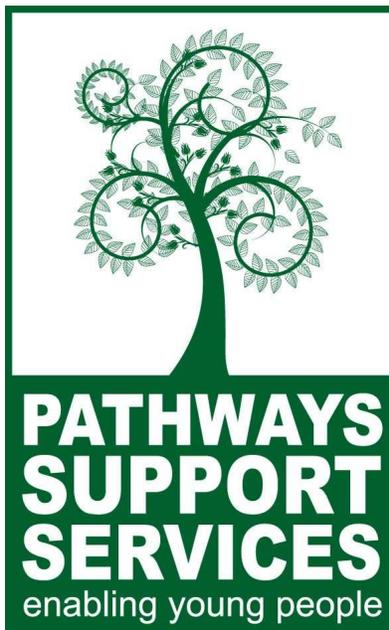


Pathways Support Services Ltd

Independent living programmes for young
people aged 16-21



Unit 3
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Section 1: Mission Statement

At Pathways Support Services, we endeavour to offer the highest standards of care. Either through peripatetic or one to one support; we seek to provide all our young adults with tools to succeed in independence. We have years of experience working in sensitive environments and respect the needs and thoughts of young adults, offering counselling at an agreed level of confidentiality.

Pathways Support Services will target its work with young people based on their particular needs. Our aim will be to treat individuals fairly regardless of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation. Our staff are drawn from all sections of the community to reflect the diversity of society in which we live. We will provide young people with an environment that assists them in becoming participating members of the communities in which they live. Pathways Support Services' aim is to assist all young people placed with us to become self sufficient in relation to their personal care and management of everyday activities.

We will provide young people with support in areas of employment and further education. The views of the young person and funding authority will be considered in relation to the type of support offered whilst maintaining the safety of all those involved. A full risk assessment will be undertaken before deciding on the appropriateness of accommodation and the level of support offered. We would also expect the placing authority to engage in regular reviews.

We endeavor to continue the care of young people previously accommodated or known to the local authority, although we are not a children's home. At Pathways Support Services we hope to promote self-sufficiency and independence through one to one support, guidance, mentoring and individual community independence plans.

Section 2: Aims and Objectives

Many young people can find the transition from care to independent living extremely stressful and daunting. We at Pathways Support Services recognise this and have attempted to address some of these issues by developing a service that will not only support young people through this period of transition, but hopefully impart some essential skills in dealing with everyday problems. Our service is aimed at young adults between

the ages of 16 - 21, who may well be subject to after-care services of Social Services or considered to represent a risk under local Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

We will also consider those young people who are in need of short-term support whilst awaiting the conclusion of court appearances by reason of offending. Accommodation instability is a major risk factor for young offenders. With a national shortage of suitable accommodation, some young people leave court on local authority bail with no suitable place to go. In order to attempt to address this we have developed a short term response facility that would offer support to the young person until the conclusion of the matters before the court. This would be provided along the same lines of our substantive service. Given the legal framework under which we operate we are only able to cater for young people for remand purposes over the age of 16.

Given the complex nature of young people and the reasons that might bring about the need for placement, we have attempted to be as inclusive as possible. For that reason we have included young people who may present with mental health issues.

We do believe that it is important for young people to maintain links with family and friends, and to this end we encourage visits by those who are of importance to the young person. We are aware that in some instances this will not be possible, although the intention will always be to establish some form of family interaction.

Prior to the acceptance of any young person Pathways Support Services will carry out a full assessment of the young person's needs and how these might be met during their placement with us.

It is envisaged that the assessment will be undertaken with all relevant information having been passed to Pathways Support Services by the placing agency. Wherever possible a visit at the young person's current place of residents will take place prior to placement. This will be to ensure that the young person is fully aware of the nature of the service that Pathways Support Services offers, and to help ascertain their willingness to work with us. Our visit will also help us to determine the level of support required and the possible cost implications for the placing agency.

Pathways Support Services will have an expectation that the placing agency will remain actively involved with any plans agreed following the initial assessment and subsequent assessments undertaken during the course of the placement. This is particularly relevant in cases where the young person has been placed by social services and is subject to After Care arrangements requiring Pathway Plans to have been drawn up, with a view to giving some focus to the future arrangements for the young person and how these will be met.

Pathways Support Services will contribute to all relevant reviews relating to any young person placed, and will ensure that where targets change these are discussed with the appropriate agency. Our intention will always be to actively work along side placing agencies to make sure that resettlement arrangements are in accordance with the wishes of all concerned, although the desires of the young person will always remain of paramount importance.

On arrival at Pathways Support Services all young people will be assigned a Link Worker who will be responsible for assisting the young person to develop objectives relating to training, employment, benefits, community links and all other issues relating to the successful stay of the young person. We would endeavor to initiate weekly programs for young people which highlight areas such as budgeting, dietary needs i.e.; menus.

We will also build community links through membership of youth clubs, sports clubs and recreation fellowships. These pursuits will be facilitated by the link worker and jointly 'managed' with the young person. It is our intention that this will allow the young person to develop a meaningful relationship with a member of staff with the focus being one of engagement.

Depending on the particular needs of the young person the staffing regime will normally be changeable, although the assigned link worker will always remain the same. All of our work will have the focus of getting a young person to embrace independence rather than seeing it as something to be feared.

We understand that one size does not fit all and with this in mind all services will be developed according to the specific needs of the young person. We consider it very important to reaffirm to placing agencies and young people that we are not a children's home and will not operate according to the principals normally associated with accommodation for young people under the age of 16.

All young people will be provided with access to a phone allowing access to 24-hour consultation with our duty worker outside of normally working hours. We will endeavor to respond to all calls within one hour. All placing agencies will be provided with this number in the event of an emergency taking place. Our clients will be expected to spend some allocated time without supervision; we see this as an important aspect of young people coming to terms with independent living. There will undoubtedly be exceptions to this, although our focus will always be to encourage young people to move to this position.

We understand that the move to independent living can be very daunting for young people in general and to this end Pathways Support Services will provide support to a high standard whilst providing young people with an opportunity to develop into positive adults within a setting of support and encouragement.

All young people will be encouraged to develop leisure pursuits within their local environments. To this end we will aim to develop young people placed with us on a social level; we understand that the development of these links will provide the young person with a sense of investment in their local community and increase the possible success of the placement and an engagement in independent living.

All leisure programmes will be arranged in negotiation with the young person concerned. We do however currently have some links with youth worker community groups within the Birmingham area.

Section 3: Accommodation

Much of Pathways Support Services' accommodation is secured via arrangements with many local letting agents, although some properties are owned by the company. We use this method as it allows us to keep our overheads to a minimum only sourcing property as and when required. Our current lists of properties are one-bed apartments or studio flats, ideal for young people coming to terms with their first independent accommodation. In some circumstances neither of the above types of accommodation is appropriate given the level of supervision required; in these cases we have at our disposal two three-bed roomed houses that will accommodate both the young person and extra staff [if required].

It will always be our intention to provide young people with as much support as required to get them to a point where they do not require 24 hour supervision; we however appreciate that in some instances a young person may not be at a point to manage this adequately, requiring nurturing and supporting to build confidence.

Pathways Support Services will remain responsible for all domestic charges relating to properties, many of which have pre-payment meters for both gas and electricity supplies. We will however encourage all young people to develop skills relating to the management of their personal incomes with regard to household expenditures. If the duration of stay is expected to be beyond 3 months, young people will be encouraged to change the décor, within reason, to their own taste.

A member of Pathways Support Services staff will always supervise the undertaking of any changes to the décor of any of our properties.

All reasonable care will be taken when deciding the most appropriate location for a young persons stay; this will form part of our initial assessment process prior to the actual placement being agreed formally. All accommodation will be equipped with the essential items required for occupancy and young people will be given a starter pack on arrival.

Section 4: Reviews

At Pathways Support Services we are keen to ensure that all young people placed with us are subject to regular reviews of placement in order that we may check and amend individual pathways plans.

We are keen to engage in local authority statutory reviews and as a matter of course do our own 28 day assessments review of placement. This would involve the young person, the local authority and any other relevant party. *“It is vital that our service is relevant to both local authorities and young people and thus we are flexible and able to amend accommodation packages where needed”.*

Ordinarily we would expect to review cases in line with statutory review dates; however we feel that any party should be able to call for a review to address problems or issues in the placement. We welcome and encourage the use of advocates, appropriate adults, and indeed part of the placement package would be to encourage link workers to help young people to develop communication and presentation skills.

Section 5: Complaints

We accept that from time to time young people will have comments or complains about our service. We would like to encourage such remarks and are keen to continue improving the service we offer at Pathways Support Services.

In the event that a young person makes a serious complaint or allegation relating to their care whilst at Pathway Support Services, we will respond by ensuring that the member of staff concerned is not placed with the young person until the complaint/issue is resolved. We carry out full CRB checks on all staff and will only employ experienced, skillful practitioners who are experienced at working with some of the most challenging individuals in our communities.

We accept that there will be some occasions when our service is subject to complaints, therefore the structures we have endeavored to put in place will protect the young people and staff alike.

We are keen to hear from both placing authorities and young people as part of our follow-up and ongoing service improvement package and have developed a feedback form to be completed by young people and authorities alike, presentable at point of review or upon request by the placing authority.

Pathways are keen for young people to have access to other organisations such as Child Line, Children's Right Forum and open door counseling services and young people will be further educated around their rights via contact with their link workers.

In summary, Pathways Support Services will endeavor to do the following things in response to any complaints:

- Senior managers will investigate complaints.
- We will work in partnership with investigating ACPC in the event of serious allegations or complaint.
- Feedback forms issued to clients and placing authorities in order to continue service improvement.

Section 6: Anti Discriminatory Practice (ADP)

The staff team at Pathways Support Services is drawn from a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We actively promote diversity and are keen to work with young people of different ethnicity, culture, religion, gender and sexual orientation. We have many years experience of working with young people who display challenging attitudes and behaviours. We take some considerable satisfaction in the fact that we have a proven record of assisting young people with many diverse needs to tap into their potential, to not only help themselves but contribute to the communities in which they live.

Section 7: Additional Control Measures

At Pathways Support Services we acknowledge that some of the young people we will cater for will undoubtedly present extreme and challenging behaviour. In some rare situations there may be the threat of physical harm either to the young person themselves, staff or members of the public. All the Pathways Support Services staff will be given full training using the Handling Emotional Aggression and Restraint Training (H.E.A.R.T) method of physical restraint.

The ideology being imported from the methods used in Birmingham's Children's homes and aims to use counseling, diffusion and non-verbal cues before engaging in physical restraint.

Should physical restraint be necessary, the practice is to be non-invasive as possible with the staff at Pathways Support Services adopting a 'holding' or 'grounding' policy; any restraint should be as brief as possible with the young person being informed and given opportunity to stop the restraint as soon as it is safe for all parties. (This method of restraint and control is designed to be administered by a minimum of two trained members of staff).

Any restraint or additional control measure used by Pathways staff will be recorded and open for inspection by the placing authority, independent advocates and compliant investigators. All young people placed with us will be made aware of our thorough and fair complaints procedures. Any young person subject to additional control measures will be advised of the procedure and their ability to access it by a senior manager at Pathways Support Services.

In summary, our policy in respect of restraint aims to be:

- Used only in extreme circumstances
- Kept to a minimum of time
- Non- invasive
- Subject to review and complaints
- H.E.A.R.T. method, used by trained, experienced staff

We would also state that our philosophy at Pathways is a non-physical one and we would hope that all young people placed with us buy into this culture making the need for physical restraint and control, a very rare occurrence.

Section 8: Staffing

We at Pathways Support Services believe in the importance of having staff who are qualified to undertake the role of assisting young people to gain the confidence and experience to deal with everyday problems many of us take for granted, this is why we give an assurance that all staff having direct contact with young people will at a minimum level be qualified to NVQ level 2.

The two managers of Pathways Support Services are both well experienced Social Workers with over 35 years experience between them of direct work with young people. Both are holders of professional qualifications in social work and have worked with young people who may well be considered the most damaged in our society. Both are registered with the GSCC.

Both have experience of working within residential settings and are therefore familiar with the problems associated with the experiences of many young people that potentially could be referred to Pathways Support Services.

Both have extensive experience of undertaking detailed assessments relating to young people and the potential risks that might be represented.

They have also worked with young people who have been subjected to all types of supervision relating to the criminal justice system, which makes them well placed to negotiate on behalf of those young people subject to such orders.

Furthermore they both have experience in the provision of Appropriate Adult services for young people in police custody, prisons, and legal interviews (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984). One of the managers has extensive experience of managing a busy youth offending area with a detailed understanding of MAPPA and community supports.

The other manager has a personality that has been described as warm and engaging with young people which is further complimented by report writing skills and management of challenging young people in a community supervision environment.

These combined qualities enable Pathways Support Services to plan for and accommodate the most diverse and complex of placements.

All staff are expected to undertake a full CRB check before engaging in direct work with young people. We do engage peripatetic workers with particular expertise in areas such as mental health and substance misuse.

The staffing arrangements for each young person placed with our service will be determined by a full assessment involving the placing agency and a manager from Pathways Support Services.

It is our belief at Pathways Support Services that our staffing selection should focus on attracting people who demonstrate an understanding of the pressures and demands placed on young people in today's

environments. We place a high emphasis on staff having an awareness of the motivations and influences that determines how young people respond to everyday life. This we believe helps to actively engage in a manner that connects with some of the reasons and motivations regarding aspects of the young person's behaviour.

Section 9: Health & Safety Policy

The issue of health and safety is of importance to the Directors of Pathways Support Services Ltd. To this end we have provided a general statement of policy, although the comprehensive policy is available on request. Pathways will ensure that the following provisions are made:

- Maintenance of safe equipment, and systems of work.
- A safe place of work, with access to and exit from it.
- Arrangements for the safe use, handling transport of articles and substances.
- Suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training to enable employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to their own safety and health of people affected by their activities.
- Competent technical advice in order to achieve safe and healthy working conditions.
- Lone working Policy for all employees undertaking direct work with young people outside of normal office hours.

The directors retain ultimately responsibility for safety throughout our business activities, some responsibilities will however be delegated to appropriate senior members of staff if deemed appropriate.

The complete policy describes the arrangements put in place to achieve this, and the monitoring systems that will enable the Directors to ensure that the company is working properly.

As part of the Directors monitoring of the effectiveness of these arrangements, we expect to be informed at the earliest opportunity of any necessary health and safety related items that cannot be funded from existing budgetary provision in order that we can assess the situation and, if required develop strategies to resolve the issues.

No policy will work without the full commitment of all employees, and our aim of reducing accidents, damage and ill health will not be achieved unless we work together, accepting that the management of health and

safety ranks equally with other issues, it is an integral part of the overall management function and all staff feel responsible for the health and safety of young people being supported and colleagues.

It is not the sole prerogative of the directors to resolve health and safety problems. Individual employees have an active part to play in the maintaining and improving standards.

The directors of Pathways Support Services will ensure free access to the policy and that relevant sections are drawn to the attention of all employees who have specific responsibility.

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