



RIVERDALE ASSESSMENT UNIT
YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE

This is a guide for all young people who come to stay in Riverdale, and we hope it provides you with answers to some questions that might be making you anxious about your stay with us. Riverdale is a five-bedded unit for young people of mixed gender aged 10 to 17 years.

We offer assessment of needs to young people, or young people and their families, who are experiencing difficulties. Your stay with us will usually be for six to eight weeks, where during this time the staff at Riverdale will work with you to find the best way forward. To help you do this you will have a named key worker.

Your key worker will be responsible for organising and attending meetings with you and will work individually with you and your family (where this is possible). This does not mean that you can only talk to your key worker; you can speak to all of the staff at Riverdale.

How To Find Us

From Killingworth – bus no 56

From Cramlington 57, 57a

From Blyth, Tynemouth, Newcastle, Whitley Bay – bus no 306 308, 1,1a, (coaster 1,2)

From Wallsend – bus no 17,

We are also between Meadow Well and North Shields metro stations

Some Useful Numbers

Family -

Friends-

Social Worker -

Riverdale Office 2006221

Riverdale Young People's Phone 0191- 2006230

Children's Participation Officer Toni McMullen 643 8216

Mentor Project/ Advocacy Service – 6438880

Ofsted Complaints – 0300 123 4666

Others

You can make phone calls to people without telling staff why you want to phone people. The telephone for young people is in the hallway outside the living room and can be used to call landlines and mobiles. If for any reason you need to use the office telephone, you can still have privacy, but we cannot allow you to wander off somewhere else in the unit with this phone because it is the main line to our working office.

Any telephone calls will be passed on to you, if they are friends we will give them the number of the young person's phone where they can phone you direct. Any call that you want to make should be done before 9.30 in the evening. We do this to make sure that all young people are able to settle at a reasonable time.

If you are out of school for any reason, you will not be given the telephone during 9-3.30 pm which are school hours. If you abuse the use of the telephone you may be asked to use a payphone that is situated in the Parks leisure centre or on the estate.

Visitors

Our door is always open to your family and friends, and we encourage you to maintain the friendships and relationships that you had before you came to stay with us while you live here. What we do ask is that people who do visit you are respectful that they are visiting the home of other young people and that they behave in a manner and in a way that does not upset or compromise the safety of others.

If we find that people are not observing this we will ask them to leave immediately and they will not be welcome back. It is best that you speak to a member of staff when you want to invite a friend for tea or just to visit so that we can make sure that this is an enjoyable and positive time for you.

Activities

During your stay we like to build in some fun times, and possibly you have an interest in a certain activity that you would like to join or re-join. We like young people to join in activities in order to broaden your social network and the skills that you need to do

this. These should be part of your action plan that you compile with your key worker and something that you look forward to each week.

The cost of these activities will be met by Riverdale, however, there are restrictions upon types of activities and the cost; your key worker can discuss this with you.

Key workers

Key workers are responsible for making sure that your admission process goes well and that you have everything that you need when you first come to us. They also attend meetings with you and are responsible for compiling reports.

When your assessment report is written, you will be asked for your views and because you will have been part of regular key work sessions with your key worker, you will know what is being written and why; and you will have the opportunity of putting your own words in your own section of the report.

This makes it easier for us to plan ahead and most importantly that you are a part of all decisions that are made about your future. You will also have a co-key worker who will often be there when your key worker is not at work.

Health

Here in Riverdale we like to make sure that all of the young people that we care for are healthy. We do this by making appointments with your doctor, dentist, optician and any one else that you see regularly. You can use these appointments to raise any concerns that you have or to gain information. If you do not feel that you can ask questions yourself, your key worker will support you with this. Some young people drink alcohol and feel that this is not a problem to them, however, for some young people this is not the case.

If you feel that your drinking of alcohol is having a negative affect upon you, you can talk this through with staff or we can put you in touch with a support worker who is specially trained to talk to young people about substance use. You should remember that alcohol cannot be brought onto the unit at any time and for any reason.

You will be given toiletries that will be for your use only. These will help you with your personal routine of brushing your teeth and showering/bathing daily. If you are allergic to anything or you like a certain brand you need to tell us so that we can make sure you have what you need.

Culture

We all have our own culture. A culture is something that we believe in, a way of life. Whether you were born in Newcastle, New Delhi or New South Wales, we all have a culture that we identify with. This can be related to the football team that we support, or a way of living that says we belong. It is important that you always respect the culture of another person and that you don't behave in a way that knowingly upsets another person.

Religion

It is important that you are able to follow your religion during your stay with us. If there are any dietary restrictions or rituals that your religion requires you to respect, let us know and we will do everything to make sure that you can respect your chosen religion. If religion is something that you have not thought about much before, you can speak to your key worker if it is something that you would like to know more about. We hope that you respect the religion and culture of other people and that while this may or may not be something that you consider important to you, that you consider what is important to other people.

Holidays and Special Activities

Lots of our young people have enjoyed camping and fishing trips, and trips to places of interest, museums, cinemas and concerts. These activities are planned in advance and staff need to do a risk assessment in order for the trip to go ahead. Trips give you the opportunity of getting away and having a nice time and to meet other young people who live in some of our other residential units.

Pocket Money

You will be given pocket money every Monday and Friday. The amount you will get will depend on how old you are. At the moment young people 10-12 years get £6.00 in total per week; those 13-14 years get £8.00 per week; those 15 years and over get

£10.00 per week. You cannot borrow from another day's pocket money and money is only handed out when you have completed any task set and your bedroom is tidy and laundry is brought down to the laundry room. We like young people to have tea before they get their pocket money so don't be surprised when you're told to *eat your tea* first!

Sanctions

If you have damaged property or you have misused funds that have been given to you, you may be asked to make a contribution towards the replacement or repair of property. If you have damaged something staff may ask you to help repair the damage, each case is different and you need to be talking to your key worker about how you want to repair the damage.

Sometimes you may have a planned activity and you may begin to behave in a way that makes it unsafe for you to take part, in this case you can be sanctioned an activity, meaning that you miss out this time. Usually you will have the opportunity of working towards another activity very soon.

This is not meant in any way as a punishment but is there to ensure that all young people are safe on any activity and that their enjoyment is not going to be spoiled in any way by behaviour.

Independent Visitors

Every month we have a visit from an independent inspection team, these are called **Reg 33 visits**. These visits look at how well we provide a service to the young people that we care for, what we do well and if there is anything that we can be doing better. It also provides you with an opportunity to speak to someone about your experience of being in care. We also have inspections from **Ofsted** who come from the government to make sure that we care for children properly. We like to have the views of young people so we hope that you will talk to people about how you feel about your stay in Riverdale.

EDUCATION

Here at Riverdale we believe that education is life long and you will continue to learn throughout your life. The staff here understand that sometimes attending school is the

last thing on your mind, but we will do everything we can to support you through this. All young people have the right to an education and have a named school as well as a personal education plan. This is sometimes called a PEP and is completed by both your social worker and your teacher. You can see your PEP at any time and you should be part of putting this together.

If you do not have a named school for whatever reason we will do our very best to make sure that you are provided with some education provision. We will expect you to work with us on this and your views on which school you attend and which lessons you enjoy or find difficult are important to us so it is essential that you share these with us.

And what better reason for attending school (*other than getting a job and making money when you're older!*) than earning money for going! While you're with us you will get 30p for each day you attend and an extra £1.00 per week if you attend for the full five days! This can be saved for you, (*a bit like a building society, but you don't get interest!*) and you can save for something special that you want and go out with your key worker and spend, spend, spend!! Or you can get your extra money weekly. That's £2.50 extra each week that you could be earning on top of your pocket money!

Smoking and Substances

Riverdale operates a no smoking policy. This means that while we understand that this is a very important time in your life and that smoking may be a part of your life in a big way, we will in no way encourage or support smoking of cigarettes or any other substance. If you do smoke, you will have to smoke away from the building, which means walking down the street or at least away from the front area of the building.

The use of any substance, whether it be aerosol or another illegal substance will be taken seriously and there will be consequences of bringing such substances onto the premises. Remember, we have a duty to care for all young people who are in our care and we cannot ignore the use of substances in any way in order to promote the safety of all young people.

We do have links with other people who can offer support around use of substances and we would encourage all young people to access these services in order to promote their well-being and in order for them to be considering the risks that are associated with certain activities.

Complaints

Coming into care and living with people who you don't know and away from your own family can be distressing, but it can also be an opportunity to put things back on track. We hope that this guide has answered some of the questions that may have made you anxious about coming to stay with us.

If you do feel that you are unhappy with something while you are staying in Riverdale you can speak to any member of staff who will then speak to a member of the management team. They will record that you have made a complaint and will try to resolve the problem. If you feel that you cannot speak to any one in Riverdale, then you can use your complaints form that you were given when you first came to Riverdale. Once this is filled in by yourself, you can post it and you will have a response from the independent complaints officer in North Tyneside Council who will then deal with your complaint.

While we will do everything that we can to resolve problems, it is the responsibility of everyone who lives and works here to respect each other and their individual rights and to accept that at some time there may be a difference of opinion where we have to agree to differ and to respect the views of others. You can also make a complaint to Ofsted; the people who are responsible for inspecting our unit and ensuring the rights of young people living there are met. You can contact them directly on 0300 123 4666.

And Finally!

Everyone at Riverdale hopes that your stay with us is both enjoyable and beneficial and that you leave us with many happy memories. And when you do move on from us, never be a stranger, your time with us has been important to us all. Please come back from time to time to let us know how you are doing.