



# Statement of Purpose

## Grassmillees

Manager: Nathalie Antonucci  
Woodside Farm House  
Coylton  
KA6 6HQ

Tel: 01292 570 427  
E-mail: [Nathalie.antonucci@sparkofgenius.com](mailto:Nathalie.antonucci@sparkofgenius.com)

Date of publication: September 2022

Date of next review: September 2023

# Contents

## 1. Contact Details

## 2. Caring for Children

- Spark of Genius Services – Aims and Objectives
- Spark of Genius & Philosophy
- Aims, Objectives and Ethos of Grassmilless
- Service Outcomes
- How the Service Meets these Outcomes
- About Grassmillees, Facilities and Recreational Activities
- About the Children who will live at Woodside
- Care Planning and Outcomes Measurement
- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Consultation with Young People, Families and External Agencies
- Anti Bullying Procedures
- Promoting Cultural, Linguistic and Religious Needs
- Anti-discriminatory Practice
- Children Missing from the Home
- Suggestions and Complaints
- Emergency Procedures

## 3. Promoting Positive Behaviour

## 4. Education

## 5. Health

## 6. Staffing Matters

- Appendix 1 Staffing Structure
- Appendix 2 Staffing Information
- Appendix 3 Staff Team Experience

## **1. Contact Details**

### **Registered Home Details**

Grassmillees

Mauchline

KA5 5ES

### **Registered Manager**

Nathalie Antonucci

Woodside

Coylton

Near Ayr

KA6 6HQ

### **Responsible Individual**

Stephen McGhee

Spark of Genius

Trojan House

Pegasus Avenue

Business Park

Paisley

PA1 2BH

Email: [Stephen.mcghee@sparkofgenius.com](mailto:Stephen.mcghee@sparkofgenius.com)

Tel: 0141 5872710

### **Registered Provider**

Spark of Genius

Trojan House

Pegasus Avenue

Business Park

Paisley

PA1 2BH

Tel: 0141 5872710

## 2. Caring for Children

### Spark of Genius ~ Aims and Objectives

We aim to function as one coherent residential child care system; with consistent policies, practices, procedures and management across all of our homes. As part of this system, we will deliver care to the standards set out in the National Care Standards.

We can provide care for a group of up to five young people, on a medium or long term basis.

In all cases, our overall **Aim** is to provide care which:

- Helps a young person to make sense of past experiences and to develop coping strategies to deal with these.
- Provides young people with positive, stimulating and enjoyable experiences.
- Helps young people (and wherever possible their families/networks) to plan towards and achieve a positive and successful future.

Our **Objectives** are:

- To provide each individual young person with the highest quality of care and support achievable.
- To promote young people's self-confidence and self-esteem within a framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, recognising their individual potential and needs.
- To safeguard young people and promote their welfare, including positive health care and health education.
- To promote educational opportunities and achievement.
- To promote young people's contact with their families, unless this is clearly and explicitly determined not to be in their best interests.
- To promote young people's integration with the wider community/supportive networks.
- To assist with the preparation for all young people for an independent and fulfilling adult life.
- To work effectively as part of a multi-disciplinary helping team to ensure that the best interests of the young people and their families are met.
- To advocate on behalf of young people to assist them in achieving their potential

We are able to offer a truly integrated and holistic approach to service delivery and we are fully committed to:

- Adapting new and emerging practice models and assessment frameworks.
- The implementation of best practice and learning from research, theory and developments in the field of residential child care and education.
- Safer recruitment practices.
- Specialist training and continual professional development of staff teams.

Spark of Genius offers fundamental core services:

- Residential Care
- Education
- Crisis Intervention
- Adult Support Services and Community Support

Each core service is fully integrated so that a young person is able to transition smoothly between services at different points and developmental stages in their lives. Our model of child care offers a unique opportunity in our ability to completely personalize a package of care and education to meet the unique needs of each child being looked after at Grassmillees. Where possible, we endeavor to prepare the young person for integration back to their family environment and community. Over the last ten years, as an organization, we have developed a comprehensive range of services for children who require specialist care and expertise which is unavailable within their local authority provision.

We aim to provide an optimal care setting for children in a group living or a singleton environment and recognise that a key element of working with a diverse age range is to ensure robust safeguarding and in the meeting of different developmental needs.

We ensure this through:

- Expert assessment of need.
- Ensuring that all care plans and placements are appropriate for the care environment through careful placement matching on admission.
- Creating a culture of support within the peer group environment
- Ensuring that all practitioners are aware and respond appropriately to the needs of the different age groups and developmental stages (training is specific to the age ranges and range of needs within the house at any time).

We have developed a staffing structure which consists of one member of staff on shift and one wakened night staff to meet the child's needs when at occupancy. Both day shift and night shift will be supported by a member of the management team through on-call. We will also increase staffing wherever required according to the needs and demands of the group.

### **Spark of Genius ~ Ethos and Philosophy**

The National Care Standards identify six core values which contribute to quality care practice in all residential settings, these are:

1. Privacy
2. Dignity
3. Safety
4. Choice
5. Realizing Potential
6. Equality & Diversity

Spark of Genius seeks to promote all of these values at all times, by way of the following examples of good practice:

#### **Privacy**

- Every young person has their own bedroom.
- All young people will receive sensitivity in practice, especially when dealing with personal issues.
- Information about all young people will remain confidential; information about one young person will not therefore be disclosed to another, or to any inappropriate source without permission.
- Care is taken to ensure that a homely environment is maintained, and the house does not develop an overtly institutional feel.

### **Dignity**

- Staff have an active awareness of each young person's child's racial, cultural, religious and dietary needs, enabling the celebration of difference for all.
- Spark of Genius provides a living environment and operational culture which places the needs of the young people as paramount, above all others.
- Spark of Genius uses techniques for managing young person's behaviour based principally on positive reinforcement and reward, avoiding punitive measures in reaction to negative behaviour(s), so that young people can learn from their mistakes and from the pro social modeling of staff and the adults around them.

### **Realizing Potential**

- Spark of Genius provides a living environment and operational culture which encourages the development of self-confidence and allows young people appropriate opportunities to take some calculated risks within their learning journey.
- At Spark of Genius, each young person is able to access and record in their own personal file.
- Spark of Genius has developed an independent living skills programme, for young people to use in their learning journey towards independent living.
- The provision of clear information about how to complain or to resolve minor issues is available, to all young people, at all times.
- All young people have access to an independent advocacy service including the provision of a free-phone telephone service and text helpline to senior managers.

### **Choice**

- Each young person is encouraged to personalize their own bedroom within reason.
- New young people (following initial settling-in) will each be encouraged to personalize their own room.
- Young people are actively encouraged to share and influence (age appropriately) the day-to-day routines and practices within the house through a variety of means, including attending residents' meetings.
- Young people are encouraged to exercise their own religious and cultural preferences.
- Young people are actively encouraged to partake in a wide variety of leisure activities.

### **Rights**

- Spark of Genius supports, promotes and complies with the European Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Spark of Genius provides a safe physical environment.
- Spark of Genius actively promotes social learning, so that all young people can learn to understand their rights and responsibilities within the home, within the community and towards others.

- All young people are made aware of how they should expect staff to behave, and what they should do if this is not their experience.
- All young people are provided with guidance and support, which informs them about how to influence decisions about their future.
- All young people are provided with information about the independent advocacy service and of how they can pursue a complaint (both formal and informal).
- A system of care planning and reviews (LAC system) is used throughout to ensure that service provision most appropriately meets health, education and social needs in order to maximize the future life chances for each young person.
- Spark of Genius actively promotes family contact, as appropriate and as agreed in the Care Plan for each young person.
- Each young person is given the opportunity to actively engage in, and influence the planning and delivery of services for them.

### **Aims, Objectives and Ethos of Grassmillees**

Grassmillees is a singleton residential children's home owned and managed by Spark of Genius; this is one of multiple residential houses throughout Scotland and England. Spark of Genius offers residential care for young people, within small houses in semi-rural areas. Our houses are selected on the basis that we ourselves would be happy to live in them and they are of a very high quality and specification. We firmly believe that residential care should be viewed as a positive choice for those young people who have to live away from home.

Grassmillees is a singleton placement for children with specific needs and emotional/behavioral difficulties who need medium to long term specialist care. Education is provided at one of our learning centers located nearby and our young people travel to school and back every day; we also support our young people in attending mainstream or alternative education, training or work placements wherever possible.

We are able to provide an innovative range of services to meet the individual needs of children and young people and we strive to:

- Create a warm, family environment without the emotional intensity of the original family home. To achieve this each young person's opinions are central to the house's operation and we endeavor to democratically agree to any changes. Young people are regularly consulted during daily discussions, Spark Parliament, in house meetings, in 1:1 key time and Quality Assurance visits.
- De-institutionalise the house by creatively challenging the legislative requirements for children's homes (minimizing signs and instructions, avoiding jargon and terminology, limiting 'official visitors' to the house and by applying a parental perspective to all aspects of care).
- Maintain close links with sporting and leisure clubs, community projects and encourage each child to participate.
- Support each young person in maintaining cultural and religious affiliations through the many links we have created in the local community. Our diverse group of staff will encourage each young person to observe, celebrate and share their beliefs and heritage through educational projects, group discussions and creative arts.
- Offer a fair gender balance within the staff team in order to promote appropriate pro-social modelling and good role models of both sex.
- Support each young person in the development of adaptive coping strategies and self-care.
- Ensure that there is always a team of adults available who work in a trauma informed way in line with the philosophy and beliefs of Spark of Genius in order to achieve consistency of approach, supporting the development of resilience and internal focus of control.

- Consistently train all our staff in knowledge and skills to improve and support the development of resilience in young people.
- Ensure that Grassmillees provides an experience which is caring, structured, holds high expectations for children's behavior and encourages participation and empowerment throughout the home.
- Adhere to robust pre-admission planning and initial assessment processes.
- Provide intensive, bespoke packages of support – this can be enhanced if a placement appears to be at risk.
- 24 hour supervision with wakened night staff
- On-call system to ensure 24 hour safeguarding support

We do this by:

- Working in a trauma informed way and putting the needs of the child at the center of everything we do.
- Empowering children to participate in the operational management of the house (house meetings and feedback during key work sessions).
- Spending time playing and sharing fun activities.
- Seeking opportunities to show children we care and they matter by being affectionate in as many appropriate ways as possible.
- Being consistent in our behavior and our expectations.
- Providing comfort during difficult times.
- Modeling and promoting appropriate physical contact. This will be 'prescribed contact' which will entail hugs, handshakes and tactile gestures to convey warmth and sincerity; staff are trained to recognise what appropriate contact is and when to give it.
- Encouraging relatives and friends to visit the house to promote the development of external relationships.
- Endeavoring to create relationships with children's families (care plan permitting) so that we can facilitate, support, monitor, report and assess family contact.

We place great value on collaborative working and we have strong links with Social Work, Psychological Services, CAMHS, Health professionals and many other external agencies. Working with the parents and carers of young people in our care can positively affect outcomes for the young people therefore we are committed to the promotion of home contact if this is appropriate. We agree contact arrangements with the case holding Social Worker and the arrangements for managing contact are clearly set out in the child's care plan. Our aim is to support the child, significant others and the placing authority with contact arrangements; and this can be done by providing transport, making space available within the house or by supervising family time if deemed necessary.

Grassmillees will not tolerate any form of discrimination, injustice or inequality. Staff are committed to the elimination of all forms of discrimination and to creating equality of opportunity for everyone, regardless of their gender, race, disadvantage, disability, culture, religious beliefs, age, sexuality or social class. Staff will receive training and support to raise awareness of discriminatory practice and the house has a robust 'Anti-Discrimination' policy which all staff will be familiar and confident with. Staff will attempt to build an in-depth understanding and knowledge of each young person so that their insights can be employed in subtle and thoughtful ways to ensure that the child is getting feedback which ensures that they feel valued.



## **Grassmillees Service Outcomes**

The outcomes we aim to achieve for our young people are:

- To feel safe and valued within a warm and nurturing environment.
- To be looked after by an appropriately skilled and caring staff team.
- To have continuity of care
- To actively learn according to their age and stage of development.
- To be encouraged to develop their own identity, enjoy new experiences and to develop a wider social network.
- To participate in local and wider community based leisure activities.
- To participate in a wide range of activities which promote self-esteem and confidence.
- To develop independent daily living skills such as cooking, personal care and safety.
- To sustain and develop new skills to improve their quality of life.
- To engage and develop new friendships.
- To eat healthily and enjoy a wide range of activities which promote good health and wellbeing.
- To have the opportunity to influence decisions which affect them.
- To participate in an active role in the planning and delivery of the service.
- To participate in educational sessions which support the 24 hour curriculum.

## **How the Service Meets these Outcomes**

At all times, we aim to provide a safe and stimulating environment for all of the children and young people placed in our care. The service will focus on delivering realistic and achievable outcomes for children and young people and will follow the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Manager and staff team will ensure that safeguarding activities are embedded in the service and health & safety legislation are adhered to.

The service is regularly inspected and monitored by:

- Regular Quarterly reports completed by the registered manager
- Regular Quality Improvement inspections completed by SMT
- Regular Care Inspectorate inspections
- Health and Safety inspections
- Food Hygiene inspections
- Regular, statutory service of equipment inspections

## **About Grassmillees, Facilities and Recreational Activities**

Grassmillees is a village in East Ayrshire and is located roughly 5 miles from Kilmarnock, 15 miles from Ayr and 30 miles from Glasgow. According to the 2019 census Mauchline is home to circa 3921 residents and although small Mauchline has various facilities and amenities to offer including a primary school, activity center, tennis courts, a local shop, one of Ayrshire's top restaurants and a petrol station. A number of shops can be found to the western end of the village, including a convenience store and a butcher.

Grassmillees favorable location means easy access to all the wide ranging opportunities on offer within the three aforementioned towns / cities (Ayr, Kilmarnock & Glasgow). These places provide choices and options for the young people, ensuring a wide range of opportunities are on offer which caters for all in a needs-led manner.

Grassmillees has;

- A Kitchen with a utility room connected.
- A spacious living room.
- 1 bedroom
- 1 bathroom
- Staff office with separate bathroom.

Within the grounds

- Garden area
- Outbuildings

### **Admission Criteria:**

**Age Range** 10-20 Years

**Numbers** One

### **Admission Procedures and Transition Planning**

We accept placements for children and young people aged between 10-18 years who will benefit from living in a singleton placement.

All admissions are undertaken following an in-depth assessment of needs and risks. Where any risks are identified, these are not seen as inhibitors for placement, but are considered on the basis of the ability to safely manage risk and to put appropriate support plans in place. However, of paramount importance is the safeguarding of children and young people in our care, and therefore we would not accept a child into placement who may pose an unmanageable risk to themselves or others.

Spark of Genius believes in developing child-centered, bespoke packages of care and education and therefore we ensure that we can meet the needs of the child being placed with us and also the needs of the young people already in placement.

We accept same day placements if it is felt appropriate and that a 'quick' transition will benefit the child; providing the objectives of the placement are aligned with the house's purpose, and where appropriate planning can take place. We will also ensure that this does not impact the current group of young people.

Once a placement has been agreed the process of 'joining' the house is carefully managed in line with attachment informed practice as we fully recognise the importance of pre-placement planning to minimize any possible anxiety and trauma. The young person is very much involved in the planning of his/her transition alongside the local authority and this is carried out at their own pace, in line with their own individual needs.

This process will routinely involve visits to the house, providing the young person with a welcome book about the house and staff, having lunches/dinner, seeing their room, making

choices about their own furnishings and décor and spending time with the staff team. This 'positive claiming' process helps the young person to feel that they 'belong' to the house and that their choices and views are firmly valued.

Whenever possible; a house visit will be arranged by the Registered Manager and/or key worker to visit the child/young person in their family home or previous placement, to prepare them for the transition. In addition, a 'Young People's Guide' will be forwarded to the young person; and contact will be established with the current carers; this will enable any questions that the young person may have to be answered, to provide reassurance and for any concerns which they may have to be resolved.

We will work very closely with the referring Social Worker to gain all of the information required to enable a comprehensive, formal assessment of risk to be completed and to devise an initial 'Care Plan' which will clearly outline the purpose and aims of the placement beforehand. A designated key worker will be carefully matched with the child; they will meet with professionals, previous carers and any other significant adults to obtain as much information as possible about the child in order to create an accurate assessment of current levels of understanding and functioning. A young person profile will be written which details daily routines, strategies for behavior management, likes and dislikes and any potential risks and this will ensure consistency of approach by the staff team following admission.

A pre-admission planning meeting will always take place prior to admission, in exceptional circumstances, this will take place at the time of admission, or will be arranged to be held within the following three working days.

### **Emergency Admissions**

We understand that it is not always possible to plan placements when a crisis situation develops. The need to act quickly in order to meet the young person's needs is paramount and therefore we are able to accommodate situations like this as quickly and as smoothly as possible if necessary. Emergency placements are available within Spark of Genius, however we would always like to be notified at the earliest opportunity so that we can manage the transition as effectively as possible whilst minimizing any stress for the young person.

In addition to the aims, philosophy and remit of the home and focus of practitioners, transition and exit planning is discussed from the onset of the placement. Our role is to support all children and young people where possible to attain a positive transition to:

**Prepare for Independence:** All staff are aware of the requirements of pathway planning and this is an integrated part of staff training. Grassmillees staff will ensure good multi-agency working and attainment of a young person's goals in this area and this is integrated throughout our work in respect of vocational training, social and life skills work.

**Return Home:** Staff will work closely and sensitively in supporting children to return to their family and/or local community if this is what the young person wants and to provide outreach support services where required.

### **Care Planning and Outcomes Measurement**

Each young person will have their own individual residential care plan, which addresses their particular needs with regards to health, education, emotional and behavioral development, identity, religious and cultural beliefs, family and social relationships, social presentation, communication profile and self-care.

Identifying and improving the outcomes for each young person is a priority area and primary task within Grassmillees.

We maintain this focus by utilizing:

- Case studies and consultation.
- The young person's views, wishes and aspirations.
- Individual placement aims, key tasks, objectives and timescales. These are updated as the child develops and their progress is evaluated.
- Educational attainment.
- Health checks and specialist assessments.
- Structured assessments to chart progress and highlight areas for development.

This data will be analyzed on a regular basis by the house's management team and this will then inform updates to the care plan, statutory reviews and practice. The child's progress within their care plan will be informally reviewed through internal auditing and also discussed formally at regularly arranged reviews and professionals meetings. This is an opportunity to look at the existing plans in place for a young person and the service which they are receiving. Following these reviews, the care plan can be amended to take into account any changes in circumstances, concerns or issues.

### **Access to Records**

Except for information/material held in the confidential section of their files, children will be actively encouraged to take an interest in records held on them; to be involved in the personalisation and writing of their files and to read and comment on them. Any information held on a child's file which has been written by a third party or does not have the permission of the author to share will not be shared with the child, and will be held confidentially. Before records or files are shown to children, consideration will be given to the likely effect of sharing the information. However, all information contained outside the confidential section is normally accessible. If in doubt or if there are concerns about the likely effect on the child, the supervisor or manager will be consulted.

Should staff need to share information provided by previous carers or third parties they will:

- Read the records/reports beforehand;
- Speak to the authors if possible;
- Collate the records in chronological order;
- Give thought to what questions the young person may ask;
- And/or what other information may be required;
- A note should be placed on the Daily Records each time a child has access to records or his/her file.

### **Safeguarding Children and Young People**

All staff will endeavor to build warm relationships to create emotional security in the belief that children are more inclined to seek understanding of past experiences from a secure position.

We will we do this by:

- Spending time playing and sharing in fun activities.
- Seeking opportunities to show children that we care and that they matter by being affectionate in as many appropriate ways as possible.
- Being consistent in our behavior and our expectations.

- Providing comfort during difficult times.
- Modeling and promoting appropriate physical contact; this will be 'prescribed contact' which will entail hugs, handshakes and tactile gestures to convey warmth and sincerity.

The key worker will ensure that:

- The child is registered with local health services and attends all appointments.
- The child is supported in attending any prescribed therapeutic services.
- The social worker maintains regular contact and ensures statutory reviews are upheld.
- The care plan and individual risk assessment is kept up to date and adhered to.
- That an individual health plan is maintained which will chart medical history, monitor personal care and raise awareness of physical, emotional and sexual health issues.

All staff are trained in the administration and storage of medication through the local pharmacy. The organization also has a robust Administration of Medication policy which all staff are aware of and have access to at any point. Any young people who require medication of any kind will be treated with dignity, privacy and respect in its administration and, where deemed appropriate, they can be involved in the administration of their own medication.

All staff are trained in dealing with issues of substance misuse. We maintain close links with local health providers and have a clear Substance Misuse policy which all staff will be familiar with. There is a clear reporting procedure which is displayed in the staff office, and, where necessary, young people will also be made aware of the potential ramifications should they misuse drugs/alcohol, while also accessing relevant support. This is reinforced during group discussions, 1:1 key time and on notice boards. This encourages secure attachments and helps to build warm and nurturing relationships with staff. The organization also has a Consultant Psychologist, Dr Marie Holmes, who can offer support in terms of a young person's addictions or reasons for misusing substances.

All staff; receive training to cover these areas.

- Safeguarding
- How to deal with a Child Protection disclosure
- Multi-agency commitment
- Internet Safety Policy – monitoring and support and awareness raising
- Promoting awareness of personal safety via discussion, learning resources, role modeling, guidance and encouragement
- Aim to reduce absences/missing young people
- Risk assessment compilation
- Safer recruitment checks
- Adequate staffing levels
- Staff training and development
- Monitoring of visitors and home contact supervision

Staff always listen to children and young people and take seriously any concern or allegation which is made. They are careful to avoid leading questions or promises of confidentiality. The manager will maintain regular contact with the relevant Social Workers and will discuss any relative issues regarding the young people with them. Any significant event will be reported to the Care Inspectorate. The manager will maintain contact with the internal Child Protection Officer (CPO) in relation to any issues or allegations related to staff.

### **Managing Allegations**

The Registered Manager is responsible for coordinating any Child Protection referrals, concerns and allegations. Spark of Genius has a comprehensive policy which is referred to by

all staff and which contains the necessary guidance and instruction. Once a concern or allegation has been made or raised – the Registered Manager will inform the organization's Child Protection Officer (CPO) and then will notify and co-operate with the Local Authority in the area where the allegation/concern is suspected.

The Local Authority will advise on the actions/measures that must be taken including notifications to the following:

- The Child(ren)'s Social Worker, and come to a decision about notifying parents and any actions that need to be taken to protect the child(ren) e.g. whether it is necessary to change placements;
- The Police, if a Child Protection Enquiry is initiated;
- Referring the member of Staff to the SSSC.

In consultation with all of the agencies, decisions will need to be taken about the ongoing safety/placement arrangements of the Child(ren) and the alleged perpetrators e.g. it may be necessary to move/ or suspend staff or move/transfer children to another house or placement. If such a decision is made, the Local Authority will be notified as will the police if it is deemed necessary.

Staff are trained within mandatory safeguarding and child protection training on how to respond to allegations made by children in their care and this includes how to respond verbally, how to record and the reporting structures they need to operate within. The placing authority of each child placed will be made aware of the need for such procedures and enter into an agreement with the Registered Manager as to how these will be used when the child is placed. This agreement will be recorded in the placement plan.

Grassmillees is formally inspected by the Care Inspectorate on a regular basis through the means of an unannounced inspection. Grassmillees is also subject to robust internal scrutiny by being audited quarterly in the form of a Quality Improvement visit which occurs quarterly. The Registered Manager will also complete a three monthly monitoring report in respect of the operation of the home. As part of these processes, young people, families and other professionals will consult regarding the quality of care being received by the children and young people who live there.

### **Sexual Exploitation of Young People**

With regards to sexual exploitation, we are very proactive and will focus on early identification and intervention strategies in working with young people who may be deemed to be at risk. We are aware that all vulnerable young people, both male and female, are at risk of sexual exploitation, therefore we will raise awareness and protection of all of our young people will be our main aim. Any young person thought to be at risk of sexual exploitation will be assessed using the Spark of Genius in-house risk management tool.

We will ensure that all staff are up to date with legislation and guidance, and ensure that they are trained to recognise the warning signs and risk factors involved in the sexual exploitation of young people by engaging with relevant professionals to deliver training. We will ensure that our Policies and Procedures are in line with up to date legislation. Spark of Genius will work with, and ensure information is shared as a matter of good practice, with other agencies including Local Authorities, Police, Education, Health and Specialist Services working with sexual exploitation, to ensure a Multi-Agency approach/response.

## **Threat of Online Sexual Exploitation of Young People**

Spark of Genius are aware that there is a serious threat of young people being exploited online and as such we are committed to implementing the framework set out by The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP). We do this by ensuring staff are armed with the knowledge to identify the young people who may be vulnerable to exploitation, and know what to do when they are identified. There is an organizational commitment to implementing the following: Working in partnership, staff training, IT policies, increasing the young people's knowledge, increasing the young people's resilience and maintaining a commitment to the principles set out by CEOP.

## **Threat of Radicalisation of Young People**

Spark of Genius are aware of the serious threat of young people becoming radicalized and as such we are committed to implementing the Prevent Strategy set out by HM Government. We do this by ensuring staff are armed with the knowledge to identify the young people who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified. There is an organizational commitment to implementing the following: Working in partnership, staff training, IT policies, increasing the young people's knowledge, increasing the young people's resilience and maintaining a commitment to the principles set out within the Prevent Strategy.

## **Gang Activity**

Spark of Genius are aware that when a young person goes missing they may become involved or associate with 'gangs'; and we will work with the young person to raise their awareness of the dangers of becoming involved in 'gang cultures'. We will support all young people who are already associated or a member of a gang, to protect them from the associated risks of gang activity. Spark of Genius recognises that friendships within groups are a normal part of growing up, and these groups must be distinguished from 'street gangs'.

We will:

- Make a return home a positive experience for the young person
- Take time to listen to young people
- Raise awareness of 'risky' behaviours
- Educate young people about 'healthy relationships'
- Find ways to work with the 'push-pull factor' for going missing by listening and talking to young people when they have been missing from placement.
- Support young people in making positive attachments and in building relationships within the house using our 'authentic warmth model' of working with young people
- Support building self-esteem in young people
- Address any issues of bullying of young people
- We will with a restorative justice approach
- Give young people a voice and to support them in feeling safe, to enable them to speak out, and to disclose if they are being sexually exploited
- Ensure that all the young person's medical needs are attended to
- Be aware of the difference between young people gathering together to socialise and gang membership.

## **Consultation with Young People, Families and External Agencies**

Each young person will have a designated key worker who will be carefully selected due to their similar interests and proven ability in establishing a positive and strong relationship with their keychild. They will use attachment informed practice to make connections and create bonds of attachment with the young person.

They will be supportive, work closely with the social worker and family, familiarize themselves with the child's likes and dislikes, organize their medical and health appointments, be responsible for the upkeep of case files and schedule weekly one to one keytime sessions to ensure that the young person is progressing, content, making progress and achieving the goals within their care plan.

We have daily informal opportunities to meet as a group over meal times to enable everyone to talk about their day, resolve any issues which may be "around" and to discuss plans and events. This is complemented by formal opportunities such as weekly children's meetings with an agenda, part of which is set to address things such as choosing menus, activities etc., and also to address any points which the young people may wish to add, the agenda is coordinated by the nominated house representative.

We carry out annual stakeholder surveys every April which includes electronic employee surveys, young people questionnaires and surveys sent to all parents/carers, external agencies and professionals. A response leaflet is created using a 'You Said, We Did, We Plan to...' format and this is shared with all participants.

There is a formal complaints and suggestions system that the young people and their families may use if they wish to address a particular concern or make a suggestion for improvement. This is usually addressed by the manager but can be referred to an external complaints person if the young person is not satisfied with the outcome. The external complaint officer for Spark of Genius is The Managing Director, Stephen McGhee and the children can also have independent access to this person.

### **Promoting Cultural, Linguistic and Religious Needs**

As part of the implementation of our 'Equality and Diversity' policy, young people resident at the house are encouraged and supported to pursue any religious practice of their choice. Information about local centers of worship including Mosques, Temples and Churches of different denominations will be provided by staff, and young people wishing to participate in their respective religious practice will be fully supported by staff to a place of worship.

Within the house, young people are given privacy and space to follow their religious beliefs e.g. private time to pray is made available as well as the provision of relevant literature about different faiths. The quiet room in the house can be used as an area for meditation and prayer as well used for recreation and other necessary meetings. Staff will ensure that food and cooking arrangements are sensitive to different cultures and belief

### **Anti-Discriminatory Practice**

Staff will provide assurance to all young people in our care about our commitment to challenge and to remove any forms of individual, institutional or structured discrimination, whilst promoting an awareness of anti-discriminatory practice through ongoing training and support. Set out below are principles which we aim to adopt, communicate and implement in the house:

Principles:

- Within Spark of Genius, young people should not be discriminated against for any reason.
- Racist behavior will not be tolerated and any such behavior will be challenged and dealt with appropriately.
- Sexist attitudes will be challenged and discussed.



- No pornographic material will be allowed within the house, and no books or pictures deemed offensive to women or men will be displayed.
- No young person will be excluded from a house because they are disabled, unless the layout of the building precludes them from physical access.
- Staff will not discriminate in their treatment of young people on the grounds of their disability or any other reasons.
- Staff will promote an awareness and understanding of disability in young people in their care and therefore work towards ensuring the best positive outcomes for individuals and others.
- Stigmatization of any young person and for any reason is totally unacceptable.

### **Children Missing from the Home**

We work very closely with the local police to utilize protocols and policies. Our procedures clearly interface with children's individual care plans to set clear expectations for each and every child in care. Spark of Genius is aware that when a young person goes missing or runs away regularly from the home or school; this could be an indicator that the young person may be becoming involved in sexual exploitation or gang activities. Spark of Genius will work with the Local Authority and Police to address this immediately, sharing information to ensure that we find a way to encourage the young person to make alternative decisions.

Above all, we will:

- Maintain contact with the young person, where possible, via phone or text (using Spark of Genius devices).
- Actively search for the young people where appropriate alongside the Police.
- Engage in a one-to-one discussion with the young person about their whereabouts, and let them know that we are concerned about them.
- Support the young person in building trust and making positive 'attachments'.
- Make time to listen and understand each young person's self-perception and seek to empower them in their lives (internal focus of control).
- Encourage young people to make safe choices and to minimize any potential risks.
- Promote the experience of success by setting attainable targets and celebrating achievements.
- Ensure each young person has a clear understanding of the need to maintain behavioral boundaries.
- Regularly review risk assessments and Care Plans.

Robust risk assessments are in place for all young people to minimize risk and good staffing ratios are observed. There is a clear procedure which is to be followed in the event of a child going missing. Staff are familiar with this procedure and a copy may be made available to parents/carers if they wish. When the child returns to the house, staff will notify the Police, the social worker, team manager, on-call manager and any other significant adults.

### **Suggestions and Complaints**

Woodside has a clear and detailed policy regarding suggestions and compliments, and all staff and young people are familiar with these processes. There are child friendly suggestions and complaints leaflets designed by our young people themselves and information on these processes is detailed in the Young Person's Guide. We have an 'open door' policy in which young people are given the opportunity to air grievances with management and staff, in group discussions, during 1:1 key time and through their social worker, advocates, regulators and child protection agencies. Young people also have access to a telephone at all times (independent advocates and helpline numbers are prominently displayed). There is also a free text helpline for young people to use if they wish to make contact with external management.

Grassmillees will be visited quarterly by SMT for a Quality Improvement visit and Care Inspectorate inspectors visit twice yearly. Parents may also contact the Care Inspectorate directly if they wish to make a complaint.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Health and Safety issues are given the highest priority. Whilst all care is taken with regard to health and safety, unforeseen emergencies can occur. If this should happen, staff will remain calm and follow procedure. Staff are clear about how to contact emergency services and how to contact senior and emergency support staff out of hours. Any emergency situation will be notified to the Care Inspectorate.

The building is equipped with a fire alarm system, there are clearly identified escape routes and all fire fighting equipment is checked in accordance with regulatory requirements.

In addition

- Fire instruction is given to all regular staff regularly.
- Any sessional or agency staff are given fire instruction at the commencement of any shift.
- All children are given fire instruction regularly.
- Any new child admitted is given fire instruction at admission
- Visitors to the house are given fire instruction as appropriate to the length of the visit
- Fire drills are held quarterly at varying times of the day, across all shifts.

A fire drill is conducted within the first week whenever a new child has been admitted to test and assess their understanding of instruction, and response to an emergency evacuation. There will be illuminated, clearly signed fire exits and the signage within the house indicates the route to be followed. There is emergency lighting which is inspected and tested in accordance with regulatory guidelines. There is a designated fire officer and person who is responsible for fire procedures identified on each shift.

If for any reason the building has to be evacuated, the young people will be moved immediately to the Woodside and staff will have a set of keys and access to the code in the event of this being necessary.

### **3. Promoting Positive Behaviour**

All of our work is underpinned by best practice and available guidance and as an organization we feel it is imperative to maintain a progressive knowledge of informed behavioral management practice models; we have therefore adopted Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (BILD approved) as our behaviour management model. To support each young person in developing adaptive coping and self-management skills all staff are trained in this accredited and advanced training programme. The core of this training is to provide care workers with the skills and knowledge to support and teach young people positive responses to any difficult situations and environments.

This training teaches staff to:

- Prevent and/or de-escalate a potential crisis situation involving a young person
- Safely and therapeutically manage a crisis situation
- Be able to help children and young people improve their coping strategies
- Initial training over four days and then refresher training in line with policy

- Competency checks will be carried out and assessed through practice observation and in debriefing/post crisis sessions following any incidents.

The main focus of this training is on teaching staff to de-escalate potentially volatile and violent situations using their relationship with the young person and the behaviour support techniques taught on the training. The framework highlights to staff the most important tool they have when working with young people is themselves and treating young people sensitively, consistently and in a caring way is the single most important contribution we make.

The framework puts huge emphasis on de-escalating situations in the early stages of crisis however in cases of extreme behaviour which may result in physical harm or serious damage to property, and when all efforts to exert control have been exhausted, adults are taught in the training to 'safely hold' a young person as a last resort to keep them safe. Physical restraint will only be used if it forms part of the care plan and has been agreed by the placing authority and has been discussed with the young person on admission.

The Risk Management Plan will detail the best intervention strategies to employ in order to avoid physical intervention and to defuse any challenging behaviour; this is updated every three months as a minimum and always following any serious incident or change in circumstances. The Risk Management Plan will indicate whether a young person would need to be prevented from leaving the home, this would be based on clear risk assessment that they or others would be placed at significant risk. This will be agreed with the placing authority as part of the care plan for the child. This may include the local authority, placing authority, family members, transport and local police. If a young person leaves the house without permission then an individual reporting protocol is in place which reflects their individual risk assessment and care plan goals.

Our positive behavior reinforcement reward systems are key in managing and promoting positive behavior and are based on the sound understanding of the needs of our children, this is continually reinforced and good behavior is always highlighted and praised. Every child has a bespoke plan developed based on their own areas of difficulties and strengths which we wish to continue to develop; any consequences and rewards are reviewed by the Registered Manager to ensure that they are age and stage appropriate.

### **Child Centered Practice**

Experience in the residential child care sector has shown that simply containing vulnerable young people is relatively easy. The challenge is to provide a healing therapeutic environment which introduces a different belief system for these young people. These beliefs about themselves, others and the world can transform the inner thinking of the young people and consequently impact positively on their behaviors.



Every Second Counts is our own, in-house training programme for residential workers. The course comprises three stages, each stage providing more in depth input than the last.

Stage 1- A two day training course, delivered by specific Every Second Counts trainers. The group of trainees will be mixed in terms of experience.

The course aim of stage 1 is to provide those who work directly with young people with the necessary theory and practical advice required in order to provide safe, effective care in the

first instance. While this initial introduction provides elements of theory within the content, the main theme of the course is to allow staff to discuss the role and share their experiences. There is an ideal opportunity for staff with a mix of experience to gain practical, everyday advice about their job and the challenges they face every day.

### **Stage 1 Course Content**

- The role of residential worker
- The principles of the National Care Standards
- The young people we support
- Corporate parenting
- Our professional responsibilities
- Beliefs, values and attitudes
- IPART theory
- Attachment theory
- Legislation
- GIRFEC
- Care planning
- Safe care
- Our professional approach
- Building relationships
- Residential worker toolkit

### **4. Education**

Education, in all of its forms, is one of the cornerstones of personal growth and development therefore all young people are actively encouraged to participate in educational opportunities appropriate to their need(s). Each accommodated young person will have a Personal Plan which outlines all plans for the young person's care and education. Where appropriate, this will also include a copy of any Coordinated Support Plan (CSP). The YPs working file will detail which particular educational establishment the YP will attend. The level of monitoring of a young person's school attendance (parental/social work involvement in the education of the young person. Dates of national examinations and any other examinations the young person may be taking. Transitions service, jobcentre, employment agencies and local employers as appropriate, and arrangements for traveling to and from school.

Spark of Genius recognises that each young person is an individual, is unique and will respond differently to various stimuli. It is imperative that any learning issues are addressed, with plans agreed for resolution prior to the admission of any young person. Spark of Genius can offer an appropriate education package designed to meet the needs of each young person living in Spark of Genius within their independent learning centers. Spark of Genius houses have a dedicated 'study' area for use by all young people, complete with appropriate learning equipment, a computer with Internet facilities and books. In addition, each young person has the facility for further private study in their own bedroom.

Young people will always be supported during any educational transition at both school and college and we will also work with local authorities to secure an appropriate educational placement for the young person based on recommendations of any statements and risk assessments.

We aim to equip each young person with the ability to manage life events so that they can deal with adversities, recognise opportunities and ultimately shape their own future for the better. To achieve this we feel educational attainment is a key factor. Therefore we will:

- Ensure stability and continuity of care through supportive corporate parenting and the development of secure attachment patterns in order to raise self-esteem.
- Provide 1:1 professional teaching support (with the support of our staff) to fill gaps in learning, and to coordinate integration into any other educational placements or mainstream schooling.
- There is no time limit on this process and it is accepted that for some young people a return to mainstream may not happen; we will work with the LA to ascertain if these young people would be better suited to our Woodside. In these cases our specialist teaching staff from the school will provide a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure each young person reaches their full potential.
- Liaise daily with school and provide support by encouraging regular attendance, assisting with homework and promoting after school activities through a 24 hour curriculum.
- Ensure each young person has access to a computer and a quiet space in which to study. All bedrooms are equipped with desks and chairs, and the education center is also available to learners out of school hours.

## **5. Health**

At Grassmillees, we understand the value of good health and wellbeing and support our young people intensively within this focus area. Key Workers will ensure that all young people are registered with local medical services such as a GP, Dentist and Optician within 48 hours of arriving at the home and that check-up appointments are made as part of the admission process. We promote healthy lifestyle choices on a day to day basis through a well-balanced diet and ample opportunities for physical activity. We support young people to attend health appointments and record the outcomes of appointments, acting upon any which require a follow up. We access local external services when required including sexual health clinics, drug support services, CAMHS and hospitals. Medical consent forms are completed upon a young person's admission to the home. Young people are educated through key working sessions, residents meetings and informal discussion regarding the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

All medication at Grassmillees is securely stored within the staff office in a secure medical cabinet, in line with Royal Pharmaceutical Society guidelines. All young people have their own individual health files. The young people also have individual storage boxes for the storage of their medication, again one is for prescribed and one is for non-prescribed medication; these are maintained by staff and are checked against written records for accuracy. Weekly balance checks ensure that all medication is checked and accounted for.

### **Consultant Psychologist**

As aforementioned, Spark of Genius provides the services of consultant psychologist Dr Marie Holmes who is able to offer a broad range of assessments, services and therapies to young people and supports to staff, and is able to link in with external agencies and local authorities as appropriate.

Dr Holmes has a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Glasgow after working for several years in both NHS and Independent services. She has over 20 years experience

working in adult mental health, patient psychiatry, autism services, brain injury rehabilitation, addictions and child and family services. Alongside these roles, Marie also spent a decade working for and providing staff training for Scotland's Breathing Space Suicide Prevention Centre.

For a full range of Dr Holmes' counseling expertise and therapies please visit her page on the counselling directory at <http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/counsellors/marie-louise-holmes>.

## **6. Staffing Matters**

### **Staff Team Structure incorporating both Grassmillees and Woodside.**

Registered Manager  
Assistant Manager  
3 Seniors RCCW's  
Team of 14 staff for Day shifts  
4 Wakened Night staff

### **Staff Team Supervision, Training and Development**

All Grassmillees staff are subject to a vigorous screening process prior to commencing employment in line with Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding processes. This includes verification from the PVG Scheme, interview, a minimum of 3 references are required, however, we request references from all workplaces where an individual has worked in child care. We also require confirmation that they are not disqualified from working with children.

Staff must complete a comprehensive induction and a six month probation period. They are supervised on a quarterly basis and appraised annually.

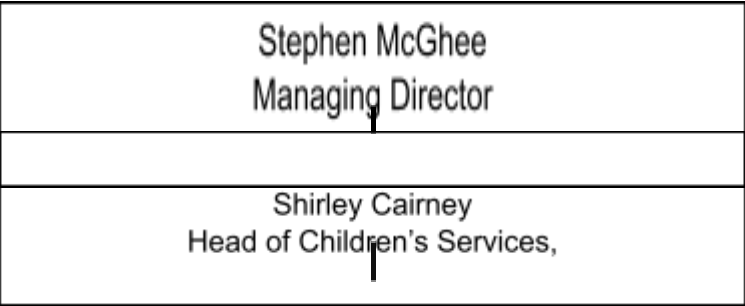
We have a robust annual training programme to prepare staff to work with children and young people aged 9 - 20 yrs which includes:

- Child Protection and Dealing with Disclosure.
- Health & Safety, Fire Safety and First Aid.
- Safe Food Handling.
- TCI
- Combating Bullying.
- Managing Challenging Behaviour.
- Understanding Attachment Disorders.
- Child Development (a key focus to understand different needs).
- Risk Assessment and Risk Management.
- Policies and Procedures e.g. Whistleblowing.

Staff also attend regular supervision and support with their line manager which covers any practice issues and identification of any necessary training required for personal development.

Each member of staff is required to register with the SSSC on commencement of employment.

## **Appendix 1 Organizational Structure of Grassmillees**



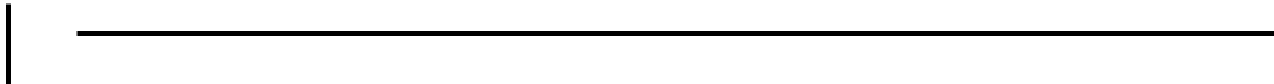
Nicola Keegan  
Service Manager

Nathalie Antonucci  
Manager

Scott Harrison  
Assistant Manager

3 X Senior RCCW's

18 RCCW'S



**Appendix 2 Qualifications and Experience of Management Team**

## **Stephen McGhee**

Stephen has been with Spark of Genius since 2004 after gaining an Honors degree in Business and Management and his NEBOSH qualification for Health and Safety.

He has 16 years of experience working with vulnerable children and young people in a variety of roles within Spark from Education Assistant to Managing Director.

Stephen has been central to building Spark's reputation and quality from a small, 10 young person school with 8 staff members to a large organization with nearly 100 children and young people in our care, a further 200 in education and over 500 staff across multiple sites. Throughout this time Stephen has led key functions such as Quality, Referrals, Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Residential Care and Education Management.

## **Education Services**

### **Shirley Cairney**

Shirley Cairney has vast experience in the field of Residential and Education Management. She started her career in 1983 and became a qualified Social Worker in 2001. She also has her PDA in leadership and management. Shirley joined Spark of genius in September 2018, after 38 years with Children & Families in local authorities. She has also been involved in working jointly with education throughout her career.

## **Residential Manager**

### **Nathalie Antonucci**

Nathalie has 18 years of experience working with vulnerable children in a variety of different settings with four of these years being in a management role. Nathalie has a degree in Integrated Business Management, an SVQ 3 and an HNC in Health and Social Care and a Level 5 Leadership and Management.

Nathalie took over as manager of Woodside Farm in May 2022.

## **Assistant Manager**

### **Scott Harrison**

Scott has SVQ 3 and HNC in Health and Social Care and is working towards his SVQ 4. Scott has 13 years experience working with vulnerable children with a wide range of needs, with four years of this in a management role. Scott joined Spark of Genius as a Residential Child Care Worker in 2020 before becoming a Senior RCCW in 2021. Scott was promoted to Assistant manager in August of 2022.