief.

My Choice Children's Homes is intent on advancing equality and diversity as key features within all its activities, as it believes this to be ethically right and socially responsible. Equality and diversity are essential factors that contribute to the quality of service and economic strengths of the My Choice.

## My Choice School

### **Annie Murphy – Head of Education**

Annie has a BSc in Experimental Psychology and a PGCE. Annie has over 30 years' experience of working with vulnerable and marginalised children, young people and adults and within this has over 20 years' experience of managing services for children and young people in residential, play, training and education settings, including 14yrs as Headteacher of My Choice School.

Annie is responsible for statutory duties relating to the education needs, provision and outcomes for all young people who are being looked after at My Choice. This includes the strategic development of My Choice School, working with the current Headteacher to ensure that Ofsted and Department for Education (DfE) regulations and requirements are maintained and exceeded. In addition her role requires working with Virtual Schools, SEN teams, schools and other education providers to ensure that additional support and resources for young people at My Choice are used effectively and are targeted to ensure best outcomes.

### **Susan Evans – Head Teacher**

Susan is the Headteacher of all 4 My Choice Schools. Susan has over 20 years' experience of working in the education sector with children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Her qualifications include MA in Education, PGCE, Post Graduate Professional Studies in Education and the NVQ Level 4 Leadership & Management for Care Services. Susan has worked in mainstream and SEBD settings and has experience of managing staff teams in excess of 25 people. Susan is responsible for managing the teachers and TAs at My Choice School and for monitoring and promoting the progress of all students, developing the curriculum and identifying additional supports for students.

For further information and enquiries about My Choice School please email Annie Murphy at: [a.murphy@my-choice-homes.com](mailto:a.murphy@my-choice-homes.com)

## Training & Development

My Choice Children's Homes offer extensive training courses for all staff.

New staff undertake a two day induction at Head Office, facilitated by a Senior Manager and the HR Manager. Staff are provided information regarding policies and legislation. Staff are expected to complete the following on-line Educare training courses before commencing work in the homes.

- Child Protection
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- On Line Safety
- Preventing Bullying
- Fire Safety
- Health & Safety
- The Prevent Duty

All staff members are expected to have achieved the Level 3 Diploma for Residential Childcare England. Staff will be registered on the course at the start of employment if this award has not been previously achieved or have provided evidence of an equivalent. This is to ensure Regulation 32 of the Children's Homes Regulations 2015 is met and adhered to.

*Unless you have the equivalent as stated in the Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations including the Quality Standards April 2015 (p70), you will be required as part of your Terms & Conditions of Employment to complete the Level 3 Diploma as stated above.*

This provides the young people with appropriately trained staff. My Choice Homes also offer Care Managers the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Residential Childcare England.

A signed training claw-back agreement will need to be signed upon registration and kept on file.

Life Train UK™ facilitate the Therapeutic Practitioners Award at My Choice for care staff. This course has been extremely successful for the staff that have already attended. We are currently in our second year of providing this course. This supports the development of our therapeutic practices within the homes.

## Training & Development

My Choice provides training courses held at head office for all staff. A selection of which are detailed below:

- Team Teach
- Child Protection
- First Aid
- Food Hygiene
- Care of Medication Foundation
- Fire Safety/Warden
- Protecting Young People—Street Gangs and CSE
- Self-Harm
- Equality & Diversity
- Appropriate Adult/Advocacy
- Active Listening
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness
- Autism Awareness
- Understanding Adolescent Behaviour



### Managers Training:

- Health and Safety Management
- Supervision
- Management Skills
- Time and Stress Management
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

We are constantly developing and reviewing our training programme. My Choice head office staff organise care staff attendance on the courses that run throughout the year.

My Choice Homes also facilitate the following Champion sessions which take place quarterly at Head Office, these are:

- CSE Champion Session
- Restorative Justice
- E-Safety and Safeguarding

These meetings are attended by the homes Managers and nominated staff members.