

## Therapeutic Services

Starley Hall benefits from its own on-site therapeutic team, based in 'The View', a bespoke building offering a quiet, reflective space for young people and their adults. As well as supporting young people, we provide support and training to the staff who care for and educate our young people as we believe that supporting carers is as important as offering timely support for young people.

Our therapeutic team is comprised of a Clinical Psychologist, a Well Being Practitioner/Nurse Therapist, a Therapeutic Assistant and a Holistic Massage and Relaxation Therapist. We also access the services of a Speech and Language Consultant, as required.

When a young person is referred and matched to Starley Hall, their background information is collated and summarised by the Clinical Psychologist. A short initial profile report is compiled for the staff team, highlighting areas of potential vulnerability based on the young person's background experiences. In addition, practical suggestions about how the care and education team can facilitate the young person's transition into Starley Hall positively are made.

Once a young person has arrived at Starley Hall, a skills assessment schedule is begun, focusing on observations of the young person's strengths and capabilities. We use both standardised assessments and semi-structured interviews with key teams. At this stage, it is important to understand that assessments are completed indirectly with adult carers, based on observations, interactions and experiences they have with the child. It is felt that direct assessment in the early days of placement can be highly anxiety provoking for young people in transition.



For some young people, it may become apparent that an in depth extended assessment is required. This can be initiated from 14-18 weeks into placement or at any point following this time period, throughout a child's journey at Starley Hall. This allows time for the young person to settle into the new environment and enables the team to make an accurate assessment of further need.

Various specialist assessments can be undertaken by the therapeutic team if further underlying cognitive, communication or neuro-developmental needs are identified. These can include speech and language assessment, intellectual assessment and assessment of social communication difficulties. These assessments can involve gathering information from multiple sources to include external agencies and family or past carers if appropriate. During this process, the young person would also meet with one or more members of the therapeutic team and participate in direct assessment.

Following assessment, some of the interventions we can offer are:

- Conversational supports, e.g. visual mind maps/Talking Mats
- Evidenced-based Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) based programmes, including the Decider Skills (widely used throughout the NHS)
- Trauma work, including Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Trauma Focused CBT
- Creating accessible materials, e.g. visual symbols incorporated into social stories/visual schedules
- Supporting self-regulation and self-awareness using techniques such as breathing and relaxation
- Emotional literacy work
- Social skills development



Where required, we liaise with and refer to outside partner agencies, including CAMHS, ADHD services, Tourettes Scotland, specialist drug and alcohol organisations, specialist services for sexually harmful behaviour and occupational therapy.

## Therapeutic Service Development

In addition to individual assessment and intervention, the therapeutic team have an integral role in developing Starley Hall's overall therapeutic environment to meet the mental health and developmental needs of our young people. All our managers and the majority of our staff are trained to Level 1 in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP). We provide onsite training, including:

- Understanding Autism and Social Communication Needs
- Therapeutic Parenting
- Attachment and Developmental Trauma
- Transitions
- Positive Responses to Trauma Based Behaviour

In addition, there are specialised courses accessed either in house or through external providers as required, such as:

- Epilepsy
- Diabetes management
- Brain injury
- Sexually harmful behaviours
- Self-harm

The progress of all young people resident on our main site is reviewed every 6 – 8 weeks at a multidisciplinary meeting called a Focus Group. These Focus Group meetings are attended by a member of the Therapeutic team. In the community houses, there are regular Care Planning meetings and members of the therapeutic service can attend on request and as required.

The Therapeutic team offer consultation individually and in groups with adult carers and educators, as a minimum intervention for every child's team at Starley Hall.



During a consultation, we often reflect on specific challenges the adults may face, how the adult around the young person understand these challenges and how they can respond effectively and therapeutically to the identified needs within care and education settings.

The consultation model adopted at Starley Hall highlights the importance of the emotional and physical environment we offer young people. Through this relational model, we recognise that the child's presentation will be influenced by the environment in which they have lived. Consequently, the staff team at Starley Hall may need to challenge the child's established ideas about adults and care.

Our therapeutic consultation model empowers adults to recognize their role as agents for change, skilling them to make systemic adjustments to meet a young person's needs more effectively. This model removes the onus upon the child to change and promotes an adaptive but stable environment that promotes therapeutic growth and development.