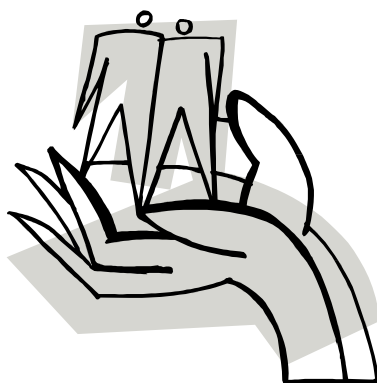


# CALCOT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

*A THERAPEUTIC FOUNDATION*



INTRODUCING

CALCOT COTTAGE  
YEW TREE COTTAGE  
THE DINGLES  
PALMERA

A TIME TO HEAL  
INDEPENDENCE  
AFTER-CARE

## INTRODUCTION

Calcot Services for Children (CSFC) began in 1990 as a direct response to the need for an alternative form of care for children who needed to live away from their families. Rather than offering large, institutionalized and often low-staffed children's homes we have tried to create small family style communities that have a high staff ratio. Calcot Cottage has a ratio of 3/4 adults to 3/4 children, The Dingles has 2/3 adults to 3 children, and Palmera has 2/3 adults to 3 young people. Our homes are based on therapeutic community models and are centred on the needs of each individual child, the needs of the group, and the community as a whole.

We are set up to enable the most vulnerable children and young people to achieve their full potential. A whole range of methods are employed in this process including psychotherapy, counselling, behavioural methods and liaison with external education facilities/school. We believe that how children develop within the home environment - that living and learning together - are as important as more formal treatment methods and that the two are closely integrated and inform each other. Ultimately, external professionals work closely with the staff team to inform each other's practice and provide successful outcomes.

Our ethos is that we take a multi-cultural, multi-racial stance and can offer a safe loving environment, unconditional care and clear boundaries to children and young people in need. Our staff do not use jargon around the children and young people. Our children and young people refer to staff as adults and have no knowledge of terms such as 'sleeping in', 'shift' and 'key worker' etc. The children or young people will simply ask who is looking after them this afternoon or who is staying the night.

Calcot Cottage, Yew Tree Cottage, The Dingles and Palmera provide a full range of residential facilities for children and young people for the age range of 5-18 and 12-18 at Palmera on a 52 week basis. There are sports complexes, parks and playing fields nearby all 3 homes. The Rivermead Leisure Centre in Reading offers a wide range of organised activities.

At CSFC we are well services and have positive links with local schools, educational facilities and colleges and there are places of worship for all religious persuasions. We believe the individual educational needs of each child or young person are of the utmost importance and that children and young people must have a place in school or college as part of their care plan. Therefore, we provide an educational support programme for those young people who are unable to access mainstream education. Our programme aims to build confidence and self esteem in young people and thus equip them for returning to mainstream education or other resource.

After opening our initial community, Calcot Cottage, we were informed by young people living at Calcot Cottage at the time that there was a need for a home, based on our ethos, which would cater for the needs of older children who did not want to leave or be placed in families. Subsequently, Palmera was established in 1993 to attend to those young people's needs. Due to a demand for placements at Calcot Cottage, a further family style community was planned and The Dingles was opened in 2003.

CSfC are members of the Association of Therapeutic Communities, the National Children's Bureau, the Independent Children's Homes Association, and the Social Care Association and have been awarded the Investors in People in April 2003. We work closely with Pact FE and Skills for Care as lead partners in providing NVQ training in the South East.'

We are also members of the Charterhouse Group, Charterhouse group members are committed to working with children and young people using therapeutic community principles.

'The Charterhouse group of therapeutic communities is a nationally recognised charitable organisation dedicated to speaking and working on behalf of its members who provide specialist treatment through therapeutic care and education to severely emotionally troubled and damaged children and young people.'

*From Charterhouse information 2005*

## BROAD STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Calcot Cottage, Yew Tree Cottage, The Dingles and Palmera operate as therapeutic communities centred on the needs of children and young people, with full regard to race, culture and ethnic background. We promote unconditional care in that we provide a space in which children and young people can express their deepest emotions in a way that is not always acceptable within the wider community and yet remain safely contained by the staff team. This provides the opportunity for emotional growth within children and young people.

Within this context we provide warm, caring homes to a child or young person, who for whatever reason is unable to live within their own families. This may be because of a need to assess damage, to avoid further damage, or to facilitate rehabilitation home or in to foster care. Where necessary, children shall stay with us on a long term basis.

Palmera caters primarily for the older young people living or intending to live within our community. Palmera offers a space where young people can develop their life skills as well as a safe place to make mistakes along the way. We hope they will move on from us as young adults, confident and equipped to cope with the transition to an independent lifestyle.

We will also offer our young people an after-care service which will consist of both physical and emotional support.

At both Calcot and Yew Tree Cottage, The Dingles and Palmera we maintain the highest standard of both personal and physical care for our client group. All children and young people, perhaps especially those traumatised by leaving their families or previous homes, deserve the highest standard of physical and emotional care, stability, consistency, structure and clear boundaries. They deserve the opportunity within a safe environment to experience or re-discover a sense of their own self-worth and above all a time to heal.

To this end, care plans in both homes are tailored to meet individual needs and are regularly reviewed. We have also developed links with child and adolescent psychotherapists trained in psychoanalytic psychotherapy which aims to help children and young people with emotional and behaviour difficulties by understanding their internal world and therefore how the children relate to others.

This mode of treatment is particularly suited to children suffering from attachment difficulties due to early emotional deprivation and damage through experiences such as sexual or physical abuse.

Staff at Calcot, Yew Tree Cottage, The Dingles and Palmera are now experienced at working with and supporting children who are usually receiving psychotherapy once or more often twice a week. This psychodynamic way of thinking informs our practice as a staff group through regular consultation meetings with a child/Adolescent psychotherapist.

We have found that we are successfully able to run this approach alongside other methods. For example, a child may be receiving psychotherapy twice a week whilst at the same time undertaking behaviour work based on praise and encouragement to make positive changes in behaviour.

We are also to offer full psychiatric assessment by a child and adolescent psychiatrist where necessary.

We are committed to working flexibly, imaginatively and as a team with educational facilities, our psychotherapists, play therapists, the children's families and all other professionals both internal and external to ensure that the best interests of every child we care for are consistently served.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.

We provide an environment where children and young people will feel safe and secure in order to develop self-confidence, self esteem and an awareness of the feeling of those around them. By monitoring the child's progress closely, by holding daily group meetings and by more formal discussion we shall assess the needs of the child/young person and make informed decisions on how those needs can successfully be met. More specifically our aims and objectives are as follows:-

1. Increase and develop personal awareness in children and young people so that they may begin to appreciate the cultural and personal differences and feelings of others.
2. To build the young person's values and encourage good personal hygiene, tidiness and proper eating habits.
3. To provide them with experiences and role models to enable them to develop satisfying and stable relationships.
4. To maintain a system of monitoring the young person's social, emotional and educational needs both in and outside the home.
5. To encourage children and young people to use effectively their free time by offering a wide range of leisure activities.
6. To treat others with kindness and respect.

In addition to the high standard of care we offer children and young people, we operate a Keyworker system in which every child living at one of our homes is allocated a member of staff to assess and support them through out their stay in conjunction with the whole team. This responsibility ultimately ensures that all children and young people receive all medical checks within appropriate time scales and all administrative tasks are kept up to date.

The key worker is responsible for the completion of monthly reports to be kept on file and for field social workers and family where appropriate. The key worker will also produce six month monthly reports for reviews and ensure all administrative tasks are completed and kept on the file on the child or young person's behalf.

We have found that this system is more successful if children and young people are not aware of it and are allowed to form strong relationships with any adult of their choosing. Direct work (life story book, family tree, play therapy) is not necessarily carried out by the child's key worker if there is another adult available who has a more suitable relationship with the child or young person. We also find that working this way with children ensures that the whole team are aware of all the needs of the children and young people rather than just the child's key worker.

We are able to offer places for up to 4 children of either sex, aged 5 - 18 at Calcot cottage, 3 children of aged 5 - 18 at the Dingles and 3 young people aged 12 - 18 at Palmera either individually or as sibling group or both. We recognise the need and importance of original contacts e.g family, friends and schools/colleges to remain consistent where appropriate and will endeavour to maintain these contacts.

## STAFFING.

The quality of the staff team is essential to the success of any initiative, therefore extreme care is taken to ensure the staff are suitably experienced, qualified and committed to the welfare of the children and to other ethos. We look for specific personality traits and qualities prior to interview listed in our personal specification (Appendix 1) that we believe will ensure that staff are sensitive to the needs of our client group and the needs of the community as a whole.

Particular emphasis is placed on supportive and caring working relationships in order to promote effective teamwork and ultimately success for our children and young people.

Individual supervision is provided for everyone within CSfC and is the foundation on which the organisation rests. Consequently, managers train regularly in supervision methods. Additionally, staff are encouraged to improve their skills in working with children and young people by attending appropriate training. Several training days are organised each year for statutory training such as first aid, fire training and health and safety. Other courses attended by CSfC staff are play therapy, working with challenging behaviour, Team Teach, child development, child protection, supervision, children and young people and mental health, and working with abused children. We are also able to second staff to the BA in social work usually via part time route and currently have 3 NVQ assessors. All our staff now train for the foundation degree in therapeutic childcare. More senior staff have obtained NVQ4 and are awaiting registered manager awards. All managers have obtained the RMA award. Several members of staff possess psychology degrees and other appropriate qualifications.

## ADMISSIONS PROCEDURES.

To ensure the ultimate success of the placement, the importance of planning and preparation is crucial.

To facilitate the process of admission it is recommended that the following information should be provided:

1. Multi-professional reports/advice from educational, medical and if appropriate, psychological services.
2. Social history reports.
3. Completed Calcot Services for Children referral (appendix 2)

If after discussion, it is felt that a place at Calcot Cottage, The Dingles or Palmera in the child or young persons best interests, an opportunity to visit is offered to the child or young person, his/her family and agency workers. During this visit arrangements for admission may be made.

All enquiries about placement should be addressed to :

Calcot Cottage: The Registered Manager  
Calcot Cottage/Yew Tree Cottage  
PO Box 8081  
Berkshire  
RG30 9DU

Telephone: 0118 942 1330

Palmera Avenue: The Registered Manager  
Palmera  
PO Box 8082  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG30 9DU

Telephone: 0118 941 7091

The Dingles: The Registered Manager  
The Dingles  
PO Box 2880  
Reading  
Berkshire  
RG30 9DU

Telephone: 0118 987 1026

## FEES

Referring authorities will be informed of the costs on application and a breakdown will be provided explaining the cost of care and psychotherapeutic/psychiatric support.

With the exception of some psychotherapy costs fees are all inclusive and will include clothing, pocket money, holidays and extra-curricular activities.

## APPENDICES

CALCOT SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

PERSON SPECIFICATION

THE ABILITY TO CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

COMPASSION

WARMTH

PROFESSIONALISM

HONESTY

LOYALTY

COMMITMENT

KNOWLEDGE

INTEGRITY

DISCRETION

EXPERIENCE

GENUINENESS

HUMOUR

EMPATHY

RESPECT FOR OTHERS.