



## The Shires at Stretton Children's Home

# Statement of Purpose

reviewed and revised by Marina Gough January 2010, 2011, 2012  
reviewed and revised by Charles Tosan April & August 2013, 2014  
revised by Charles Tosan and Marina Gough August 2014  
revised by Amy Merchant October 2014  
revised by Charles Tosan September 2015  
Reviewd, revised and updated by Emma Nicholson and Kirsty Truesdale March 2016

Status: Compulsory  
Audience: Parents/Carers  
Children and young people  
Local Authorities  
Staff  
Acorn Central team  
Admissions Pack

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## Introduction

The Statement of Purpose is a requirement under Regulation 16 of the Children's Home Regulations 2015 Schedule 1 – 'Matters to be included in the Statement of Purpose'. It is provided to HMCI as part of the home's registration process and is available on request by any person working at the home, any child accommodated at the home, the parent of any child accommodated at the home and the placing authority of any child placed at the home.

## Quality and purpose of care

### 1. A statement of the range of needs of the children for whom it is intended that the children's home is to provide care and accommodation

The Shires is both a children's home and a school for 12 young people with autism. Additionally the children may have learning difficulties, challenging behaviour and other conditions such as ADHD, epilepsy and dyspraxia. The children at The Shires may also have other associated medical conditions such as diabetes, asthma or allergies. Children placed at The Shires all have Education, Health and Care Plans (statement of special educational needs) that specify their specific needs and the strategies that should be employed in order for their needs to be met.

The young people are likely to have learning difficulties, although the extent to which this hampers them in their daily lives will vary from child to child. Nevertheless, the children in The Shires are recognised as being vulnerable in terms of their autism and learning difficulties and so there are high staff ratios to reflect the needs identified for each individual child.

Care is taken to ensure that children who are admitted to The Shires are able to get on with one another. For example, children will not be put together if one is very sensitive to noise and the other makes and likes a lot of noise.

### 2. Details of the children's home's ethos, and the outcomes that the children's home seeks to achieve and its approach to achieving them.

The ethos of The Shires is very much characterised by a 'can do' attitude. Staff share the value of creating a home for children that is not institutionalised, and that reflects a family atmosphere. Staff at The Shires are experienced in supporting children with autism and understand how and when the environment needs to be adapted in order to maximize the potential of each individual. The Shires' approach is firmly based on a therapeutic model, supporting staff to help the youngsters make sense of the world in which they live.

Staff are well trained in working with children with autism and understand the need for the children to have clearly identified routines and continuity. Therefore, life at the Shires is predictable but challenging for the young people concerned, and eminently rewarding. Good planning is fundamental to the success of the home and school. The adherence to schedules, and the identification of key people who work in the same way, and who understand the impact of change on the young people, characterise policy and practice. Each child has a primary carer allocated to them who ensures that each young person's care plan and targets reflect their changing needs and the progress they are making. Primary carers work with a nominated colleague on the teaching staff to ensure consistency between the two settings.

At the Shires a strong focus is placed on helping the children to become independent and to respond flexibly to the demands of the wider world. The child's voice is very important and staff are keen to involve the children in the day to day running of the home.

Daily planning meetings using the TEACCH approach help the children to know what is expected of them and provide opportunity for them to influence the routines of the day. All contact staff at the Shires are familiar with TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped CHildren) approach and philosophy to routines and learning. All of the young people have very different communication difficulties, so programmes to support their learning are individual to them. Routines, symbols and signs support communication, and all contact staff are familiar with in PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System), Makaton and BSL (British Sign Language). The children are encouraged to develop life skills and so they are involved in shopping for and the preparation of meals. They have responsibility for keeping their own bedrooms clean and tidy and are encouraged to contribute to the cleaning of shared areas in the home.

The ultimate goal of the Shires is to create a centre of excellence that provides the best care and education possible in the best environment that can be achieved. The Shires uses a highly individualised child-centred approach in all aspects of care and education.

**The aims of The Shires' children's home are to:-**

- ❖ provide a safe, caring and healthy environment where children can thrive and develop independence
- ❖ ensure that the children are involved in as many aspects of their care as possible
- ❖ encourage the children to 'have a voice' and to make their views and ideas known so that they can be taken on board
- ❖ ensure that each child is treated as an individual so that they have a clear sense of their own identity
- ❖ promote and celebrate diversity
- ❖ provide a wide range of exciting and challenging opportunities that meet the individual needs of the children

**The objectives for the children in The Shires are that they will:**

- ❖ achieve their best in terms of their physical, emotional, social and academic development
- ❖ feel that they are part of a home that is characterised by a warm and child-centred ethos
- ❖ know and understand what is expected of them
- ❖ understand the role they play in helping the home to run effectively
- ❖ be willing to challenge themselves to achieve greater levels of independence within the constraints of their autism
- ❖ know that their views are important and that staff listen to them

**3. A description of the accommodation offered by the children's home including**

**a. how accommodation has been adapted to the needs of children cared for by the children's home**

The Shires provides comfortable purpose designed accommodation for up to 12 residential children. The main building provides accommodation for 9 children. Additionally 3 bedrooms are provided in the cottage adjacent to the main building. All areas of the children's home are decorated and furnished attractively. The furniture, flooring and soft furnishings have been thoughtfully selected and designed to provide robust and safe surroundings that retain a homely, domestic character.

Everything down to the bedding and linens is chosen to provide each child with the same kind of living environment they might have at home. Individual tastes can be accommodated and

children can decorate their rooms as they wish. The choice of furnishings and equipment is informed and guided by what staff and managers would choose for their own children. If they would not have something in their own homes, it is not good enough for the children who live at The Shires.

The children relax and eat in pleasant and spacious lounge and dining areas. The lounges are equipped with TV and video/DVD player and have a good selection of toys, books and traditional and electronic games that are regularly renewed and added to. The furniture is colourful, attractive and provides plenty of varied seating options for the children, enabling them to enjoy some personal space or join with others as they wish. Therapy and quiet spaces are provided within the home area for children to spend calm time. There are two adjoining relaxation rooms with door-less archways and with soft furnishing and soft lighting where children can elect to spend calm time either alone or with staff. In the relaxation rooms the children can choose the colour of lighting that matches their mood at the time.

The large dining area features a large central 'breakfast bar' as well as domestic style, dining tables and chairs; with enough separate tables for the children to maintain the space they require to eat comfortably. In the main dining area, there are facilities for children to independently choose snacks and drinks from the fridge and freezer and use the microwave and toaster to make snacks whenever they want.

The bathrooms provide plenty of showers, baths, basins and toilets to meet the needs of the children and afford the children privacy when they need it. In the main building one room has an en-suite bathroom while the other rooms share two toilet areas with three toilets, two baths and a shower/wet room. There are additional toilet areas with one wheelchair accessible toilet in the annex area and two toilets (one male and one female) on the first floor of the main building. In the cottage one room has an en-suite bathroom while the other two bedrooms share a large bathroom which allows space for more supported personal care.

The Shires has a life skills kitchen that is fitted out with domestic appliances and designed so that children can be encouraged to acquire independent skills. This facility is used by the home for children to prepare their own snacks and drinks and to learn to do their own laundry, and by the school for lifelong learning lessons.

During the waking day each child is supported in the home by at least one member of staff at all times. During the school day support staff come to class with the children and work with them under the direction of the teacher. After school the same support staff go back with the children to continue their evening activities with them. At night, children are supervised by a team of 5 waking night staff and a ratio of 1 staff per 2 sleeping children. A team of therapists providing speech and language, occupational and emotional therapy, art therapy and music supports the children and the staff team in school as well as in the home. The Shires has 2 cooks who prepare wholesome and nutritious meals to suit the individual dietary preferences of each child.

The main building and the cottage have been refurbished and extended to meet the highest health and safety and environmental standards. This includes a spacious, brand new commercial kitchen, a state of the art fire alarm system and electronically controlled doors throughout the building and electronic fire door stops. The continuous refurbishment and decoration programme ensures that the accommodation is always maintained to an excellent standard.

**b. the age, range, number and sex of children for whom it is intended that accommodation is to be provided**

The Shires is registered as both a children's home and a school. The children's home can accommodate up to 12 children and young people who may be male or female between the

ages of 11 and 19 years. The school can admit up to an additional 8 day pupils who may be male or female. The day pupils attend school on a daily basis only. The children's home is open for 52 weeks per year, and young people may board on a weekly, termly or annual basis.

### **c. the type of accommodation including sleeping accommodation**

The Shires children's home comprises of two buildings designed to provide accommodation for 12 children with all the bedrooms on the ground floor. The main building has 9 bedrooms, all of which are single occupancy and one has an en-suite bathroom. In the cottage there are 3 single bedrooms, one of which has an en-suite bathroom.

All children sleep in single or double beds and each bedroom has sufficient storage space for clothes and personal effects. Each bedroom has soft furnishings of an individual design. Curtains and bedding are of domestic style and quality. Children can decorate their walls with paint, posters or pictures of their own choosing. Each bedroom has a desk and chair and children are encouraged to complete homework tasks in their bedrooms. Additionally, if they have large projects to work on they can access the large breakfast bar or life skills kitchen table.

The home has professionally managed broadband with age appropriate filters and child-protection and the children are able to access Wi-Fi to support them in their learning and for leisure activities. Children who are not siblings do not share bedrooms.

The children accommodated in The Shires are provided with all of their bedroom furniture, bedding and towels. If children are placed on a 52-weeks LAC (looked after children) basis they are also provided with clothes and shoes. Furniture in bedrooms and shared areas such as the lounge, dining and kitchen, whilst sturdy and practical, is chosen to ensure that the house has a homely feel to it.

The Shires children's home has a total of 12 bedrooms between the main building and the cottage designed to accommodate a maximum of 12 children and young people. There is a spare room reserved as a medical room in the main building.

Children in the home are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their friends and family and have access to several phones. They are able to make and take phone calls in privacy.

The children are provided with all of their meals and snacks. Meals are balanced, attractively prepared and designed to take account of the choices and preferences of the children.

## **4. A description of the location of the home**

The Shires is located in a rural setting close to the village of Stretton in Rutland, on a slip road on the south side of the A1. The Shires sits in a fully-fenced 3 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds. On a phased basis, areas of the grounds were securely fenced and then landscaped or 'adventure-scaped' to provide a number of play and adventure spaces each of which offers a different experience for the children. The cottage has its own large garden and patio area within the grounds and all children share access to a vegetable garden. The children are encouraged to spend time outdoors, growing plants and vegetables and exploring the grounds.

The Shires has in its grounds a sensory garden which contains many different features such as mounds, a willow igloo, water feature and a range of flowers and shrubs which encourage wildlife and biodiversity.

The Shires is within easy walking distance of a local shop. The neighbours are very comfortable about the position of the children's home and very supportive. The Shires has its own vehicles, and is close to a mainline railway station for longer journeys.

The Registered Managers carries out a regular review of the appropriateness and suitability of the location of the premises used for the children's home in line with "The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 [Regulation 46] ("the Children's Homes Regulations") taking into account the requirement in regulation 12(2)(c)(the protections of children standard). The location review is done to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place to identify any risk or potential risks to the children. The location review is carried out in consultation with, as well as taking into account the views of, each relevant person including the local police and the local safeguarding children's board (LSCB).

## **5. The arrangements for supporting the cultural, linguistic and religious needs of children.**

The Shires welcomes children from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds. It is non-denominational, and staff show respect for all religions and cultures. Cultural differences are celebrated and shared where possible and appropriate.

Some of the children who live at The Shires come from homes where English is not the main spoken language. Staff come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and are often able to converse with a child or his/her parents in their own language. Where there is a barrier to communication because of a child's linguistic difficulties, augmented communication is promoted at a level appropriate to the individual child. For example, symbols might be used to support communication or applications on iPad.

As part of the pre-admission process the Registered Managers ensure that information is provided about the child's religious needs. Careful discussions with parents allow the staff to ensure that customs and practices from home are, wherever possible, continued and valued within The Shires. Where parents/carers would like their children to attend a place of worship on a regular basis, staff make appropriate arrangements to facilitate this.

## **6. Details of who to contact if a person has a complaint about the home and how that person can access the home's complaint policy**

A formal procedure exists for making complaints and on admission children's families are made aware of the complaints policy. The Shires takes all complaints seriously and treats them confidentially. All complaints are treated impartially and in accordance with the policy and no complaint results in a child or their family being treated unfavourably. All complaints are recorded and senior managers monitor the complaints' log. Anyone wishing to make a complaint about the home can direct their complaint in writing to the Register Managers. The registered managers will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 5 working days with a copy of the complaint procedure attached. The registered managers will investigate the complaint and provide a written response within 20 days. Anyone wishing to make a complaint can also write to the Registered Managers requesting a copy of the complaints policy.

## **7. Details of how a person, body or organisation involved in the care or protection of a child can access the home's child protection policies or behaviour management policy**

The staff at the Shires are proactive in promoting the welfare of the children and understand the importance of safeguarding the children for whom they provide care. The following guidelines form part of the safeguarding policy and all staff are made aware of these at induction, and reminded about them when they start working with the young people through supervision.

- ❖ all staff have a duty of care and a duty to respond to, and report, any suspicion of abuse, or any child who may be at risk of any significant harm or abuse
- ❖ no member of staff will ask leading questions
- ❖ all information will be passed on immediately to the DSO



- ❖ all staff receive annual training in Safeguarding Children
- ❖ managers receive Safeguarding Children’s training up to level 3 (now known as Inter-Agency Working in Partnership)
- ❖ all safeguarding issues are monitored by the Director of Care and Education
- ❖ when a referral is made to the local safeguarding team it will be sent within 24 hours receipt of information
- ❖ information will be sent to the LA, the LADO and Ofsted within 24 hours
- ❖ all information will be dated and signed and kept in a locked drawer
- ❖ The Shires staff recognise the Charter of Children’s Rights (Convention on the Rights of the Child)

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|-----|---|
| SO  | Director of Care and Education, Marina Gough  |
| DSO | Deputy DofCE, Charles Tosan<br>Director of Care and Education, Marina Gough<br>Registered managers, Emma Nicholson and Kirsty Truesdale |

Children at The Shires are very well supervised at all times. Bullying is not a feature of the way in which children who live in The Shires interact with one another, largely because their autism often means that they have little interest in their house mates.

The children who live in The Shires children’s home all have autism and they have at least 1:1 staff during the day. They generally do not choose to absent themselves from the home. Nonetheless The Shires has in place a missing child policy which states that The Shires adheres to the Joint Protocol 2014 - Children and Young People who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care produced by Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children’s Board and Leicestershire Police. The Shires missing child policy sets out the steps the home will take in case a child is absent without permission. The policy also sets out details of staff roles and responsibilities in case a child goes missing.

On occasions children enjoy home visits. Parents who are unable to return the children on the agreed day are expected to contact The Shires to explain the circumstances that are preventing their child from returning at the planned time. If a child does not return as planned, and no communication is received from parents, staff follow this up and inform the appropriate authorities.

The Registered Managers may call for the placing authority to review a child’s care plan where the child has been persistently absent from the home, or if the child is considered to be at risk of harm. The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 places a duty on local authority to react to this request. Likewise the host authority may request additional care review if they consider a child to be at risk of harm.

## Views, wishes and feelings

### 8. A description of the home’s policy and approach to consulting children about the quality of their care

The child’s voice is important in terms of running The Shires successfully as a home. Wherever possible, and at a level appropriate to the child’s needs, children will be involved in contributing to decisions about their care. Daily planning using TEACCH schedule and weekly house meeting with staff and children provide opportunity for the children to engage with the day to day running of the home by suggesting activities, considering planned menus, arranging chores, and expressing their views in general.



Young people are encouraged to attend their LAC reviews and to contribute to the setting of targets. They have formal monthly meetings with their primary carers where they review the targets in their care plans and raise any issues they wish to discuss. Children are made aware of the complaints procedure that exists for The Shires and are encouraged to voice concerns and worries as they arise.

Some of the children who live at The Shires may be unable to communicate their views about the quality of their care. Special arrangements are therefore made for an adult who acts independently as the child's advocate to spend time regularly alongside each child, experiencing life in the home from the child's perspective. The advocate is someone who is known to the child, but not involved in their care who spends time 'in the child's shoes' and then reports back on what they liked about their experience, and asking questions about things they were not sure they liked. The advocate's reports are regularly reviewed by the management team and action is taken if any issues are raised that warrant it.

## **9. A description of the home's policy and approach in relation to -**

### **(a) anti-discriminatory practice in respect of children and their families**

**The promotion of partisan political views within the children's home is strictly prohibited.**

The staff and managers at The Shires do not tolerate any discrimination against children or their families on any issue including racial identity, physical appearance, sexuality, age, religion and disability. It is the responsibility of staff and management to challenge discrimination when it is apparent.

- ❖ The Shires provides placements to children and young people based on whether the child meets the admissions criteria and whether the home can meet the child's needs
- ❖ staff are recruited purely on merit and their ability to do the job
- ❖ those responsible for arranging placements and recruiting staff are aware of both positive and negative discrimination, and act accordingly
- ❖ all staff are required to be aware of and challenge discriminatory actions whatever their source, including those of their colleagues and young people living at The Shires
- ❖ tackling discrimination is a process of education not punishment
- ❖ children at The Shires are supported to practise the faith of their or their family's choice and where necessary appropriate support and advice is provided by staff or from recognised sources within the child's chosen faith group

### **(b) children's rights**

- ❖ Recognising the rights of the children is central to the ethos of The Shires. Staff receive training in ensuring that the rights of the children are met, and that if the child cannot take the responsibility that affords him/her those rights, the staff act on the child's behalf. The Shires has a written policy entitled 'Rights and Responsibilities of Children at The Shires' which gives practical advice to staff about ensuring the rights of the child when he/she is off the premises. The Shires staff recognise the Charter of Children's Rights (Convention on the Rights of the Child)

## **Education**

### **10. Details of provision to support children with special educational needs**

All of the children who live at The Shires have statements of special educational needs (or EHC Plan) and all have autism. Some of the youngsters need help with their communication as they have difficulty in verbalising their ideas and thoughts and augmented communication

systems are in place, such as PECS, to support them. Children living in The Shires are highly reliant on structures and routines because of their autism. To support them TEACCH type schedules are in place and are designed around the needs of the individual child. For example, some children need picture prompts, others word prompts. Children living at The Shires are vulnerable because of their autism, and are highly staffed to enable them to access the community, develop independence, and to live full and active lives.

**11. If the home is registered as a school, details of the curriculum provided by the home and the management and structure of the arrangements for education**

The Shires is dually registered as a children's home and a school. The Shires school is registered with the DfE to provide education for up to 20 pupils. Children at the home attend school from 09.00 to 15.45 Monday to Friday. The school is staffed with qualified teachers and support staff. The school curriculum is based on the National Curriculum and P Levels which are adapted to individual student's cognitive ability and stated needs to ensure that every child achieves the highest level of educational attainment possible. The Shires operates a 24-hour curriculum which cuts across the school and children's home.

The staff in the home work closely with the teaching staff to ensure that learning and skills from one setting are developed and practised in the other. Teaching staff spend time with students in the home practising home management skills, for example, whilst care staff support the children in class on a daily basis. Resources are shared and children can access class based resources outside school hours.

**12. If the home is not registered as a school, the arrangements for children to attend local schools and the provision made by the home to promote children's educational achievement**

The Shires' children's home is dually registered as a children's home and a school for up to 20 (12 boarders and 8 day) children and young people of mixed genders.

## **Enjoyment and achievement**

**13. The arrangements for enabling children to take part in and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their needs and develop and reflect their creative, intellectual, physical and social interests and skills**

The Shires' leisure curriculum provides the children with a range of interesting and engaging activities outside the time spent in the classroom. Staff in the home follow the 24 hour curriculum planning provided by the school and ensure that children are offered a wide range of experiences which may include visits to:-

- ❖ places of interest, including historic buildings, nature reserves and parks
- ❖ leisure facilities which provide activities such as ice skating, horse riding, sailing, swimming
- ❖ adventure playgrounds and recreational and sports facilities for PE, games and other activities such as ten pin bowling
- ❖ country parks and the seaside
- ❖ local sites of interest such as farms, shops and garages

During holiday periods children activity weeks are organised where special activities are arranged. These special activities may include canoeing, Kayaking, climbing, camping and other outdoor adventure activities as well as trips further afield.

Children are encouraged to join local groups such as youth clubs and are given the support they need to enable them to access these activities. They also share events with the local community such as having a stall in the village fete and planting trees in the local area.

Strong emphasis is placed on the children developing their own cultural heritage and identity, and also widening their understanding of other cultures. Arrangements are made for children to attend church or mosque services where they or their families wish. Food can be a great motivator for children with autism and provides a very easy and enjoyable way of helping children to learn about the way in which people from other cultures and countries share mealtimes and to sample the type of food they prepare. The children are regularly taken out for a meal in a local café or restaurant so that they can observe and learn the social skills associated with such occasions.

Close links are maintained between the school and the home and children are encouraged to carry out any homework tasks they have been set.

Some of the children who live at The Shires have difficulty in organising and managing their own leisure time because they have severe learning difficulties and are only working at a low cognitive level. Staff support these children by playing games with them and taking them out on walks and visits within the local and wider communities. Most of the children enjoy playing on computers and whilst this encouraged, staff monitor usage carefully to ensure that the children do not become over-obsessed to the extent that they exclude all of the other activities on offer. Children have internet access but this is regulated in line with The Shires' e-safety policy.

## Health

### 14. Details of any healthcare or therapy provided including -

#### **(a) details of the qualifications and professional supervision of the staff involved in providing any healthcare or therapy; and**

Children in the home receive support through CAMHS psychiatrist, clinical/educational psychologist, communication, speech and language therapist, occupational therapist, music therapist and play therapist

Children only receive therapy that is specified within their placement plans and agreed with the child's parents and placing authority. Any therapy provision is carried out only by a licensed or registered practitioner and all registrations are checked against the appropriate professional registers. All therapists employed to work at The Shires have current enhanced DBS clearance and they work as consultants. No member of staff will provide therapy for which they are not trained and supervised.

#### **(b) information about how the effectiveness of any healthcare or therapy provided is measured, the evidence demonstrating its effectiveness and details of how the information or the evidence can be accessed**

Regular informal meetings take place between the therapists and the Director of Care and Education/managers. Formal multi-disciplinary team meetings take place on a termly basis and provide an excellent forum for sharing approaches, assessing the effectiveness of approaches and monitoring the progress of individual children. Therapists have input into monthly primary care meetings so that staff are continuously updated about ongoing therapies and programmes.

All therapists produce regular termly reports of children's progress. Any issues arising from one therapy session are shared at the regular MDT meetings and all therapists support the child in dealing with these issues. All therapy reports are stored securely both electronically and in children's files.

All information about the work of the therapists with the children are mostly stored electronically on a secure server as well as in secure files in dedicated offices in the children's home and school. These are accessible only to authorised personnel. These information are made available to parents, guardians and placing authority on request and in line with regulations.

## Positive relationships

### 15. The arrangements for promoting contact between children and their family and friends

Except in circumstances that have been specified by a court order, or agreed as part of the care plan, every effort is made to enable children to maintain contact with their family and friends. When a child is admitted to The Shires, arrangements are made for them to maintain contact with their parents and other significant people in their lives in the most appropriate way for the child and his/her family. The arrangements, which will cover home visits, contact by phone, email or post, and visits from parents to the home are written into the child's care plan and the staff support the child in managing and preparing for the contact according to their needs.

Where appropriate children have a personal email address, and items of post or emails are passed to the child by care staff immediately. The home makes regular and at least twice-weekly contact with the child's parents to keep them informed about how their child is getting on and school sends home regular updates of school activities. Every child has a home/school diary.

## Protection of children

### 16. A description of the home's approach to the monitoring and surveillance of children

There is no electronic or mechanical surveillance equipment used within The Shires children's home. However, there is CCTV at the front entrance of the home and school which is pointed outwards towards anyone approaching the building from the front door. There is a clear sign on the front entrance informing anyone approaching the front door that CCTV system is operational at the front entrance. The CCTV was installed as an added level of security to keep the children at The Shires safer by monitoring whoever comes in or goes out of the building at all times.

### 17. Details of the home's approach to behavioural support, including information about -

#### (a) the home's approach to restraint in relation to children; and

Staff in The Shires have full regard for Regulation 20 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 which clearly states the circumstances under which restraint might be considered and used. Staff are fully conversant with The Shires' Behaviour Management Policy and subscribe to the notion of positive management of behaviours.

Staff are trained in the use of MAPA, a BILD accredited method of Managing Actual or Potential Aggression. This method of behaviour management was chosen by The Shires

because it focuses on de-escalating situations and redirecting children rather than using physical interventions. Restraint at any level is used only when there is no other alternative. All staff are made aware that restraint, when used, in relation to a child must be necessary and proportionate in line with Regulation 20(2) of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

The MAPA principles centre around the management of behaviour at different levels – low, medium and high. Low interventions are largely defined as 'touch' usually on the upper arm and usually for reassurance for the child. Medium interventions include light pressure on a child's arms to guide them somewhere safe or safer. High level interventions include restricting a child's movements when to avoid doing so might lead to them causing themselves or others harm. Technically any of these interventions are deemed to be restricting a child's liberty and as such are to be recorded in the restraint log, specifying the level of MAPA holding used.

**(b) how persons working in the home are trained in restraint and how their competence is assessed**

Staff are trained in the use of MAPA, a BILD accredited method of Managing Actual or Potential Aggression. All MAPA-trained staff receive a refresher training every year to ensure they remain competent. Staff are fully up to date with new legislation and any new techniques introduced by MAPA. The Registered Managers monitor staff on a regular basis to ensure they are working to agreed MAPA techniques and is easily available to staff if they have any questions about restraint or other physical interventions.

## Leadership and management

### 18. The name and work address of:-

(a) the registered provider;

The registered provider for the home is  
Hopscotch Solutions Ltd  
The Shires,  
Shires Lane,  
Stretton,  
Rutland,  
LE15 7GT  
01780 411944.

Hopscotch Solutions Ltd owned by  
Acorn Care and Education Ltd  
1 Merchant Place,  
River Street,  
Bolton,  
B12 1BX  
01204 558038.

(b) the responsible individual (if one is nominated)

The responsible individual for the children's home is  
Charles Tosan  
The Shires,  
Shires Lane,  
Stretton,  
Rutland,  
LE15 7GT  
01780 411944

(c) the registered managers (if one is appointed)

Miss Kirsty Truesdale and  
Miss Emma Nicholson

The Shires,  
Shires Lane,  
Stretton,  
Rutland,  
LE15 7GT  
01780 411944

#### **19. Details of the experience and qualifications of staff, including any staff commissioned to provide education and health care**

The Director of Care and Education is Marina Gough. She has overall responsibility for the school and the home settings enabling exceptionally high levels of consistency in practice. She is a qualified teacher and has worked in schools as a teacher, inspector and service head for more than 30 years. She has a B.Ed. (Honours), the NPQH headteacher qualification and an NVQ4 in Leadership and Management of Social Care.

The care staff team is led and managed by the Registered Managers Emma Nicholson and Kirsty Truesdale.

Kirsty's qualification include:-

Working towards Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management (Completion July 2016)  
NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care in Children and Young People  
NQC Level 2 in Health and Social Care in Children and Young People

Emma's qualification include:-

Working towards Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management (Completion July 2016)  
NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care in Children and Young People  
NQC Level 2 in Health and Social Care in Children and Young People  
Certified Instructor for Management of Actual and Potential aggression

Emma and Kirsty are experienced Care Workers and Managers with 14years experience between them of achieving outstanding outcomes for Children, Adolescents and Young Adults in Residential Care and Education. They have worked extensively in a social care and an educational setting with young people who have; Autism, learning difficulties, experienced psychological trauma and exhibit challenging behaviour.

Care staff hold NVQ3 (Level 3 Diploma) and more senior staff hold or are working towards Level 5 Diploma. Teaching staff hold either a qualified teacher status (QTS) or teaching assistant level 3 training along with relevant university degrees. There is always a senior member of staff on site and the Director of Care and Education, the Deputy Director of Care and Education, Registered Managers and the Team Managers provide senior cover every day of the week.

There is always an adequate level of first aid trained staff on shift every day to meet the basic health care needs of the children in the home. All other major health care and medical needs of the children are referred to the local GP and hospitals.



Regular training takes place for staff for MAPA, safeguarding and autism. The training record is held centrally by the HR department of The Shires and highlights when training needs revisiting or refreshing. The majority of staff working at The Shires have a very good understanding of the needs of children with autism and are experienced in helping them to manage their difficulties.

**20. Details of the management and staffing structure of the home, including arrangements for professional supervision of staff, including staff that provide education or health care.**

The Children's home and school is headed by the Director of Care and Education, a Deputy Director of Care and Education and the Registered Managers. In addition, the staff at The Shires includes 3 team managers – with two team managers managing the two day care staff teams and one team manager managing the night care staff team. The day and night care staff are a mix of Care Workers at Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 and Grade 5. There is also the teaching staff team line managed by the Teaching Team Manager.

The staff team increases and decreases according to the needs of the children living in the home as defined by their Education Care and Health plan (statement). As a minimum the home is staffed by an adequate number of staff to ensure every child present in the home has access to at least a 1:1 staff support. In which case if all twelve children are present in the home there would be at least thirteen staff (twelve staff plus a Team Manager) present on shift on each of the two day teams that operate on a two-day on two-day off pattern, and five waking night staff, on a four-night on four-night off shift pattern. Crossover between the day and night staff teams allows good handover of information. It also allows for day staff staying on longer if the young people are not settling easily.

All staff employed at The Shires have monthly supervisions with their line managers.

**21. If staff are all of one sex, or mainly of one sex, a description of how the home promotes appropriate role models of both sexes**

The staff group working with the children in The Shires is diverse, reflecting the strong equal opportunities policy that guides practice. The young people work with both male and female staff and staff avoid setting stereotypical gender roles that undermine the notion of equality.

## Care planning

**22. Any criteria used for the admission of children to the home, including any policies and procedures for emergency admission**

The Shires has a very strong policy of inclusion, and welcomes young people from all backgrounds. The home accepts both boys and girls from any geographical area, and is non-denominational.

To be eligible for consideration for a place at The Shires, young people must fulfil the following admission criteria:-

- ❖ be of secondary school age
- ❖ have Autism
- ❖ attend The Shires School on a full or part time basis

In addition to meeting the above criteria, young people must also satisfy The Shires of their suitability for placement by means of an initial assessment. Referrals for places are usually received directly from a placing authority. Parents may also apply for a place for their child at The Shires.



The Shires' assessment team, which may include a member of the Therapy Team considers each referral. Each child is assessed through discussion with parents/carers and placing authorities and observation of the child in his/her home and education setting where possible.

Most of the children in the home find change to routine very difficult and it is crucial that admissions to the home are carefully managed to ensure that the new child and the children already living in the home are fully prepared for the change that is to take place. For this reason The Shires does not usually accept children on emergency placements.