



TY PARENTING ASSESSMENT SERVICES LTD
Committed to positive outcomes for parents & their children



Ty Connections believes that what is significant for children, is their day-to-day experience of being parented now and in the future, not the diagnosis of their parent's difficulties. Our commitment will always be to the immediate and long-term safety and wellbeing of all our resident children. We offer an inclusive service that is accessible to all vulnerable families regardless of race, back-ground, religion, gender and or any disabilities.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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This List is not exhaustive and available upon request. Our policies are continually being updated in accordance with new legislation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Ty Connections III is a Residential Family Centre operating a unit in the London Borough of Barnet. The services offered range from structured time limited Parenting Assessments which could be Residential and or Community based. Viability, Pre-birth and Risk assessments are also available.
- 1.2 It provides these services for Children and Families Services, Cafcass and Legal services to ensure early planning for families that have been identified or directed by the Courts as needing the services of Ty Connections.
- 1.3 Ty Connections III was registered in February 2012; the accommodation in the LB of Barnet has three, comfortably furnished self-contained flats, and located on Friern Barnet Road, with great access to amenities & transport. Ofsted inspected in 2012, January 2015 and June 2018 respectively, overall rating the centre consistently 'Good' across all inspections.
- 1.4 Assessments of families and their dependent/s at Ty Connections are conducted in keeping with the Department of Health's "**Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families**" and also the "**Working Together to Safeguard Children**" publication. Ty Connections overall strategy is underpinned by the following principles inbuilt in the Children Act 1989." The **Welfare Principle**" the welfare of the Child is paramount. This is the overriding principle and "**The Partnership Principle**" In all circumstances, no matter how difficult, individuals, agencies and organisations working with families should strive to work in partnership with the Local Authorities and other professionals.
- 1.5 Assessments of families and their dependent/s at Ty Connections are conducted in keeping with the Department of Health's "**Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families**" Assessments are led and co-ordinated by Ty Connections Senior Social Worker and undertake to establish a detailed understanding of the family. All Assessments are PAMS informed utilising elements of the parenting assessment tool written by Dr Sue McGaw. Utilising PAMS provides us a parallel evidenced based assessment which reflects more accurately parent's knowledge, skills, and practice.
- 1.6 Ty Connections believes that best practice demands a multi-disciplinary approach, using evidence-based practice to achieve the best outcomes for its client group. We therefore liaise closely with providers of relevant local services/resources such as GP's, Health visitors, Drug & Alcohol programmes, Domestic Violence intervention projects, CMHT's and effective parenting courses as well as all professionals and significant others who are involved in the lives of the parents and their children.

2. Overall Aim of Ty Connections

- 2.1 The aim of Ty Connections is to provide a comprehensive, independent, and professional range of parenting services to support 'vulnerable' families to improve the quality of their own and their children's lives and achieve better outcomes.
- 2.2 Our extensive experience is of parenting assessments whereby parenting capacity has been impacted by mental health issues; Substance & Alcohol misuse; Learning Difficulties and Domestic Violence.
- 2.3 Staff at the unit is experienced and represent a range of disciplines such as Social workers, Psychotherapists, Health & Social care, and Counsellors. Along with this they are skilled in the requirements of engaging with and supporting young parents according to their developmental needs which may or may not be consistent with chronological age. We have a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the range of issues that can impact on a young person both as an individual and as a parent including issues around sexuality, emotional development, identity, self-esteem, transitions and the life cycle and so on.
- 2.4 As well as providing a home to live in, we undertake assessments with individualised comprehensive Programmes of Support. The basis of our assessments is a formal system of needs assessment and care planning, a key-worker system and regular reviews. We will undertake extensive observations of the independent living skills and parenting skills tailoring the support to the families' level of needs. We will also observe the care provided for children by the families and offer advice, support and guidance in order to assist them in developing their parenting skills. We also seek to explore with the families' issues, which affect their capacity to parent and to assist them in identifying and making any necessary changes to their parenting.
- 2.5 Ty Connections detailed assessment reports will be used to inform and support decisions by Local Authorities and Courts regarding the future planning for families.
- 2.6 Robust systems are in place for processing referrals to the centre and admissions to ensure that the service can safely accommodate families and meet their needs and the needs of the placing authority.

3. Ty Connections Objectives

- 3.1 To provide a safe and nurturing environment in which families can be assisted in developing skills for coping with the demands of parenthood.
- 3.2 To observe the relationship between the families, to assess the potential for that relationship to develop. To assist and support parents in their work to acquire the insight, skills and recognition of attachment in parenting their children.
- 3.3 To undertake assessments in a manner which is fair, anti-oppressive and respectful of every individual's and family's unique identity and circumstances, irrespective of ability, age, class, gender, racial origin, religion or sexual orientation; In order to make a recommendation in the form of a written report.
- 3.4 To devise and implement an agreed programme which meets identified and specific needs of each family that involves individual work, group work and activities that include the parents and children together.
- 3.5 To continually assess and make appropriate changes to each families' program and placement plan to best meet the needs of the families.
- 3.6 To formally review each family's placement at regular intervals.
- 3.7 To provide families the opportunities to receive support and to develop their parenting skills with the advice and guidance of Ty Connections in-house and working in partnership with external agencies.
- 3.8 To gather structured information about the actual ability to live independently in the short, medium and long term.
- 3.9 Where appropriate, to ascertain the wishes and feelings of resident families about their past, present and future circumstances.

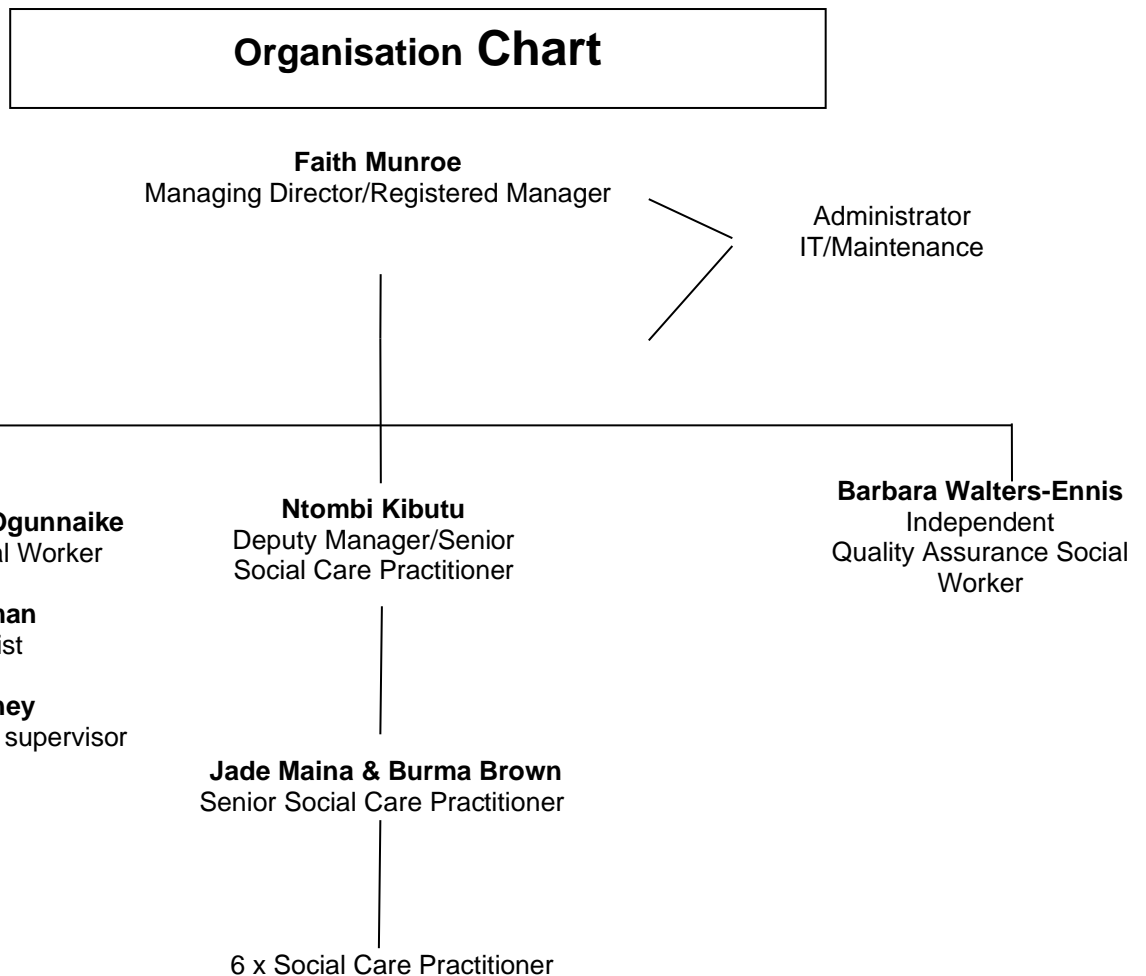
4. Facilities available at Ty Connections

- 4.1 Ty Connections III is a purpose-built block of three studio apartments on the first and second floor. These are self-contained studio apartments and there is a maximum of three families at the unit, at any one time.
- 4.2 Maintaining a maximum of three families at any one time, behaves it well in providing individual and specific targeted programmes of assessment and support for the clients it serves. Along with this the "homely" and attractive environment of the unit avoids the pitfalls of larger units where such support can at times be experienced as "institutional" and remote. 'Families appreciate living in self-contained accommodation.' (Ofsted report 2018)
- 4.3 Excellent embedded partnership working enables families to receive an extensive level of support, which meets their holistic needs. The centre works exceptionally well with other professionals and this multi-disciplinary approach focuses on the best interests of children. Families receive protection from the strong safeguarding arrangements with the police and local authority safeguarding personnel.
- 4.4 Due to our experience, we are aware of the ways in which issues around learning are frequently associated with parenting difficulties, even if they have not yet been assessed. In order to ensure an inclusive service at the unit, all parents undertake PAMs knowledge questionnaires as a starting basis to alert us to potential leaning needs, and parent teaching is undertaken in a range of ways in order to ascertain the manner in which a person appears to learn best.
- 4.5 The studio apartments are furnished throughout, although families are encouraged to bring some personal belongings such as ornaments and pictures with them to make their stay more comfortable.
- 4.6 Furniture, crockery, cutlery, kitchen utensils, beds and bedding are provided.
- 4.7 During their stay at Ty Connections families are expected to provide all their own food and provisions, supported by their social worker's arrangements.
- 4.8 Families are relieved of any stresses associated with the payment of utility expenses but are assisted in establishing benefit entitlements if applicable. Referring Children and families Services are expected to provide the families with a breakdown of allowances payable until such times benefits have been established.

- 4.9 Families receive an activity allowance dependent on their individual needs and financial constraints. This is to provide an opportunity for the families to access a wider range of community activities which promote the children and their parents. Under no circumstances should the activities allowance be confused with the families' weekly maintenance allowance. Referring Children and families service are expected to provide the families with a breakdown of allowances payable.
- 4.10 It is important to emphasise that placements at Ty Connections are not intended to provide an alternative to social housing. We provide the accommodation to sustain the range of services we offer to families to improve the quality of their own lives and achieve better outcomes.
- 4.11 It is our view that an assessment of Parents' parenting capacity can be facilitated in a highly structured residential-based assessment. The benefits of this are that it permits exploration and assessment that tests their current skills, support the development of new or enhanced skills, and explore the personal or environmental factors that might impact parenting capacity or their ability to safeguard their child or children.
- 4.12 Furthermore, it tests their motivation and commitment to the parenting role over an extended period. It also provides an opportunity to assess and measure their child or children's response to the care offered and the impact or likely impact of this on their child or children's emotional and physical wellbeing.
- 4.13 Notably, the environment within which we are set up for assists parents in developing their parenting capacities to care for their child or children under the safety net of the structured and supportive environment as found within Ty Connections.

5. Management & Staffing

Ty Connections III is a privately-owned family business. Ms Munroe is the Managing Director and Registered Manager.



5.1 Ty Connections has a very experienced and qualified staff team from a range of disciplines including social workers, psychotherapists, Health & Social care, and counsellors. Along with this they are skilled in the requirements of engaging with and supporting 'vulnerable families' whereby parenting capacity has been impacted by mental health, substance & alcohol abuse, learning difficulties and domestic violence.

- 5.2 All our assessments involve teamwork from different grades of staff and from different but related backgrounds. The Staff team reflect the cosmopolitan and ethnic demography of London with staff whose cultural heritage is truly diverse.
- 5.3 The team aims to undertake assessments that are both fair and respectful of individuals' unique circumstances, while ensuring that the safety and well-being of children always remains paramount.
- 5.4 The **Assessment Team** at Ty Connections III comprises of the Service Manager, Lead Assessor Senior Social worker, Senior Social Care Practitioners and Family Assessment Support workers.
- 5.5 The **Service Manager** (Faith Munroe) is responsible for the overall placement. In short Faith manages the safety of the unit to ensure that the systems are in place to minimise the risk to children. Such as case management, staff supervision, Service Plans, contractual agreements, and liaison with the Local Authority.
- Faith has over 23 years' experience working with children and families in a variety of settings, with 13 years directly Managing residential family centres. She has undertaken and contributed to assessments of children, young people, and adults in statutory, voluntary and the independent sector. Training has been undertaken in areas such as Child development; Parenting/ Advanced Parenting, Child Protection, Safeguarding children and young people, family therapy, Couples as Parents and Parents as Couples. She holds a BSC Honours Business degree and the Leadership and Management award in Health and Social Care Level 5. Faith is also trained to deliver the PAM's 3 Specialist Parenting Assessment by the psychologist Dr Sue McGaw and further CPD training in the areas of Child, adolescent and family mental well-being: multidisciplinary training, working with teams and Networks under Stress at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation trust 2013/14 and 2016 respectively. In 2018, Faith started her Graduate Diploma in Law.
- 5.6 The **Lead Assessor Social Worker** (Karen Gayle and Bola Ogunnaike) is responsible for undertaking the Parenting Assessment. The Family Assessment Support Workers work alongside and report to the Lead Assessor.

The remit of the Lead Assessor is to focus on the key areas of assessment as outlined in the letter of Instruction. The methods of work are conducted by undertaking individual and or couple assessment sessions, informal observations which focus on the overall needs of the child/children, parenting capacity, engagement with the assessment, communication, insight and understanding of the concerns of the Local Authority, Relationship between parents, family dynamics, relationships, external/environmental factors, risks in the community and strengths and vulnerabilities of the parents.

5.7 Karen is a qualified social worker and registered with Social Work England. She holds the certification of qualification in social work and a Bsc Hons in Applied Social Science, which she obtained in 1995. Karen is NNEB qualified and holds a Diploma in Play Therapy and Families obtained in 2001, she also holds a Diploma in Systemic Practice with Couples and the Post Qualifying Award in Social Work obtained in 2006.

For over 20 years she has worked predominantly within a children and families' setting, primarily undertaking a range of assessments to inform care proceedings for local authorities along with independent assessments for a range of private and voluntary agencies including residential parenting assessment centres. Karen has led on residential parenting assessments as the consultant senior social worker/Lead Assessor at Ty Connections since 2008 and has extensive experience in undertaking parenting assessments whereby parenting capacity has been impacted by mental health issues; substance & alcohol misuse; learning disabilities and domestic violence.

Karen is trained in the assessment framework and is also able to apply a systemic approach to assessments; she is also trained to deliver the PAM's 4 Specialist Parenting Assessment by the psychologist Dr Sue McGaw. Along with this she has extensive experience in working directly with children who have experienced trauma.

5.8 Bola is a qualified social worker registered with Social Work England to practise in the United Kingdom as a qualified Social Worker. She is a member of the British Association of Social Workers. Bola holds a B.A Hons in English and Sociology obtained in 1987 and an Msc in Social Work obtained in 1997. For over 18 years she has worked predominantly within a children and families" setting, primarily undertaking a range of assessments including criminal and care proceedings for local authorities. Bola has also been employed as a Family Court Advisor and Children's Guardian at Cafcass from 2002 to 2013 where she practiced in both private and Public Law. Prior to this she worked as a front-line practitioner for local authorities specialising in Child Protection. Bola is also trained to deliver the PAM's 3 Specialist Parenting Assessment by the psychologist Dr Sue McGaw.

5.9 The Senior Social Care Practitioners (Jade Maina, Ntombi Kibutu and Burma Brown) alongside the Family Assessment Support Workers are responsible for carrying out the daily observations, key work sessions, observations in the community, on-going risk assessment, practical support and direct work with the parents. The staff team compile detailed daily recordings which are incorporated as part of the assessment and work with families in accordance with the aims and objectives of the placement/care plans and agreements.

- 5.10 **Ntombi, Jade and Burma** are at a senior level within the Family Assessment Support Team, in addition to this role they also key work the families. Jade has been employed at Ty Connections since 2010 and has progressed from a family assessment support worker within the organisation to assist the Service Manager with the development and implementation of innovative practices and procedures. Alongside Ntombi and Burma they all have a fundamental role around ensuring that the support staff are able to develop their knowledge and understanding in the areas of safeguarding both children and vulnerable adults offering advice and guidance to both managers and Family Assessment support workers. Jade holds a degree in Psychology and she is also trained to deliver the PAM's 4 Specialist Parenting Assessment by the psychologist Dr Sue McGaw with further CPD training in Couples as Parents and Parents as Couples at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation trust 2016, Graded Care Profile 2, 2019.
- 5.11 Ntombi also deputises in the managers absence, she holds an NVQ 4 in Health & Social Care, BTEC Level 7 Diploma in Strategic Management and Leadership (May 2018) alongside the A1 Assessors award, Graded Care Profile 2 and is also trained to deliver the PAM's 4 Specialist Parenting Assessment by the psychologist Dr Sue McGaw. Burma holds NVQ level 3 in Health & Social care and has over 19 years' experience working with children and families in a variety of settings, with over 7 years directly within residential family centres.
- 5.12 The Family assessment support workers come from a range of disciplines in the areas most commonly associated with the wider issues we deal with. Some are qualified social workers and or psychologically trained at degree level, and all are Level 3 children and Young People's workforce or equivalent.
- 5.13 Assessment team meetings and regular review of the daily recordings, issues arising, and on-going risk assessments are undertaken to inform key phases of the assessment process, placement plans and actions.
- 5.14 The Staff team benefit from ongoing training, team meetings, regular reflective supervision and performance appraisals. The service development plan details the organisation's continued commitment to staff training. There is a democratic approach to service development and staff contribute to the vision for the focuses on equipping staff for their role, improving the assessment process and other working practices.

5.15 **The Family's psychotherapist** (Sarah Houseman) is responsible for providing a confidential space for a resident parent to work through any difficulties they may have during the assessment process. The content of such sessions will necessarily remain confidential and will not be subject to scrutiny except where child protection or safety concerns arise, though parents' uptake and general engagement in the sessions will be commented on in the final report. **Sarah** is a qualified UKCP registered psychotherapist and qualified social worker and Social Work England registered.

5.16 **Barbara Walters-Ennis** (Quality Assurance Social Worker) Barbara is a qualified social worker and registered with Social Work England to practise in the United Kingdom. She is a member of the British Association of Social Workers and holds the Certification of Qualification in Social Work, obtained in 1993 and a B.A. Hons in Applied Social Science obtained in 1996. Barbara completed the Practice Teacher's award in 2000 and the Post Qualifying Child Care Award in 2003. For over 20 years she has worked predominantly within a children and families' setting, primarily undertaking a range of assessments including criminal and care proceedings for local authorities. She has also specialised in undertaking comprehensive assessments for both private and voluntary fostering agencies.

Barbara holds a Diploma in Management Studies obtained in July 2007 and is a member of the Chartered Institute of Managers. Between 2003 and 2007, she was the managing director of an independent foster care agency. Barbara was the registered Manager for two Residential parenting assessment units between 2008 and 2015. In this capacity she has both led and overseen a range of parenting assessments on families who have a wide variety of complex needs including serious drugs and alcohol issues, learning needs and mental health issues

5.17 **Sharon Mahoney** (Consultant Senior Social Worker/External supervisor.) is a qualified Social Worker registered with Social Work England to practise in the United Kingdom. Sharon undertakes management and staff team supervision. Sharon facilitates reflective practice to support the Management and staff team in their role, by encouraging the development of practice skills, maintaining professional and ethical standards in the context of on-going professional development; providing reliable and regular 'thinking space'; Maintenance of our professional practice, Theory and practice and the impact that such work has on the practitioner her/himself.

6. Fees and charges

- 6.1 **Standard weekly fees of £3500.00** are charged per family placement.
NB. the exception to the above fees, is if the makeup of the family is five or more, and they require the use of two apartments to accommodate them then **Standard weekly fees of £7000.00** are charged.
- 6.2 These fees are inclusive with no hidden charges, for example all our assessment is PAMS informed, 1-1 support/monitoring through the day or night, additional waking night, reasonable childcare such as parents attending meetings and or Court.
- 6.3 These fees include: pre-placement meetings, full assessment of the family, attendance at Child looked after reviews and Placement review meetings whilst the family in placement (including up to 5 days after placement); the Final Assessment Report is completed 14 days post the assessment period ending. There may be instances whereby the date of the final report is negotiated. Family Weekly reviews, Court Statements, or Interim Assessment Reports whilst the family is in placement as negotiated between the Local Authority's legal advisor. Accommodation, utilities, and basic equipment are all inclusive in the fees.
- 6.4 In response to referrals, we can offer a no-charge/fee initial service plan proposal based on a review of the documents and reports pertaining to the client family. The aim is to address the potential merits of placement at Ty Connections, detailing how an assessment would be planned, structured, and delivered, subject to availability.
- 6.5 There is a prerequisite for all family admissions to the unit, to look at and prevent the risk and transmission of Covid-19. Within the first 24 to 48 hours, testing should be undertaken, the Local Authority are expected to make all the arrangements, the families are expected to self-isolate in their allocated apartments until results of the testing is received.
- 6.5 Interpreting and translating services if required within the course of our parenting assessment by us, is not charged outside the standard weekly fees.
- 6.6 Court Attendance is charged at £300.00; this includes court attendance and court reports reviewing time.
- 6.7 We understand that flexibility is a vital requirement in any work commissioned by a Local Authority. There is scope at any stage of the assessment for termination to be considered or for a move into the

community with work continuing in the family's home or the family going into a different specialist resource e.g., drug rehab, therapeutic foster care.

6.8 Termination of Placement

At any stage, the placement can be terminated by the Local Authority or Ty Connections. There will be a two-week cancellation fee should the Local Authority terminate. There will be a one-week cancellation fee should Ty Connections terminate. In an emergency that constitutes serious child protection or safeguarding concerns, the placement will be suspended until there is a disruption meeting: this may be in person, via email or phone depending on the circumstances. A placement termination eviction notice may also be served giving the service user 24 hours to vacate. In some instances, notice can be given in advance to avoid a cancellation fee.

6.9 Extension of Placement

If requested, planned and unplanned extensions of placement would be generally be available to families already in the placement and would be agreed by the Manager. Any extensions requested beyond the agreed placement end date are charged a minimum of one week's cancellation fee. For the avoidance of doubt in cases where holding placements go beyond the agreed end date this is charged a minimum of one week's cancellation fee.

6.10 Authorisation of Additional Services

Where a service is not included within the standard weekly fee, we will discuss the request with the Local Authority. We will not introduce services without written authorisation, but we do request that it is dealt with as a matter of urgency for the continuation of the assessment.

6.11 Retaining a Placement

Ty Connections has limited availability. Therefore, to retain an apartment prior to the move in date, a 50% reduction of the weekly fees is £1750.00. We can offer a phased move in plan, whereby the family can visit, meet the staff team, other resident families and make appropriate move-in preparations prior to residing.

6.12 Commissioning Authorisation

Placements cannot be confirmed until the Local Authority's designated fund holder or commissioning officer has provided written authorisation.

6.13 Payment Terms

The fees contract must be signed and returned confirming the agreed costings. Ty Connections requires all invoice payments to be made to Ty Parenting Assessment Services Ltd within 30 days of

the invoice date. Failure to make payment within the agreed timescale will attract daily interest at 8% plus the BOE base rate.

7.0 Community-Based Assessments

7.1 Ty Connections community-based assessment, is available:

- Following a positive assessment, further assessment of families moving into the community, with work continuing in the family home, if in a reasonable distance.
- One Parent residential and the other Parent Community-based attending the unit as part of contact, assessment session and support programme.

7.2 We understand that flexibility is a vital requirement in any work commissioned by a Local Authority, this service offers the same high-quality service and approach as in our residential assessments

7.3 We will provide detailed service proposal of work along with an individualise plan of assessment to assist parties in determining whether they wish to commission our services.

8. Criteria for admission

8.1 Families referred to Ty Connections have usually been the recipients of considerable intervention by Children Services and other agencies prior to the referral. This intervention will have led to the identification of serious concerns about the care available to the child/ren in the family.

8.2 In many cases various assessments in respect of the families will have been carried out prior to them coming to Ty Connections. These will usually include Initial and Core Assessments conducted by Children Services in conjunction with other agencies such as Health, Education, and the Police and often some specialist assessments by professionals such as psychologists and psychiatrists. It is expected that copies of those assessment reports will be made available with the referral. The referral to Ty Connections is often a direct result of the recommendations of one or more of those assessments.

8.3 Our referral process involves completion and submission of our referral and risk assessment form for consideration. This link can be emailed and or accessed via <https://forms.gle/GPp1HrpZ2HuQrC9q7>

8.4 In situations where offering a placement is thought to be viable, Ty Connections will then prepare a Service plan/proposal addressing the potential merits of the placement. Informing the referring agency about how the assessment/programme of support would be planned structured and delivered.

There is a prerequisite for all family admissions to the unit, to look at and prevent the risk and transmission of Covid-19. Within the first 24 to 48 hours, testing should be undertaken, the Local Authority are expected to make all the arrangements, the families are expected to self-isolate in their allocated apartments until results of the testing is received.

8.5 Ty Connections accept referrals of parents 18 years plus. If the parent is approaching 18, we assess this as part of the pre-placement risk assessment. However, in considering adolescent parents it is necessary to ascertain that their self-care skills are sufficient for them to look after themselves and their dependent/s adequately.

8.6 Ty Connections offers placements to single mothers and single fathers with one or more children

8.7 We can offer *two parent residential placements or one parent residential/one parent community based. *Two parent residential placements - Note that if we are required to comment on sole caring parenting capacity, we will build in one parent going offsite for a time limited period to assess the other parent as part of the assessment process.

8.8 We can offer placement comprising of one or more children of any age, we assess this as part of the pre-placement risk assessment.

8.9 In circumstances where a family is the subject of a Care Order, it is not appropriate for Ty Connections to assume parental responsibility on behalf of the Local Authority as to do so would compromise our focus upon and commitment to the immediate and long-term safety and well-being of the families.

8.10 Parents with learning difficulties

Ty Connections is committed to providing opportunities for families in which one or both parents have a learning difficulty to undertake a fair and sensitive assessment of the care available to the child/ren within the family. We can adapt assessment processes and materials as appropriate. We seek to ensure that a formal assessment of the parent(s)' learning difficulty has been undertaken before the residential assessment begins so that we can ensure that as much information as possible is available in planning the assessment in a way which is sensitive to every family member's needs. We seek specific guidance from whichever professional undertakes that assessment about how best to work with the individual(s) concerned.

However, it is our belief that what is significant for children is their day-to-day experience of being parented, not the diagnosis of their parent(s)' difficulties. Our commitment is to the immediate and long-term safety and wellbeing of children.

8.11 **Parents with mental health difficulties**

In order to undertake an assessment of a family in which one or both parents have a mental health difficulty, we require a formal assessment by a mental health professional of the nature, extent, prognosis and requisite treatment plan of the difficulty before a placement can be made. We also seek to gather as much information as possible to plan the assessment in a way, which is sensitive to every family member's needs. We seek specific guidance from whichever professionals have been involved with the family or who have undertaken specific assessments to ascertain how best to work with the individual(s) concerned.

However, it is our belief that what is significant for children is their day-to-day experience of being parented, not the diagnosis of their parent(s)' difficulties. Our commitment is to the immediate and long-term safety and wellbeing of children.

8.12 **Parents who are dependent upon alcohol**

Alcohol is not allowed within Ty Connections in any circumstances. We receive a number of referrals in respect of families in which one or both parents/carers are dependent upon or have difficulties controlling their use of alcohol. It is not considered appropriate to undertake assessments at Ty Connections in respect of individuals whose use of alcohol is out of control or who attempt to stop drinking immediately before starting the assessment. This is to ensure the safety of the individual's own child/ren, other residents and staff. Furthermore, it is considered bad practice and unfair to expect an individual in such a position to embark upon an Parenting assessment because to do so would almost inevitably lead to the placement breaking down, thereby creating further trauma and disruption for the child/ren. The placement would be likely to break down either because the individual was attempting to abstain from alcohol and possibly experiencing withdrawal symptoms while also engaging in a residential assessment which in itself can be stressful; or because she/he was attempting to use alcohol surreptitiously and their parenting or behaviour was adversely affected. However, in circumstances where parents/carers can acknowledge their difficulties with alcohol and the impact of those upon the care of their child/ren, we are prepared to consider referrals. The evidence we require that such an acknowledgement has been made is a letter from a legitimate alcohol advisory agency confirming that the individual has sought help in relation to their use of alcohol and has begun to implement advice provided. This may or may not necessitate complete abstinence. We would be guided about the necessity of that by the agency concerned. Before agreeing to the individual concerned moving into Ty Connections in order to begin an assessment, we would be recommending that the individual engage with drug and alcohol services locally at **Change Grow Live - Barnet** is a support service for individuals who are affected by drug and alcohol problems.

8.13 **Parents who are dependent upon illegal substances**

Using illegal substances are not allowed within Ty Connections in any circumstances. We also receive several referrals in respect of families in which one or both parents/carers are dependent upon and have difficulties in controlling their use of one or more illegal substances.

It is recognised that it is possible for some individuals to use illegal substances and still to meet their child/ren's needs safely and adequately.

We are therefore prepared to consider such referrals. However, it is not considered appropriate to undertake assessments at Ty Connections in respect of individuals who are denying or minimising the level or impact of their use of illegal substances or who attempt to stop using those substances immediately before starting the assessment.

It is recognised that the use of many illegal substances is highly addictive and giving up or reducing the use of them can be extremely difficult. Introducing an individual in any of these circumstances to Ty Connections would be to bring a level of chaos and/or unpredictable danger into the centre which would clearly compromise the safety of the individual's own child/ren, other residents and/or staff. Furthermore, beginning an assessment involving an individual experiencing any of these difficulties would be unfair to the individual and to their child/ren because of the high likelihood that the placement would break down. However, in circumstances where parents/carers are able to acknowledge their difficulties with illegal substances and the impact of those upon the care of their child/ren, we are prepared to consider referrals. The evidence we require that such an acknowledgement has been made is a letter from a legitimate drug counselling or advisory agency confirming that the individual has sought help in relation to their use of illegal substances and has begun to implement advice offered. Before agreeing to the individual concerned moving into Ty Connections in order to begin an assessment, we would be recommending that the individual engage with drug and alcohol services locally at **Change Grow Live - Barnet** is a support service for individuals who are affected by drug and alcohol problems.

8.14 Ty Connections reserves the right not to offer placements for assessment to any individual who it is reasonable to suspect may be a risk to other service users or staff. Individuals who present a risk of violence or sexual risk to other service users or staff must be assessed by a suitably qualified psychologist or psychiatrist before a placement can be offered. It will only be possible to offer a placement to individuals in such circumstances if the psychologist or psychiatrist is able to provide reassurance in a written report that the individual no longer poses an undue risk.

9. Underlying ethos and philosophy of Ty Connections

- 9.1 The underlying ethos and philosophy of Ty Connections believes that best practice demands a multi-disciplinary approach. We liaise closely with providers of relevant local services/resources as well as all professionals and significant others who are involved in the lives of the service users and their children.
- 9.2 Our approach to undertaking assessments is influenced by several legislative, professional and organisational principles and values:
- a. The right of every child to be brought up in a family that can meet her/his basic needs and provide the child with secure attachments, stability, and a sense of belonging and permanency. This principle is reflected in government policy
 - b. Every individual's right to a private family life as enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998.
 - c. Every child's right to be protected from harm, also enshrined in the Human Rights Act 1998.
 - d. The principle, underlying the Children Act 1989, that children should be brought up within their families of origin wherever possible. Where children are deemed to be in need, appropriate services should be provided to promote their welfare and upbringing in their families if possible.
 - e. The importance of effective assessment of families and their dependent/s needs and how they might best be met. The 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' (Department of Health 2000) highlights the importance of analysing, understanding and recording what is happening to children within their families and their wider communities; and basing professional judgements upon that information.
 - g. The importance of recognising the positive aspects of families' circumstances, particularly young parents' strengths, and proven abilities; and seeking to build upon those strengths in undertaking assessments.
- 9.3 Ty Connections aims to undertake assessments that are both fair and respectful of individuals' dignity while ensuring that the safety and wellbeing of children always remains paramount.

- 9.4 Ty Connections provide support and advice to families daily. If required, throughout the night. The aim is to achieve a balance between offering support, monitoring the care and well-being of the families, intervening when necessary and encouraging the families to gain independence.
- 9.5 Ty Connections respects' rights to privacy where possible, particularly late at night, providing that the safety and protection of residents is ensured.
- 9.6 The willingness of parents to work in partnership with Ty Connections is essential.
- 9.7 Families are encouraged to participate in the following main sessions offered:
- **Daily planning** where parents and staff work in partnership to produce a daily plan, which incorporates how they plan to meet their child/rens needs, all their appointments, sessions, and other scheduled events.
 - **Formal placement weekly reviews** where parents and staff work in partnership discussing, areas of strength observed and the areas for further improvement, these sessions complement in the moment feedback that takes place on a more ad-hoc basis. The discussion also provides an opportunity for parents to comment on and contribute to the placement plans.
 - **Placement Plans and actions** incorporated in the weekly reviews. Where parents collaborate to review progress, set targets, monitor outcomes, and communicate the expectations of all involved throughout the placement.
 - **Weekly planning** where parents and staff work in partnership to produce a weekly plan, which incorporates all their upcoming appointments and other scheduled events.
- 9.8 Ty Connections clearly has a duty to the families it serves to work in partnership with other agencies involved in the assessment of their needs and care. Ty Connections seek to work closely with referring Children Services Departments and professionals such as Children's Guardians, solicitors, psychologists, Health Visitors, GP's, and Education professionals.

10. The Process and Content of Assessment, timescales and how we work with families.

- 10.1 In regard to the assessment timescales our view is that anything less than 12 weeks could only be considered a risk assessment and not a full assessment of parenting capacity. A twelve-week assessment would be a full assessment that allows for the assessment of capacity for change.
- 10.2 Whereby the family are resident for a 12-week residential parenting assessment the **Final Parenting Assessment report is made available two weeks after the end date of the assessment period.**

Interim assessment report date usually six weeks, along with four-week placement review meetings and final indicator meeting in weeks ten or eleven of the assessment period if required.

10.3 The first couple of weeks of the placement:

- Facilitate a settling-in period for the family where they might begin to establish relationships with staff and the professional network, and to familiarise parents with the unit protocols, policies, and structures.
- Develop meaningful working relationships with staff to offer support, guidance and monitoring of the caretaking offered to their child/children and begin establishing age-appropriate routines and structure around meeting their needs and independent living skills.
- This is an intensive period of robust support, supervision, monitoring and intensive observations of care tasks, stimulation and the relationship between parent and child.
- At the end of this period, a formal placement planning agreement meeting to be held with all parties, to review settling in progress, discuss and agree the detailed formal assessment, internal and external support plan and actions.

10.4 Assessment

- Parents will have individual and/or couple assessment sessions with the Senior Social Worker /lead assessor (PAMS trained) who will focus on the key areas of assessment as outlined in the letter of Instruction. The methods of work focus on the overall needs of the child/children, parenting capacity, engagement with the assessment, communication, insight and understanding of the concerns of the Local Authority, relationship between parents, family dynamics and relationships, external / environmental factors, risks in the community and the support needs, if any, for the family over the short and long term.
- The Family Assessment Support Workers (PAMS trained) will work directly with the family carrying out the daily support and observations, key work sessions, observations in the community, on-going risk assessment, practical support, and direct work. FASW's compile detailed daily records which are incorporated as part of the assessment, working alongside and reporting to the lead assessor.

10.5 Support

- In-house individual support/counselling sessions with our qualified psychotherapist will be offered to parents to work through any difficulties they may have during the assessment process. Uptake and attendance will be commented on in the final assessment report; the content of these sessions will remain confidential except where child protection or safety concerns arise.

- Families are supported to identify age-appropriate community play groups for parent and child to attend, targeted parenting programmes whilst in placement.
- If the location of the placement address affords parents continuity and accessibility with pre-existing external support services, we would recommend and facilitate continuation for consistency.
- Due to our experience, we are aware of the ways in which issues around learning are frequently associated with parenting difficulties. To ensure an inclusive service at the unit, all parents undertake PAMs knowledge questionnaires as a starting basis to alert us to potential leaning needs, and parent teaching is undertaken in a range of ways to ascertain the way a person appears to learn best.

10.6 **Additional Structure for Safeguarding**

10.7 Additional safeguards are implemented to ensure that all resident children are safe during the assessment period such as CCTV and use of a baby audio monitor. CCTV is available in the communal areas and where required in the apartments.

- The camera in the apartment focuses on the children's' sleeping, feeding and changing area, providing privacy for the parents in their side of the apartment, which is shielded by a dividing screen.
- The camera in the apartments is used and viewed by the staff on duty at the unit as an additional tool of observation and monitoring around routines of care undertaken by resident parents minimising over imposing on their personal space, in particular to the night time routines.
- The start of all assessments involve robust supervision, monitoring and intensive observations of care tasks, stimulation and the relationship between parents and child, and requires parents to be assessed in a variety of sessions during the day so for the majority of the time they would be seen by and working directly with the family assessment support workers whom are present 24/7.
- The CCTV system can be accessed remotely, records images, which are retrievable for a short period of time. Disclosure of recorded material will only be made to third parties following a child protection or safeguarding incident, or to assist in a criminal enquiry and/or the prevention of terrorism and disorder.
- Ty Connections' CCTV policy complies with the revised national minimum standards for residential family centre's which came into place in April 2013.

- 10.8 Parents understand that the centre uses surveillance cameras and audio monitoring devices as the initial pre-placement meeting and induction to the centre highlights this practice, which is centred on safeguarding children. It will be explained to the parent's what is expected of them and how they will be required to engage during the assessment period. I.e. undertaking all direct care tasks in the designated area.
- 10.9 How we deal with safeguarding, safety issues, conflicts, disputes, arguments, tension, intimidation, threatening, aggressive and abusive behaviour at Ty. Either directly or indirectly (overhearing you on the mobile phone for example)
- a. Staff will intervene and ask you firmly to desist from and or attend to.
 - b. If you do not stop or refuse to follow the guidance or direction given by staff after the first request or warning, we will act.
 - c. This could be:
 - i. Removing your child from the situation to a place of safety.
 - ii. Requesting you to take a walk of the unit to calm down the situation.
 - iii. Meeting the child's needs directly.
 - d. No discussions are had until you have calmed down and return to the unit and this is undertaken by management at a mutually convenient time.
 - e. If you are unable to work with this agreement, we will request a placement disruption meeting that includes the Local Authority. A decision can then be made on the most suitable consequences for the placement conditions having been broken. *This may result in your placement being terminated.*
 - f. Resident parents will always be invited to give their account, and your views will always be considered where possible before any decision about your placement is made.
- 10.10 Management and staffing details can be found (page 8.)
- 10.11 It is anticipated that the status of assessments carried out at Ty Connections in relation to the Department of Health's "Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families" will be that of specialist assessments commissioned by Local Authorities after a Core Assessment has been undertaken.
- 10.12 Ty Connections undertakes holistic assessments in line with the 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.

- 10.13 Assessments at Ty Connections seek to ensure that families current strengths and difficulties are assessed in the context of both their past circumstances and their potential to meet their child/rens' short, medium and long-term care needs in the future.
- 10.14 Ty Connections prefer that families are given opportunities to visit the accommodation if they were offered a placement, meet staff and go away to reflect upon the prospect before committing themselves.
- 10.15 Prior to the commencement of any assessment, there would be an expectation that all parties concerned would meet to discuss, agree and sign the detailed plan of the assessment. This agreement is designed to inform the assessment process and will provide all parties with a clear understanding of all the following elements of the assessment; Including reasons for the assessment, timescales, roles and responsibilities of workers and parents, expectations of what will happen, where it will take place and when and if any special arrangements may be required, cancellations of appointments, how disputes will be resolved and contingency arrangements.
- 10.16 The aims and objectives of each placement are clearly stated in the written placement agreement. An individual programme of monitoring, support and planned sessional work is devised for each family and their ongoing progress is measured with respect to the aims and objectives of the placement. We therefore say as follows:

'The reason for setting out Ty Connections roles and expectations is to help parents and Ty Connections Family Assessment Team and Support Workers (FASW), to be clear, thus preventing any breakdown in the working relationship or in the support received from us.

- *Ty Connections will provide an **Independent** parenting assessment on behalf of the Local Authority.*
- *Staff will be supporting, guiding, monitoring, observing assessing you with your children to assist the courts within our expertise, 'parenting'*
- *This duty overrides any obligation to those instructing us or their clients.*
- *The parenting assessment is balanced alongside a programme of support over the weeks and we talk with you about the plan an appreciate your feedback throughout.'*

- 10.17 Ty Connections would expect the local authority to provide the centre with copies of any previous assessment reports carried out on the family concerned including a detailed chronology of the family to avoid repetition of information gathering. Ty Connections would expect the local authority to provide the centre with any letter of instruction required to inform the assessment process and pending court action.

10.18 Ty Connections will keep daily records of sessions undertaken with families. There will be an expectation that progress review meetings will be arranged to review the placement and ensure that any necessary amendments to the plan are made. An interim assessment report is available with a final Parenting assessment report made available a fortnight of the conclusion of the assessment.

10.19 During the placement staff work with the family in the following ways in-house and in the community utilizing structured services provided by universal services such as children centres.

- Direct and indirect observations
- Daily planning
- Weekly planning & feedback sessions.
- Key work sessions
- Individual sessions
- Parenting sessions
- Life Skills sessions
- Play and Development sessions
- Counselling/support sessions

10.20 **The Assessment process is divided into four distinct phases. Assessment team meetings and regular reviews are undertaken to inform key phases of the assessment progress, placement plans and actions.**

Phase One - This phase commences on placement. This phase is also known as the 'settling in phase' where the family learns to adapt being in a structured and supported environment.

This period allows for the transition into our setting and the establishment of working relationships with the unit staff and the professional network. It also entails robust direct support/intervention during primary basic care tasks and the implementation of routines and structure. In addition, there are high levels of monitoring, supervision and observation. This phase typically should last no more than two weeks.

Phase Two - During this phase there is still a high level of monitoring, intervention and direct support. However, the emphasis shifts to the emotional component and relationship between parents and the child. The introduction of community-based activities and in-house teaching sessions will occur around the third week of the assessment process. When it is agreed that the parents have fulfilled the competencies at this stage of the assessment then they move onto the observation phase of the assessment where direct intervention and support are gradually decreased to move onto the assessment of parenting capacity. At this phase if it is felt that parents are not able or capable of progressing to the next level of the assessment, a meeting will be convened with the

Referring Authority and other appropriate networks and professionals to determine what the next steps should be in terms of the assessment and future placement plans.

Phase Three - This phase focuses intensively and robustly on overall parenting capacity, day to day care tasks, meeting the overall needs of the child, promoting the emotional and identity of the child, capacity to sustain positive changes achieved, stimulation, forming attachments, integration with community resources, assessment of contact and ensuring safety. This phase also identifies and addresses the strengths and vulnerabilities of the parents and the identification of appropriate resources and/or further assessment /intervention for addressing them.

Phase Four - The final phase of the assessment focuses on the discharge plan, agreed placement plans and support package. The focus is on re-integration into the community, linking with community-based resources and facilitating a smooth transition into independent living within the community.

10.21 The programme of work undertaken is customised to account for differences in learning styles, pace and delivery to optimize their successful uptake by parents. Strategies include:

- Time limited sessions to account for potential poor concentration levels
- Questions are worded in simple form and with wording easy to understand. Then corroborating during sessions with parents, continuously checking that they have understood a phrase or sentence by asking them to paraphrase what they understood.
- Utilisation of other resources likely to facilitate any learning such as 1-1 mentoring.
- Performance based learning using a mixture of verbal and non-verbal teaching methods such as pictures, modelling and demonstration to support any verbal instruction, monitoring which are the most effective.
- Practical Sessions, in appreciation of the fact that some people learn experientially rather than through merely listening and concentration skills. (Such as role playing, trial learning and experimentation.)
- Visual aids through use of handouts from the "You & Your child 0 to 1years" book published by CHANGE.
- Role play through staff role modelling appropriate care tasks using a baby doll and giving advice 'in the moment' and so on.
- Utilising and incorporating PAMS tools: 'I need help form', 'Parenting knowledge questionnaire' and 'Parenting skills booklet.'
- Solution focused approach to support parents to understand the reasons for, purpose of desired outcomes. Solution focused model is a strength-based approach to assessment.

- Individual and in the moment sessions around behavioural change using motivational interviewing (MI) techniques to support parents to identify how she can do things differently in her children's best interest.

10.22 **12-week residential parenting assessment**

- Extensive observation of the care provided for the dependents by their parent(s).
- Assessments being made of parents' capacity, willingness, and motivation to accept advice, support, and guidance, to put it into practice and to maintain new skills on a consistent basis.
- Individual and couple sessions with the parent(s) to explore with them the issues that affect their ability to parent and to assist them in identifying and making any necessary changes to their parenting.
- Sessions Focusing on the parent(s) ability to safeguard and promote the welfare of their dependents.
- Assessment of parent's capacity to identify/ access support services which may be required to ensure that their children's physical, emotional and educational needs can be maintained within the family.
- Identification of any significant risk factors to which children may be exposed.
- Exploration of parent's existing significant relationships and capacity to develop and sustain relationships.
- Exploration of parent's capacity to understanding child development and the impact of attachment formation on relationship building.
- In addition to the above Individual sessions with the Senior Social Worker /lead assessor will explore family history and functioning and the impact on parenting, the nature of the parent/child relationship and parents' capacity for change including their ability to engage with the professional network. Individual sessions will also explore the support needs, if any, for the family over the short and long term.
- Key worker observations / direct support / key sessions will focus on the parents day-to-day functioning both as individuals and as parents.
- Practical support and learning sessions will be provided to enhance their skills and functioning in both areas. For example, organisational skills, practical parenting skills, child development and daily living skills.

10.23 We are a small parenting assessment centre, and this behoves it well in providing individual and specific targeted programmes of support for the clients it serves. Along with this the "homely" and attractive environment of the unit avoids the pitfalls of larger units where such support can at times be experienced as "institutional" and remote.

- 10.24 We are experienced in using evidence-based practice to achieve the best outcomes for its client group and this is further enhanced using clear and effective targets and goals in the work that is undertaken, along with regular reviews, to ensure that progress and measurable outcomes are sustained.
- 10.25 Excellent embedded partnership working enables families to receive an extensive level of support, which meets their holistic needs. The centre works exceptionally well with other professionals and this multi-disciplinary approach focuses on the best interests of children. Families receive protection from the strong safeguarding arrangements with the police and local authority safeguarding personnel.
- 10.26 Ty Connections is committed to regular consultation/feedback with Parent(s) to ensure that the service provided is supporting families and meeting the required needs. Feedback is made available regularly. They are also invited to make comments about the service they receive and the progress of their assessment through their weekly reviews which is recorded and shared with the professional network.
- 10.27 If there are any concerns raised the Managers are committed to ensure that the issues are discussed with the Parent(s) and appropriate action is taken. If the Parent(s) is unhappy with the action taken they will be directed to the Agency's complaints procedures as relevant.
- 10.28 Managers will regularly review the feedback to ensure that good practice is maintained, and areas of concern are dealt with in an efficient and appropriate manner.
- 10.29 Feedback is also available and becomes part of the families file, ensuring that their views are taken into account when subsequent reports are prepared and when the file is read during inspections and independent audit visits, or within court proceedings.

11. Fire Precautions and associated Emergency Procedures

All resident families have a PEEP on file, which is an individual escape plan to enable them to exit the building in the case of emergency. On admission, every parent and child undertake a fire evacuation drill. Fire drills undertaken, measure evacuation response and cooperation levels.

- 11.1 Instruction on fire procedures is displayed throughout the unit including apartments. Fire alarms and emergency lighting are tested weekly and extinguishers together. Every six months the system is turned off to ensure battery back-up is working, with an engineer's check of alarms and lighting certified annually. Ty III has a Fire maintenance service throughout the accommodation and complies with all relevant regulations.

11.2 Basic fire information is given in the Fire Action notice below, read it and take note of the information now, don't wait until there is a fire!

You have an important role in ensuring that the Ty Connections measures to prevent fire operate effectively. The Accommodation has smoke detectors installed. It is negligent to misuse or tamper with them!

- Do not block fire escape routes; it may result in persons being unable to exit the accommodation in the event of a fire.
- Do not wedge open fire doors, these are designed to protect escape routes and prevent the spread of toxic smoke and fumes. (The majority of deaths in fires are the result of inhalation of toxic smoke & fumes).
- Do not overload electrical sockets, or tamper with plug fuses.
- Take care with portable heating appliances; always check with Ty Connections Staff to ensure the building's electrical supply can take the load. Radiant heaters i.e. fire with an exposed element or flame must not be used.
- Adhere to the no smoking policy. Take care with smoking materials; make sure that any smoking materials are safely extinguished in a suitable receptacle.

FIRE ACTION ON DISCOVERING A FIRE:

The primary concern in the event of a fire is to prevent injury or loss of life. Therefore, all other considerations are secondary, and the evacuation procedure must be started immediately via the quickest and safest route when the fire has been detected.

Do not attempt to tackle the fire. **Dial 999 or 112** if you have the means to do so without risk to yourself and others.

KNOW:

Your means of escape routes, primary and secondary.

IN THE EVENT OF FIRE:

- Remain Calm.
- Leave quietly without stopping to collect your belongings and without rushing.
- DO NOT re-enter the house until you are told it is safe to do so by the Fire authorities

EMERGENCY 24/7 DIAL 07983030648

We are contactable 24 hours/7 days. Use this number for **FIRE, INTRUDERS, FLOOD** or any other emergencies.

12. Arrangements for dealing with internal and external complaints.

- 12.1 All users of Ty Connections are provided with information about how to comment on or complain about the service they receive upon admission. Complaint, comment and compliments forms are accessible in the communal areas of the units. Forms are also included in the 'Residents' Guide', given to all service users at the start of their placement. Go to <http://www.tyconnections.com> and under the quick contact, request information/forms of How to complain.
- 12.2 All complaints are recorded centrally and passed to the Manager. Every attempt will be made to resolve complaints informally and locally if possible.
- 12.3 All service users are informed about their right to contact Ofsted directly in order to raise a concern or make a complaint. **By Telephone:** 0300 123 4666, **Email:** enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or **post to:** The National Complaints Team. Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester. M1 2WD
- 12.4 The Children's Commissioner for England **promotes** and **protects** children's rights in England
Children's Commissioner for England, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London.
SW1P 3BT Telephone 020 7783 8330 Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
- 12.5 Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
The LADO **deals with allegations against staff within the children's' workforce in Barnet.**
Barnet's LADO should be contacted via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Team. Tel: 020 8359 4066 Email: mash@barnet.gov.uk The MASH operates Monday–Thursday 9am to 5.15pm and 9am to 5pm on Fridays. Outside of these hours care and welfare concerns about children and young people that require an immediate response should be reported to the Emergency Duty Team on **020 8359 2000**. Where an emergency response is required, at any time, the police should be called.
- 12.6 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, are the **final stage** for complaints about councils, all adult social care providers (including care homes and home care agencies) and some other organisations providing local public services. They are a free service and investigate complaints in a fair and independent way – “we do not take sides.” PO Box 4771 Coventry CV4 OEH Telephone 03000 061 0614 (Mon-Fri 8.30am to 5pm)

13. Rules and Conditions applying to residents and the circumstances in which placements may be terminated

13.1 The rules and conditions applying to residents are contained in the 'Residents' Guide' and some are contained within the families' placement agreements.

- It is expected that there may be times when *families* do not agree with or wish to respond to the advice they are given. They are encouraged to question any aspect of the work, which they find it difficult to respond to. However, any aggressive or threatening behaviour will not be acceptable, and it is expected that *families* and Ty Connections will resolve any conflict or disagreement collaboratively and amicably.
- The placement at Ty Connections III will proceed on the basis that families are expected to look after the house, maintain all the items and equipment within it provided by us.
- Any of the following eventualities is likely to lead to the termination of the placement but an emergency progress meeting will be convened if possible before any decision is made:
 - a. Ty Connections III having reported to the Local Authority immediate and serious concerns about the parental care offered to *dependent/s* or information to indicate that *dependent/s are* in immediate danger.
 - b. Any targets set for *families* by the key workers to be achieved to sustain the placement have not been met.
 - c. A breakdown in co-operation between the families and Ty Connections III and/or resistance and/or a negative attitude towards the assessment on the part of the *parents*.
 - d. A breach of the terms and conditions of the placement at Ty Connections III as set out in the document 'Residents' Guide' with regard to refraining from using or having possession of alcohol and illegal drugs on the premises; refraining from violent, abusive and threatening behaviour; not treating other residents in an oppressive or discriminatory manner; misusing the smoke alarms or security cameras; wilfully damaging the fabric or contents of the premises; and behaving in a manner which unreasonably causes distress or offence to other residents or staff.

See Appendix (4) use of accommodation & Appendix (5) Violent/Abusive behaviour and acts of Racial or Sexual Harassment.

- e. The placement cannot be sustained due to a breakdown in *parents'* physical, emotional or mental health such that the progress of the Parenting Assessment is significantly undermined.
- f. *Parents decide* to leave the placement.
- Ty Connections III reserves the right to terminate any placement with immediate effect in circumstances wherein the likely outcome of not doing so would be to place the immediate safety or well-being of *child/ren*, other residents and/or staff in jeopardy.

14. Arrangements for contact with non-resident adults and visits from members of extended families.

- 14.1 In order to ensure the protection and wellbeing of the families. Ty Connections takes great care before agreeing to any contact arrangements involving non-resident adults. This can be found in the Residents Guide also see Appendix (6) Guest policy.
- 14.2 Families can receive visitors from extended family members or close friends while at Ty Connections. Any such visitors need to be identified when the written placement agreement is drawn up or formally agreed between Ty Connections and the responsible Local Authority subsequently. Contact may be agreed off-site in the community, to accommodate larger families safely.
- 14.3 The frequency and duration of visits also need to be agreed formally and depend upon the distance to be travelled; the identity of the visitor and the families placed circumstances. Advance notice of at least forty-eight hours before any proposed visit is required. However, Ty Connections reserves the right to request that the Local Authority undertakes a risk assessment and or police checks before agreeing to any individual visiting and exercises this right in respect of any individual not well known to the Local Authority.
- 14.4 Ty Connections reserve the right not to agree to visits should they not be appropriate for the assessment process at any particular time. Ty Connections also reserve the right to ask visitors to leave for a period while specific pieces of work are carried out and/or, should it ever be necessary for any reason, to ask visitors to leave the premises altogether.
- 14.5 Any difficulties presented by visitors or by family members while receiving visitors may lead to Ty Connections withdrawing its agreement to individuals visiting the accommodation or in the community.

15. The policy in relation to drugs and alcohol at Ty Connections

- 15.1 Neither alcohol nor illegal drugs are allowed on the premises at Ty Connections. In the event of Ty Connections noticing alcohol or illegal drugs in the accommodation or their bedrooms, they would ask the parents to take the alcohol off the premises and dispose of it or offer to dispose of it themselves. Such an incident would lead to notifications and consideration of the need to discuss on-going placement. See Appendix (7) Drugs and Alcohol policy statement.
- 15.2 In circumstances where it is established that a resident has used illegal drugs during the placement or a resident's presentation or behaviour lead Ty Connections to be concerned that they might be using illegal drugs, the need to terminate the placement would be considered. The resident would be able to establish whether they are using by undertaking urine or hair sample test and that test returning a negative result.

16. Ty Connections Confidentiality Policy - GDPR – Data Protection

- 16.1 In keeping with NCH's Confidentiality policy, no information about any family would ever be shared with any other family. In-group meetings, Ty Connections may ask families if they would like to explore issues in relation to their own experiences but information specific to individuals would not be divulged unless those individuals chose to share that information.
- 16.2 All team members who will be involved in a family's assessment are expected to read all of the information attached to a referral to Ty Connections. Similarly, all information arising from a family's assessment is shared with all those involved in the assessment and every member of the assessment team, all of whom are involved in the day-to-day management of Ty Connections.
- 16.3 All information arising from the assessment is shared with the referring Local Authority in the person of the child/ren allocated social worker or, in their absence, their line manager. Every family's written placement agreement states that any safeguarding concerns will be passed to the Local Authority's out of hour's duty team if the situation warrants such immediate action.
- 16.4 Ty Connections staff will not share any information in respect of any families assessment with any individual unless that individual is able to establish that they are a named member of the professional network designated to support and care for the families.

16.5 GDPR – Data Retention

We recognise that in the running of our service, we collect and process personal data from a variety of sources. This personal information is collated in several different formats including letters, emails, legal documents, employment records, operations records, images and statements.

The personal data is held in both hard copy and electronic form. Ty Connections will ensure that personal data that we hold is kept secure and that it is held for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is being processed. In addition, we will retain the minimum amount of information to fulfil our statutory obligations and the provision of goods or/and services - as required by the data protection legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

17. Policy Statement for the arrangements for respecting the privacy and dignity of residents.

- 17.1 Ty Connections believes everyone has the right to the privacy and dignity that all of us in society enjoy. We encourage residents to view the Centre as 'home' and we respect the individual's right to make informed choices about their lifestyle.
- 17.2 Every family placed at Ty Connections has the use of the living accommodation, which includes their own apartment, self-contained bathroom and toilet facilities, kitchen and sleeping areas. Parents are provided with keys to their apartment, they are also provided with their own lockable storage unit upon request.
- 17.3 Observation and monitoring can take place at any time of the day or night although the latter only take place after the family retires for the evening in the event of there being any immediate concerns.
- 17.4 Staff makes every effort to observe and respect family members' privacy and dignity when undertaking observation and monitoring tasks, however the safety and wellbeing of the resident children will always be the paramount concern. Families' written placement agreements state that: *'their privacy and dignity will be maintained if they undertake their own care tasks in the bathroom, using the screen for additional privacy.*
In addition to the CCTV a baby audio monitor will be used by TC; it is your responsibility to ensure that your private conversations are taken away from the monitor if you do not want staff to hear.'
- 17.5 Announcement will always be given on entering the Apartments. If there is no response, staff will inform the resident by calling through the door that they need to enter the apartment (if it is locked, by use of the emergency pass key) in order to ensure that all family members are safe and well. Should staff discover that all family members are safe and well and that parents have made a choice not to answer the door, staff will remind them that such action constitute a breach of the placement

agreement the incident will then be referred to The manager and any repetition would lead to consideration of the need for an emergency meeting.

17.6 CCTV is in use at Ty Connections. It allows for monitoring of the communal areas and visitors accessing and exiting the Ty Connections living accommodation. Additional safeguarding measures may be identified prior to the start of placement or arisen during placement which requires the sleeping and changing space of the child to be monitored by CCTV.

17.7 Baby audio monitors are in use at Ty Connections. It allows for monitoring of the children whilst parents are in their apartments.

17.8 The centre's telephone enables families to have private telephone conversations. The fair usage telephone policy allows families to telephone social workers, solicitors, children's guardians, GP, health visitors.

18. The arrangements for protecting children and parents.

18.1 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 defines two groups of people within its scope:

- Children
- Vulnerable Adults

Vulnerable Adult

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 defines a vulnerable adult as:

- Those in residential accommodation provided in connection with care or nursing or in receipt of domiciliary care services
- Those receiving health care
- Those in lawful custody or under the supervision of a probation officer
- Those receiving a welfare service of a prescribed description or direct payments from a social services authority
- Those receiving services, or taking part in activities, aimed at people with disabilities or special needs because of their age or state of health
- Those who need assistance in the conduct of their affairs

Child

- The Children Act 1989 defines a child as:

- Any person under the age of 18 years including those persons under the age of 18 that:
- Are living independently
- Is in further education
- Is a member of the armed forces
- Is in hospital
- Is in prison or a young offender's institution
- Any person aged 18, 19 or 20 who: has been looked after by a local authority at any time after attaining the age of 16, or has a learning disability

18.2 One of Ty Connections stated objectives is to provide a **safe and nurturing environment** in which families can live together, children's rights and needs are respected and their development and well-being in the care of their parents can be closely monitored. That objective underpins the centre's overall aim of providing a Programme of Support to all family's resident at Ty Connections.

18.3 It is clear therefore that 'safeguarding is everybody's business' to protect all of the children and parents accommodated by us, while they are resident at Ty Connections.

18.4 Ty Connections is subject to a comprehensive system of policies and procedures, which include the following:

- Child protection concerns and procedures
- Safeguarding children & young people policy statement
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults

18.5 All members of staff are required to read and familiarise themselves with Ty Connections policies and procedures within their first week induction before commencement of their post.

18.6 The "Child Protection Procedure" states "whenever a person working on behalf of Ty Connections has a concern that a child is or may be suffering significant harm, these concerns must be discussed immediately with their Manager, and the referring local authority social worker.

18.7 The procedure goes on to provide guidance about prevention of abuse; recognition of abuse and dealing with disclosures or suspicions of child abuse.

18.8 There is a clear expectation that concerns will be referred to Children & family Services on the day that they arise.

18.9 Staff can contact a designated member of the management team twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week. Management Team are available outside of the 9 to 5 hours. Staff are expected to speak to the manager whenever concerns about safeguarding arise.

18.10 Every family's placement agreement includes the following statement:

- The needs of the *Child* will be treated as paramount by the staff of Ty Connections who will inform *the relevant* Children Services Department immediately should any issues in respect of *her/his* safety, protection and well-being – including *parents'* health, attitude or state of mind - arise during the placement.
- Should Ty Connections staff have any concerns about the care of *Child* they will contact the relevant Children Services who will undertake such enquiries if they are deemed to be necessary. See Appendix (1), for Child Protection Policies and Procedures.

18.11 Ty Connections safeguarding children & young people policy states:

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. All reasonable steps will be taken to promote safe practices and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

We will: -

1. Implement our recruitment procedures for appointing staff, volunteers and helpers to ensure that reasonable steps are taken not to appoint a person who is unsuitable to work with children or who is disqualified from working with children.
2. Ensure that all staff, volunteers and helpers in our organisation are aware of their responsibility to protect children and young people. A child will be considered to be anyone under the age of 18.
3. Promote the rights of a child to be listened to and to be taken seriously so that the child is able to express their views, thoughts and concerns.
4. Ensure that staff, volunteers and helpers are aware of and adhere to our code of conduct and child protection policy and procedures; a copy is provided in all introductory employee packs.
5. Ensure that all staff, volunteers and helpers understand the need to report child protection concerns about a child or a worker's conduct towards a child.

6. Ensure that staff, volunteers and helpers understand their responsibility to refer any child protection concerns to the Manager of Ty Connections and the LA Social Worker of the client, in line with our child protection procedures.
7. Ensure that staff, volunteers and helpers are provided with support and the opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in relation to child protection issues.

18.12 **Safeguarding Adults**

18.13 At Ty Connections families safeguarding means protecting adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted, including where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

18.14 The aims of adult safeguarding are to:

- Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs
- Stop abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Safeguard adults in a way that supports them making choices and having control about how they want to live
- Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned
- Raise public awareness so that communities, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying, and responding to abuse and neglect
- Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a concern about the safety or well-being of an adult
- Address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

End of Statement of Purpose