

MITUS CARE LTD
981 Great West Road, Brentford TW8 9DN

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Young People Thriving Through to
Independence



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Introduction

This statement is available to staff and young people accommodated in the home, parents and those with parental responsibility for our young people. This includes any local authority, voluntary organisation or local educational authority charged with placing children and young people.

Head office address: Mitus Care Ltd.

Room 106, 981 Great West Road, Brentford TW8 9DN.

Not surprisingly, research tells us that the experiences of young 'looked after' people, is often significantly more challenging than that of young people brought up by their birth families. They are more likely to have experienced loss, trauma and significant changes in their lives, more likely to have low educational standards and qualifications and much more likely to have experienced deprivation and abuse in childhood. Young 'looked after' men in particular may be exposed to gang culture, crime, and violence. They are statistically more likely to go missing and to find themselves in situations of considerable personal risk.

While the process of growing up and transitioning to adulthood is challenging for all young people, it is far more so for the 'looked after'. These vulnerable young people must be offered the opportunity to learn effective strategies to cope with the realities of their past, in order to overcome their challenges and to eventually thrive. They must be enabled to recognise that they are allowed to make mistakes and recover from them and encouraged to take positive risks and face life's challenges, by developing the skills necessary to live independently. At Mitus Care Ltd, we enable this development in an environment that is safe and nurturing.

While we recognise that fostering in many cases is the ideal option for children and young 'looked after' people, we also know that supported accommodation can be the best choice for some. At Mitus Care Ltd, we don't simply provide young people with a place to live and the tools to cope independently, we also strive to equip them with those essential internal mechanisms and strengths that will enable them to manage at an emotional level, when they face life's inevitable day-to-day challenges.

Quality and Purpose of Care

Statement of Principles

The following sets out what we believe are the essential objectives in order to improve young people's life chances and provide effective care.

We aim to:

- Provide an environment that is caring, nurturing and supportive for young men & women of school leaving age, 16+, as they transition to independence.
- Promote education as a vehicle for positive change and for improving the life chances of the young people we care for; this will, naturally, include life-skills education.
- Protect and promote each young person's welfare by providing a safe environment and developing practices that safeguard their wellbeing.
- Assess and meet the physical, social, intellectual, emotional, cultural and spiritual needs of all our young people regardless of their backgrounds.
- Treat each young person with the respect and dignity they deserve.
- Ensure that our young people have an opportunity to participate in the daily life of the home.
- Work in partnership with families, professionals and others to ensure positive outcomes for young people and young parents.

Commitment to Young People

- All young people have the right to be protected from harm and to feel safe and secure
- All young people must be encouraged to value and maintain their own cultural identity
- All young people will be encouraged and supported in their desire to access education and training as appropriate
- All young people have the right to accurate information, and to be heard, regarding decisions concerning their lives
- All young people have a right to their private space
- All young people must be given the opportunity to enjoy their life and encouraged to achieve their positive goals

When cared for within the right environment, an environment that is nurturing and safe, young people have the capacity to achieve positive change.

In the Mitus Care environment, a young person's dignity and individuality are celebrated and developed because **we approach things from the individual upward, not the system downward.**

Mitus Care Ltd offers supported accommodation and a learning environment for young people aged 16+. Learning is achieved through one to one coaching, mentoring and group work. The emphasis is on preparing young people to enter the work marketplace as competent young adults, thus maximising their opportunities in the world of further education and work.

Our service is aimed at young adults preparing to leave care and in need of medium/high level support, in order to manage the transition to independence. This service is also aimed specifically at young people who have had a turbulent placement history, marked by issues around behaviour and self-control. We understand that for these individuals the transition to independence requires a clear and strong structure and may take longer to achieve than is normally anticipated.

All work will be framed within the casework approach to social care, with each young adult having an allocated worker. A clear placement and pathway plan will create the structure for our work with our service users. Participation and regular reviewing of each plan/assessment will be a key feature of each individual service user's development and growth.

At Mitus Care we create a therapeutic environment where young people can feel nurtured whilst receiving a high level of support that will enable them to develop their true potential. We provide a safe environment that offers time and space for them to go through life's necessary growth processes. Our managers and support staff have worked for many years in the care sector, helping to turn around some of the most vulnerable young people coming through the system.

At Mitus Care, our ethos is built on a strong foundation of values that guide our actions and decisions, ultimately shaping the exceptional care we provide. We are dedicated to four core principles that define our organization

1. Empowerment: We believe in the power of empowerment – the ability to uplift and support individuals in their journey towards independence, confidence, and self-determination. Empowerment is at the heart of what we do. We strive to enable each person under our care to make choices, express their preferences, and take control of their lives. We recognize that empowerment is a fundamental right, and we are committed to fostering an environment where it thrives.

2. Care: Care is the cornerstone of our ethos. It is the unwavering commitment to the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of those we serve. We approach our work with the utmost compassion, respect, and dedication. Our care extends beyond the provision of services; it encompasses the creation of a nurturing and safe environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and understood. Every act of care is a testament to our dedication.

3. Development: We are passionate about development – personal, social, and intellectual growth. Our commitment to development is a driving force in our approach. We continuously Mitus Care Ltd – Statement of Purpose seek opportunities to support individuals in realizing their potential, acquiring new skills, and reaching their goals. We are steadfast in creating pathways for progress and personal fulfillment.

4. Ambition: Ambition fuels our pursuit of excellence. We aspire to be leaders in the field of care and support, always striving for the highest standards. We encourage

ambition in the individuals we serve, aiming to unlock their inner potential. Together, we dream big and work tirelessly to achieve remarkable outcomes. In embracing these four principles – Empowerment, Care, Development, and Ambition – Mitus Care is dedicated to fostering an environment that empowers individuals to thrive and reach their fullest potential. These principles inspire our actions, guide our decisions, and exemplify our unwavering commitment to providing the highest quality of care and support to those we serve.

Mitus Care is equipped to work with the following groups of young people:

- Self-harmers
- Young people who are drug users
- Young Offenders
- Absconders
- Young people with moderate learning disabilities
- Young people with diagnosed/undiagnosed mental health concerns
- Young people with violent and aggressive behaviour

The team at Mitus Care are committed to the development of young people and believe that, when placed within an environment that is nurturing and safe, they have the capacity to achieve positive and permanent change in their lives.

Teaching them to Stand Strong

At Mitus Care, we have determined that our role is to prepare young people in our care for self-sufficiency and independence. This is achieved by providing daily opportunities for them to learn skills that will help them in their transition towards adulthood. This is an on-going process, which starts from the moment they are 'looked after', and is achieved by promoting their individual ambitions and self-worth.

Our aim is to equip young people with the skills and coping mechanism to build self-confidence, self-sufficiency and independence.

Objectives / Outcomes

At Mitus Care, we assist young people's development by providing the following opportunities to develop the skills to live independently:

Basic Housekeeping

- Shopping, food preparation and a wide range of consumer skills
- Practising money management and budgeting
- Learning the safe use of household appliances
- Learning what to do in emergency situations
- Developing skills for work
- Help in accessing benefits and housing services

Building Positive Relationships

- Building family, peer and community networks
- Learning about different types of relationships
- Appreciating other people's views, wishes and feelings
- Learning effective communication

Managing Their Day to Day Living

- Setting appropriate boundaries
- Developing a routine that includes formal or alternative education
- Making effective use of their leisure time
- Practising neighbourly behaviour
- Examining and recognising their challenging behaviours
- Setting clear and achievable objectives for their lives
- Developing strategies for coping with their past

Practising Self-Management

- Developing a positive sense of themselves as young people
- Learning negotiating strategies and skills
- Learning about conflict resolution
- Learning non-threatening self-assertion
- Understanding peer pressure and its possible effects

Young people's progress is continually assessed via direct support and general day-to-day contact with workers. Particular attention is paid to their ability to work towards achieving the above objectives. The level of support offered depends on the assessed needs of the individual.

Young people are expected to take part in weekly direct support sessions with their allocated worker. In these sessions they can review their individual support plans and their progress. The support plans are structured around the emotional, physical and practical needs of the young person and enables them to work toward achieving the objectives outlined above.

Young people are supported to maintain and build networks with family and friends to minimise isolation once they move on.

Young people are encouraged to meet as a group with staff and other young people weekly to discuss any issues that arise for them at Mitus Care. Residents meetings form an essential part of the building processes.

Our Services

At Mitus Care

Mitus Care is our supported living home for young people 16+ based in The London Borough of Brent. We provide 24-hour support, social development skills and access to counselling in an optimal nurturing environment.

Our home support is tailored to meet the needs of individuals and where necessary individuals can be involved in choosing their room within the accommodation and be assisted to organise furnishings and decoration.

Our support team are experienced and equipped to support young people who are:

- Vulnerable
- Display challenging behaviour
- Minor learning difficulties
- Mental health concerns

Placements offered

- Medium to Long-term Referrals
- Urgent Referrals
- Respite Referrals

Support includes:

- 24-hour staff cover
- Weekly 1to1 support
- Access to Counselling
- Access to Education
- Access to Employment
- Day-to-day living skills
- Access to our Academy workshops / training

We have great connections with local community facilities including, leisure, education and additional support services. Staff assist with benefit claim application and enrolment on educational courses.

Leadership and Management: Organisational Structure

Directors, Management Advisors, Care Manager - Senior Support Worker
Residential Support Workers - Sessional (Bank) Workers

The staff team consists of:

- Director
- Care Manager
- Senior Support Worker
- Residential Support Workers
- Sessional (Bank) Workers
- Maintenance workers are employed as and when required

Management and Staffing

The Directors of Mitus Care have overall management responsibility for the Service. The Director is the Responsible Person and also fulfils operational role and function in the Home. The Directors hold responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Home and are supported by Support/Key Workers and a night warden(s).

The Director retains a strategic management role overseeing the day to day operations. The Directors are supported by a small group of management advisers. The Directors are on hand to provide on call support as required.

Mitus Care ensures safe recruitment procedures. All staff recruited are referenced and DBS checked using current guidelines and policies as a minimum. We will have rigorous staff vetting (full CVs, correspondence and calls with all previous employers).

The staff at Mitus Care has a wealth of knowledge and experience of working with vulnerable young people. At Mitus Care we avoid using agency staff except in emergencies or where it is felt that a particular worker is a good fit for the team. Generally, we maintain a pool of 'bank' sessional staff to cover absences and holidays, thus enabling continuity and consistency of care.

At Mitus Care we operate a shift system:

8am - 8pm

8pm - 8am

9am - 5pm

10pm - 6am

Rota's are organised on a bi-weekly basis. The ratio of staff to young people is 1:4 (unless additional support is needed). The Managers and Directors are on call weekly. Handover meetings occur daily involving the staff about to go off duty and the shift coming on duty. There is a crossover period to enable this process to take place (Staff required to be on shift 15 minutes early).

Staff meetings take place monthly. The meetings are sometimes extended to allow for team training.

Team meetings are a vital forum for communicating and making decisions about practice. From time to time young people are invited to join the team meetings.

The staff at Mitus Care have extensive experience in social care work with children, families and are highly qualified and trained.

Our senior support workers, Managers and advisors have over three decades of experience of working with young people in Social Services settings and related fields. Within the team there is an established group of residential workers, many have been with the organisation for many years.

Staff Development, Supervision and Appraisal

It is important that the staff at Mitus Care are fully versed with the function and purpose of the service. Staff are fully informed of current policies, procedures, legislation and the application of these during the induction period. Staff are also kept up to date on new legislation and guidance through a process of 'in house' briefing/training. Staff are also expected to attend relevant external training.

The Staff receive regular supervision training and their training and development needs are regularly reviewed. It is important that staff feel valued and supported as individuals and in the work undertaken. Each staff member has a clear personal and professional development programme. The individual plan is revised and updated periodically. Staff receive appraisal annually. Staff appraisals are carried out by the Social Care manager.

Supervision and lines of accountability are recognised as vital elements within the staff group. All staff have a designated supervisor who is responsible for their supervision. The Director and care manager are responsible for ensuring the provision of supervision. The manager and staff receive supervision on a monthly basis. The content of supervision covers, practice/organisational issues, as well as accountability and thoughts and feelings about the work.

Staff supervision is a crucial aspect of good practice and support. It is important that all staff working in the residential service, including managers, have a right to regular, private, individual supervision with their line manager.

Care Planning A-Z

Access to Files

Young people's files are kept in a lockable cabinet in the staff office. Young people are welcome to use the office to make a call to their social worker or family and they are also welcome to talk with staff. However, they do not have unsupervised access to the office and are generally discouraged from using it as a leisure area.

Young people requesting access to their files will make their requests in writing to the manager. This is in line with the Access To Records Procedure. The file will be made available within 40 days of the request. They will be assisted to access the requested information.

Anti-discriminatory Practice

Mitus Care is committed to equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. Staff and residents of Mitus Care are expected to show due regard and respect for each other's racial, religious, cultural and linguistic background and sexuality. Our practice and procedures operate in a manner that counters discrimination against individuals and groups identified as disadvantaged. Discrimination or oppression on the grounds of race, gender, sexuality, culture, religion and disability will not be tolerated. Tolerance, respect, and an appreciation of other cultures form part of the agenda of work with young people at Mitus Care. Staff will challenge and address discrimination in any form. Young people are encouraged to understand that 'difference' is something we should all embrace positively, and that each individual has a right to freely express who they are.

In all actions concerning young people in our care, their best interests shall be our primary consideration. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has:

- The right to a childhood (including protection from harm)
- The right to be educated
- The right to be healthy (including nutritious food and medical care)
- The right to be treated fairly
- The right to be heard (including considering children's views)
- The right to privacy

At Mitus Care all young people are valued and their rights are respected and upheld at all times. Cultural habits and practices are encouraged and supported. Young people are encouraged to voice their opinions and advised about their rights as a 'child looked after' and as a citizen.

Behaviour Management

Young people in care have a variety of needs which include clear guidance, influence and, where necessary, discipline as well as empathy and understanding. It is important that Mitus Care is viewed as a home, not an institution. Nevertheless, clarifying limits, responsibilities and setting boundaries are integral to the provision of a 'safe place to be'. Mitus Care strives to provide a safe and secure environment for users accessing the service. We have a set of rules, which are designed for the security, safety and well-being of everyone at the House. The rules form part of the placement agreement, which the young people are asked to sign on admission. The rules are designed to promote appropriate behaviour.

At Mitus Care young people are encouraged to make positive choices about their life. They are assisted to examine their life experiences, their past and their hopes for a better future. They are discouraged from making choices that have a detrimental effect on them and others. This includes the choice they make to 'act out' and behave in a manner that is unacceptable. Discussing their behaviour and subsequent consequences is an integral part of the work with young people at Mitus Care. Young people respond to firm boundaries balanced with genuine care. They also respond to an environment that demonstrates an awareness that young people make mistakes and that they have the ability to move on from those mistakes and towards positive change. Where change is significant or noteworthy, rewards are given.

Bullying and Harassment

Mitus Care Ltd is committed to protecting young people from bullying and harassment. Young people found to be bullying others are in breach of Mitus Care rules and subject to the warning procedures outlined in the placement contract.

Generally, bullying could be described as the intentional or perceived causing of distress, anxiety, humiliation, pain or social exclusion to one young person by other young person/ people, by verbal or physical means, or through the damage or loss of property.

All allegations of bullying are taken seriously. The young person being bullied is listened to and their complaints recorded.

If a complaint is received the social worker and relevant Local Authority department is notified. A meeting between staff and the alleged perpetrator(s) is held as soon as a complaint is received. If it is deemed appropriate, a meeting could be held with all the young people concerned in an attempt to resolve the matter.

The young person subjected to bullying is protected where possible from further harm/distress and supported and empowered to deal with the situation. An opportunity for them to talk through their feelings are made available immediately or as soon as possible to minimise the impact of their ordeal. If after investigations, the allegation of bullying or harassment is found to be true, the warning process is then activated. Persistent bullying or harassment will lead to the perpetrator/s' placement being terminated.

Consulting Young People Views, Wishes and Feelings

At Mitus Care the young people are encouraged and supported to make decisions about their lives and to express their views about how the home is run. Mitus Care also consults with families and other significant adults where appropriate in order to invite their views on the service being offered. Day to day discussions and key working sessions are an integral part of the work at Mitus Care. Young people are always encouraged to share their thoughts about the home and the manner in which it functions. Their views are taken into account on things such as issues affecting them, issues relating to; Education, The care they are receiving, Issues relating to the home, Issues relating to service structure, Issues relating to support being received.

Young people are consulted through the following:

- Residents meetings
- Self-assessment forms
- Direct support sessions
- Progress reports / meetings
- Preparation for statutory reviews
- Quarterly independent quality assurance visits
- Feedback Forms / Questionnaires

The views of young people are recorded and shared with colleagues and the relevant social workers and managers.

Complaints

Mitus Care seeks to resolve complaints in an informal way in the first instance but supports young people's rights to access the formal complaint procedure.

Minor complaints come up every day particularly when young people live with others and have close contact with staff. Our role is to listen carefully and enable the young person to express their view. Every effort will be made to work through the difficulty or complaint, demonstrating care and sensitivity.

The Process

There are three stages to the complaints process; informal complaint, formal complaint, formal referral to the Local Authority.

1. The Informal stage where the young person or other parties raises a complaint with a member of staff and all parties seek to resolve the complaint.
2. The formal stage in which the complaint is put in writing to the manager who will investigate and seek to resolve the complaint.
3. The third stage is where the complaint cannot be resolved at a local level and is passed to the referring Authority. Where a formal complaint is raised, pertaining to abuse/child protection, placing authority is to be informed within 24 hours of the complaint being raised.

Informal Complaint

At this point, every effort should be made to clarify any misunderstandings before a formal complaint is made. A meeting should be held between all parties concerned. At the informal stage, the complaint should be resolved within 24 hrs.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome, the complaint should be put in writing to the manager. Assistance can be offered to the complainant if they wish to complain in writing.

Formal Complaint

At this stage the complainant can complain in writing to the manager. If the complaint is made on behalf of someone else, the person concerned should be sent a copy to confirm its accuracy.

The manager will investigate the complaint, with the assistance of an independent person where necessary. A written response will be sent to the complainant within 28 days of receipt of the complaint. The response will explain the outcome of the investigation and provide reasons for whatever decision(s) have been reached. The complainant will be advised of the next stage if they remain dissatisfied.

Complaint / Allegation

In the event of a complaint being made reporting an incident of abuse involving a member of staff, the following steps must be followed;

- Any allegation or suspicion, whatever the source, must be taken seriously.
- Report any suspicion or allegation of abuse involving a member of staff to the placing authority LADO, Mitus Care and Management and the Social Worker from the young person's borough.
- The LADO leads on the investigation and advises as to whether the matter requires investigation under the Safeguarding/Child Protection Procedures. Allegations are reported to the LADO within 24hrs of the complaint being raised.
- Safeguarding investigations are usually undertaken by the LADO and the Police. Mitus Care would only get involved in an investigation if asked to do so. We may be asked to undertake interviews with those involved in the complaint.
- Such interviews would be undertaken by a member of Mitus Care management team or a designated representative. Outcomes of such interviews are fed back to the LADO.
- When involved in any interviews, these need to be carefully planned to ensure that the interview itself is not abusive or oppressive, details of allegations and circumstances will be recorded in writing and maintained on file.
- Any urgent action necessary to protect the young person or any other young people involved should be taken following a complaint/allegation

The Director has the responsibility to:

- Suspend any member of staff with whom an allegation or suspicion has been raised against, if this is felt to be the appropriate and immediate course of action required.
- Take account of any history of previous concerns about this individual staff member including minor incidents.
- Ensure that all possible relevant information gathered during the course of the child protection or criminal investigation is available for any disciplinary hearing.
- Ensure that information about the allegation or suspicion; the action taken and the outcome of the enquiries is recorded on the relevant personnel file and management records as well as on the files of the young person.
- Pass information about the individual concerned to appropriate authorities.

Allegations against the Director.

If the complaint is against the Company Director, a complaint can be made directly to the relevant referring local authority. If the complaint were of a safeguarding nature the placing authority would be contacted within 24hrs.

In circumstances where the Director is directly involved in a child protection allegation/investigation, an independent scrutiny investigation will take place, where an independent investigating officer will come in and investigate the allegations.

The director will have no contact with the complainant until all investigations have been fully reviewed. The Director will retain contact in matters pertaining to the management of the service.

Cultural and religious needs of children and Young People

Young people, along with their families if possible are best placed to help us to understand how we can meet their cultural and religious needs. In all our work with young people, we aim to consider the ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic needs of each young person in our care. Such needs will be incorporated into their individual placement plan.

Young people are encouraged to tell us about their cultural needs such as particular foods or religious and cultural festivals they are interested in.

Young people at Mitus Care are encouraged to follow their own religious beliefs and the opportunity to attend the church, mosque, temple or other place of worship commensurate with their religious beliefs. This is something that is supported, and all staff and other young people respect this.

Education of Young People Accommodated

Mitus Care is committed to help improve the educational chances for young people accommodated. This begins by building a positive mindset in the young people we care for, assisting them to raise their self-esteem and their expectations of being able to achieve.

Our commitment is to assist young people to make measurable progress towards achieving their educational potential. The expectation is that young people will engage in a structured mix of education or training as appropriate. Young people are encouraged to maximise the use of all mainstream education and further education opportunities where possible. We believe that every effort should be made to integrate young people into regular education/learning provisions in the community rather than provide an 'in house' provision which further marginalises them as a 'different' group, isolating them from young people who are not 'looked after'.

Young people with special education needs can expect the same level of support in that we liaise with the relevant agencies and services to ensure they achieve the best possible educational opportunity available to them. We take advice on any specialist resources that is necessary to assist their learning.

Young people are supported to achieve educationally through private tutoring where they are not in any other form of education. Tutoring and the cost of such support is provided through the local educational authorities or social services. Where young people are achieving the minimum or reduced education, we will endeavour to engage them in alternative learning activities.

Mitus Care team is constantly building links with local schools, PRU, careers services and training providers in order to support the young people. Key workers liaise closely with education and training providers in order to monitor the young people's progress. Mitus Care will advise the local Education Support team when a child from another placing authority is placed and the child is not in education.

Young people are encouraged to join and make use of the library facilities and other community resources that can enhance their learning. Internet access is available to young people at Mitus Care.

Enjoyment and Achievement

Mitus Care supports the view that it is important that all children and young people should take part and benefit from a variety of activities that meet their individual needs, personal development and reflect their creative, cultural, intellectual, physical and social interest and skills.

For each individual this will look different, some are more active than others, some more creative. Some will need guidance and the opportunity to explore new things. Whilst it is important to encourage young people to take up a hobby or engage in activities, this should not be forced on the young person, or seen as a requirement. At Mitus Care we adopt a 'person centred' approach thus it should not become more important for the staff to engage a young person in activities than it is for the young person themselves. The right thing to do is to go at the pace and the desire of each individual and listen to what they want.

At Mitus Care all staff are responsible for organising activities with young people. Their views are sought as to the range of activities they wish to engage in. The young people are encouraged to engage in local activities such as joining youth groups and local sports centres, they are also encouraged to take part in outings with friends or staff such as ten pin bowling, ice skating, cinema trips, trips to the park, trips to the seaside, meals out etc. It is the view of Mitus Care that all young people will be supported in their chosen activities, as long as it is assessed to be safe. Religious and cultural festivals are promoted and celebrated with the young people as they occur.

Young people are encouraged to attend and participate fully in regular meetings where they can share their views. When such meetings take place minutes of these meetings are taken and acted upon as necessary. The agenda includes personal issues that young people may wish to raise and their views concerning the operation of the home.

We ensure children, young people and their families are involved in the development and running of the homes. Not only do we accept the principle of young person's involvement, we strive to ensure this practice through a variety of participation and consultation activities within the home. Our aim is to assist young people to successfully deal with significant changes and challenges, develop positive relationships and display positive behaviour.

With staff as role models, young people learn how to behave towards each other and within the local community in a non-discriminative way. They are encouraged to understand the range of cultures and beliefs that exist within the home, and in the local and wider communities and to respect differences.

Our 'Behaviour Management' approach encourages and supports young people to make changes to their behaviour through the use of praise and positive reinforcement and rewards. The use of restraint is used as a very last resort, to protect the young person or others from harm.

Fire Precautions and Associated Emergency Procedures

The Guidance and Policy document contains procedures relating to the evacuation of the premises, dealing with a fire, and regular checks needed to ensure fire hazards (e.g., wedged doors) are avoided.

In all cases, even when the fire is one which appears easy to control, staff on duty should:

1. Activate the alarm
2. Call the fire brigade on 999
3. Evacuate the building

The door should be shut to the room in which the fire is located. Internal doors at Mitus Care are fire resistant and should effectively contain the fire within the room for half an hour as well as contain smoke which in many cases is often more deadly than the heat and flames. If the fire is small, it may be appropriate to attempt to put it out, however no unnecessary risk should be taken.

Fire equipment is checked regularly, and fire drills are held to ensure that staff and young people are aware of the procedures in the event of a fire or need for evacuation. Procedures are found in the Mitus Care guidance document. Young people are made aware of the fire and emergency procedures and take part in regular fire drills.

Health

At Mitus Care, we consider the promotion of young people's good health to be one of the basic priorities of our work with them. We consult with young people's social workers and parents prior to admission to gain as much information as possible on their medical history and any specific medical problems that would need immediate and/or on-going attention and treatment. Young people's Social workers and parents/guardians are informed at the earliest possible moment of any illness/injury/accident, which might befall them. Any information passed on to us by parents or other agencies concerning the medical history of a young person is treated in the strictest confidence.

Under the Children Act 1989 and 2004, the Local Authority to which the young person is in the 'care' of has a responsibility to ensure that arrangements are made for the child to be examined by a registered Medical Practitioner either prior to the placement at Mitus Care or as soon as possible. Young people at Mitus Care are encouraged to have their statutory 'LAC' medical. Staff will usually accompany the young person to the appointment.

At Mitus Care we take responsibility for ensuring that young people are able to access health care services. Young people are registered with local GPs and other health agencies as soon as possible after they are placed at Mitus Care. Wherever possible we aim to keep young people on the register of their own doctor. However, where Mitus Care falls outside the catchment area, we would register young people with one of the local Health practices. Boundaries relating to catchment areas do not apply to dentists.

Young people are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health by making relevant appointments with assistance from staff. Mitus Care staff oversees the application of all prescribed medicine. Medication is locked away in a cabinet for safekeeping. In certain cases, e.g. where a young person suffers from asthma, it is important that they always have medication available immediately. Our policy is then to ensure they have both the knowledge and ability to self-administer safely and appropriately. At Mitus Care we keep a book in which all medicines/treatments are recorded.

At Mitus Care we support the use of 'home remedies' and where possible and as appropriate, home remedies are offered and provided.

We respect young people's rights to privacy in terms of the consultation with their GP and will seek

their permission if such action is required. However, medical information can be acquired via their social worker.

Staff at Mitus Care recognise the importance of advising young people on health issues, e.g. smoking, alcohol, drugs, sexual behaviour etc. Alcohol and illegal drugs are not allowed on the premises. Our experience tells us that many of the young people referred already use alcohol and smoke cigarettes therefore such activity is monitored carefully. Young people are not allowed to smoke in the house. Smoking is generally discouraged at Mitus Care

LAC Reviews

Review of Looked after children is a statutory requirement under the Children Act 1989. As a minimum requirement, young people's circumstances must be reviewed within 4 weeks of moving into the placement if its unplanned, within three months of the first review, and subsequently at intervals of no more than 6 months.

Reviews are essential in terms of providing a forum where young people can contribute to discussions and plans about their life. It offers them the opportunity to get their views and wishes heard.

Mitus Care are fully involved in the statutory review process relating to young people accommodated. A progress report is prepared for the review outlining the young person's development in the areas addressed in their individual support plan.

Young people are prepared for the review; they are given the consultation form and supported to complete them. In some instances, and at the young person's request, staff will advocate on the young person's behalf during the review.

A copy of the review minutes is kept on file and decisions incorporated into the support plan.

Missing from Care and Unauthorised Absences

Young people are expected to inform staff if they are leaving the house. They are encouraged to tell staff where they are going, who they will be with and when they can be expected to return. A record of what they are wearing is noted in the logbook. Mobile numbers are recorded for young people and friends where possible.

Young people are required to sleep at Mitus Care unless overnight stay elsewhere has been agreed.

Where an absence is unauthorised or the young person's is considered 'missing', staff follows guidance outlined in the 'missing person' policy. Where their whereabouts are known but permission is not granted, the absence is considered 'unauthorised' and the police are not notified. However, their referring authorities are informed. Where young people are deemed missing (i.e. their whereabouts are unknown), they will be reported to the police and to their referring authorities. Where parents are involved, they will be informed along with other significant individuals and agencies. In all instances, staff will try to establish the young person's whereabouts by contacting them on their mobile phone or by contacting friends/family etc. before reporting them missing. Some time is usually given after the agreed curfew time before the MPR is made. This is usually up to an hour. Where young people are late back, but staff have maintained contact as they make their way home, staff will exercise judgement before a report is made. In such circumstances, an estimation of the time it will take to get home will be made. In order to ensure the young person's well-being, staff may meet the young person and escort them back.

Where there is concern that a young person may be in immediate danger or risk of significant harm and they fail to return to the house at the agreed time, or if no contact has been made to establish their whereabouts, they are reported missing immediately.

Mitus Care have devised a set of procedures, which includes recording the physical details of the young person and undertaking a risk assessment that highlights any concerns held. This information is given to the police whenever a young person is missing.

The absence/missing episode is discussed with the young person on return to the house and staff will establish their well-being. In line with the local 'missing person' protocol, the Police will visit and meet with the young person soon after their return home. The placing authority is also responsible for 'return interviews'.

Mitus Care has a comprehensive 'missing person' policy and guidance document in line with statutory requirements.

Placement Disruption

A placement disruption system is in place, which young people are made aware of at the beginning of their placement. The placement disruption system is outlined in the placement contract. The placement disruption procedures are enacted if the rules are persistently breached. Continual breach of the rules can lead to the termination of the placement.

Positive Relationships

Promoting Contact between young person and their families and friends

At Mitus Care we recognise the importance of young people maintaining links with their families and friends. Young people are encouraged to maintain such links unless there are grounds to preclude contact. Families are encouraged to visit the young people at Mitus Care House, which is their home and where necessary we assist in the process of them rebuilding severed relationships.

Space is available for young people and their families to meet privately.

Young people are encouraged to maintain links with old friends and to make new ones. Up to two visitors are allowed at any one time except on special occasions such as birthdays, where young people may want to celebrate with friends and family.

Referral Criteria and Admission Procedures

The process of referring young people should be as trouble free as possible. The young people placed are usually accommodated under Sc20, s23a or Sc31 of the Children Act 1989. Supported residential accommodation should form part of a range of services that work closely together to support the needs of the young people referred.

Referrals are made in writing to Mitus Care, accompanied by relevant essential/background information/reports. As a general premise, referrals to Mitus Care are considered, taking into account the issues and needs of the existing service users. Young people who meet the admission criteria are introduced to the home prior to moving in except in exceptional circumstances where an emergency admission has been agreed. Where possible a pre-admission visit is encouraged to enable the young person to meet with staff and other young people and to see where they are likely to live.

If agreed, an overnight stay can be arranged as part of the pre-planning. Where the placement is planned, a meeting is held involving the young person, their family (where appropriate), the social worker and Mitus Care staff prior to admission. A key worker is allocated soon after admission.

Emergency Admission

Admission to Mitus Care is usually on a planned basis. In some circumstances an emergency referral will be considered. In such cases all other criteria must be met. In the event that a young person is assessed as in need of accommodation and at risk, and for whom no other appropriate placement is available, Mitus Care will accept an emergency placement.

The following process is to be followed:

(This process is also applicable to planned placements.)

- Gather as much information as possible from the referring authority about the young person prior to admission
- The referring authority should send immediately, a referral document, essential information document, background information, last review minutes, assessment reports and any other relevant information on the young person.
- On arrival Mitus Care staff should meet with the social worker and the young person to introduce the Home, learn a bit about the young person and to go through the

accommodation agreement and the house rules. The document is then signed by Mitus Care, the social worker and young person.

- On arrival the young person is given a welcome pack, the pack contains the Young People's Guide which includes the house rules, the complaints procedure and complaint form and the self-assessment questionnaire. The pack also includes toiletries a toothbrush and towel and a treat.
- The young person is shown their room and assisted to unpack (if required)
- Depending on the arrival time, a meal or a snack is offered

The following day staff will meet with the young person to find out how their first night went and to go through the guide, the house rules and the complaint procedures and the placement contract. The self-assessment is also explained. Young people are assisted to complete the self-assessment as soon as they are settled, usually within the first month of being placed.

A placement-planning meeting is arranged within 72 hours after the young person is placed.

The following young people are considered as suitable for Mitus Care:

- All young men for whom it is felt Mitus Care is a positive option. Including;
- Young men transitioning to fully independent living
- Young men with multiple placement breakdowns
- Young men with moderate learning disabilities
- Young men at risk of offending
- Young men at risk of engaging in criminal activity

The following young people would not be considered suitable for Mitus Care:

- Young people with severe physical or learning disability
- Young people with a concerning history of sexual offences or arson
- Young people with a high level of violent behaviour who pose a real threat to the safety and wellbeing of others in a group-living environment

Mitus Care is active in the following boroughs: Surrey County Council, Slough, Hillingdon and Croydon. Placement Team will be notified of all new admissions in line with government policy.

Safeguarding Young People

Mitus Care is committed to keeping young people safe from all forms of abuse including child sexual exploitation (CSE). The issue of abuse of children is everybody's business. Mitus Care works closely with all agencies concerned with the welfare of young people to ensure information is passed on in a timely and effective manner.

At Mitus Care we also address 'self-harm' as a safeguarding issue. Young people's **mental health** is high on our agenda. Regular room checks forms part of our safeguarding practice. We are committed to diverting young people away from self-harming behaviour by enabling them to formulate a more positive life story and a better outcome going forward.

At Mitus Care, staff receive training on safeguarding issues as an integral part of their induction package. This training is refreshed at regular intervals, in line with the Quality Standards and the company policies and procedures.

The staff employed at Mitus Care are fully aware of the local protocols when dealing with safeguarding issues.

A copy of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), procedure is kept in the Home. There are comprehensive guidelines and policies at Mitus Care and Support regarding safeguarding.

Mitus Care work closely with Social Workers, the Safeguarding Team, local LADO and the young person's placing authority. Any complaint or allegation made is fully investigated.

In the event of any safeguarding issue, the staff have been instructed to inform the home manager and Director immediately. If a child has disclosed information of an abusive nature, staff are aware that they must pass on child protection complaints made against support workers or Registered Manager to the LADO.

Mitus Care also has a Whistle blowing Policy which is available to staff and relevant parties.

Mitus Care supports the principles underpinning a multi-agency response to the sexual exploitation of children and young people including:

- Sexually exploited children should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders.
- Children do not make informed choices to enter or remain in sexual exploitation, but do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation.
- Young people who are, or at risk of being sexually exploited will have varying levels of needs. They may have multiple vulnerabilities and therefore an appropriate multi agency response and good coordination is essential.

At Mitus Care, we have a designated CSE champion and have signed Slough's Pledge in support of the borough's campaign to address the issue of CSE. Mitus Care has a comprehensive CSE policy and guidance document which is available to all staff.

Quality Assurance

Tawa Laniyan is currently appointed as Quality Assurance Officer.

Mitus Care strive to ensure a quality service at all times. To this end we recognise the importance of providing the right environment and ensuring that:

- Premises adhere to all current Health and Safety procedures
- Regular safety checks are undertaken, and appropriate records maintained
- All equipment is checked, and relevant certificates acquired
- The Home is maintained, promoting the well-being of each resident and their quality of life
- The living environment of each resident takes account of their race, culture and physical needs
- Residents are encouraged to be involved in the running and maintenance of their living Environment

Everyone employed to work with children and young people in residential care has a responsibility for ensuring that the quality of care is of a high standard. The legal framework for establishing standards is contained in the Children Act 1989, detailed in the Children's Homes Regulations and Quality Standards.

Residential workers are under a legal 'duty of care' which has been interpreted in case law as the duty [as opposed to Authority] to act as a careful parent would. The responsibilities of a careful parent are not defined in legislation, but the Courts have generally interpreted them as a duty to exercise adequate supervision. Proper supervision will depend on the age and maturity of the child or young person, whether s/he is affected by any disability, and on the merit of their particular case. Supervision can mean giving adequate advice and instructions rather than constantly watching a child or young person, unless there is some obvious risk.

Tawa Laniyan
Mitus Care Ltd

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