



South Tyneside Council



# **Young Person's Guide to Whiteleas Way Children's Home**

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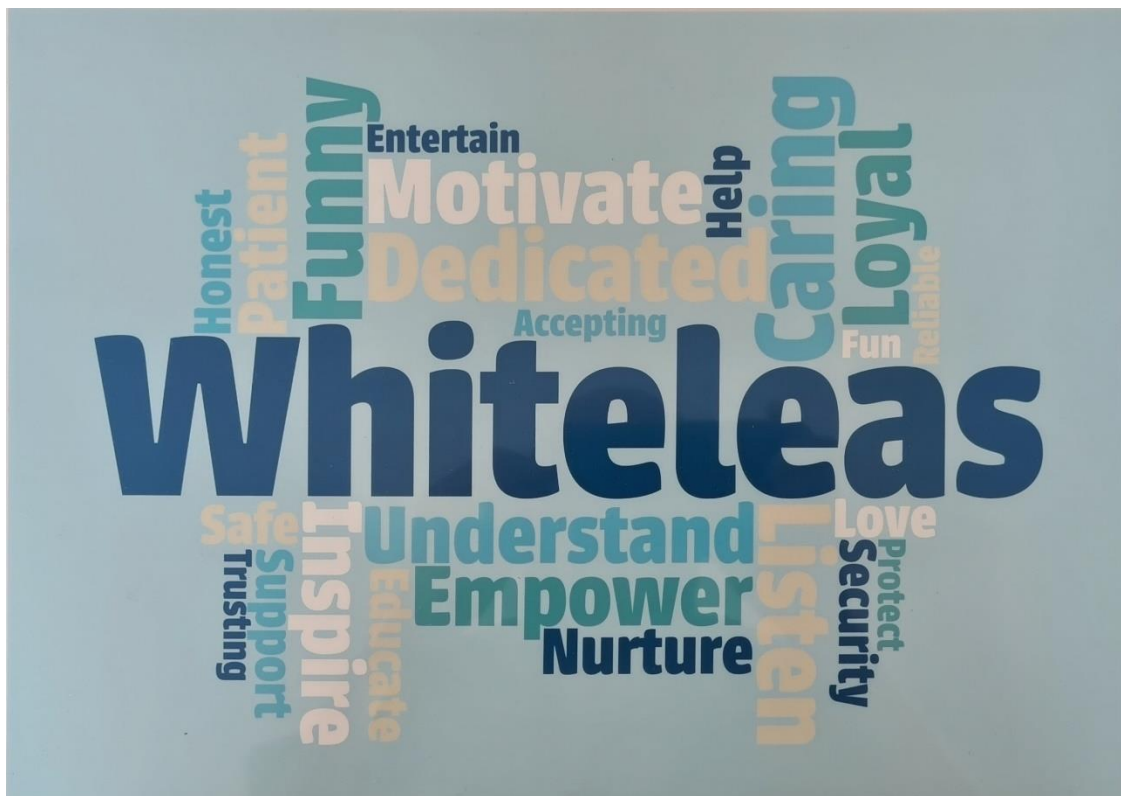
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## Introduction

This guide has been designed for young people who live, or are planning to live, at Whiteleas Way. Young people who live at Whiteleas Way have helped write it so hopefully it will have all the information you need. The guide will hopefully answer most of the questions you have – as well as some things you hadn't thought about, things like:

- What Whiteleas way can offer you
- Our rules and expectations
- How we can support your independence skills

If you think there is anything you need to know that is not in the guide, please let us know



## **About our Home**

Whiteleas Way Children's Home is a large, detached building with space for up to 4 young people of either gender who are aged 13 to 17 years (just before you become an adult). The home is very close to local shops and a bus route, so it is easy for you to get out and about while you're living here.

Our location has many attractions on our doorstep, including the beautiful coastline and beaches, The Word (National Centre for the written word), the Customs House, and many other attractions including cinemas, restaurants, and museums - see your keyworker if you would like to visit or need more information.

### **What we aim to do**

- Work with you to agree your Care Plan and make positive steps towards your future.
- We will support you to try making good decisions and choices.
- Respect you as an individual taking into account any needs you have with regards to your race, culture, religion, sexuality, disability, gender and background.
- Work with other agencies/people involved in your Care Plan.
- Make sure you are aware of your rights as an individual as well as your responsibility towards others.
- Build and manage positive relationships.
- We will support with difficult situations, give advice, and support to help you overcome problems.
- Build on your life skills for when you move on from Whiteleas Way such as cooking, shopping, budgeting, managing money and making appointments.
- Provide you a safe, stable home environment where you will feel loved and cared for.

The team will always be around to support you.

## What is the home like?

There are a number of rooms around the building that you can use.

The team have worked together with our children and young people to make sure that surroundings and décor are as homely and comfortable as possible.

The “Cosy” room - We have recently renovated this room at the request of one of our young people. It was suggested this room was made into a ‘chill room’ so one of our young people designed this room and selected sensory equipment. This is a space which can be used to relax and to enjoy the calming environment. There is a cooker, sink, microwave and all the things you need to make yourself something to eat and drink. There is also a pool table and a PS4 in this room to enjoy.



The living room has a large lounge which overlooks the garden; it has a large Smart TV, DVD player and comfy sofas.



There is a dining room where everyone in the home can eat their meals; staff members also have their meals in the dining room with the young people.

There is also a large kitchen, to prepare your evening meal. We have been improving the outdoor areas and there are gardens to the front and rear, we love to have BBQ's in the summer months and are hoping to create some home grown produce with the creation of vegetable plots. We now have an outdoor gym area as this was something our young people thought they would like, we have had a roof built to keep you dry when you are working out!

Some of the rooms in Whiteleas way are locked, such as the office and storage rooms in the home this is to keep your important information safe and secure.

### **What are the bedrooms like?**

Everyone has their own bedroom at Whiteleas Way, which can only be entered with a key. You will be given a key when you arrive – though the staff will also have one. The rooms are all nicely furnished including bed, chest of drawers, wardrobe and a flat screen TV on the wall. All bedrooms have their own en-suite shower room and toilet for added privacy. Before you come to Whiteleas Way and once you move in, there will be an opportunity to buy or bring your own things to decorate your room, like pictures, quilt covers, curtains etc.

It is really important that you look after your room and make sure you keep your things safe. You will have a lockable safe in your room to keep anything of value safe – however if you'd rather, staff will be happy to keep things in the office safe.

### **Wi-Fi**



There is Wi-Fi which will enable you to access the web for whatever you need to study, find information and stay connected with friends and loved ones.



We need to keep you safe while using the internet and there are certain restrictions in order to prevent you accessing sites which could cause you any harm. Staff will work with you to ensure that you have all the skills you need to keep yourself safe online. Staff will discuss the use of the Wi-Fi when you come to live with us and you can sign a safe-use contract.

## What is the food like?

When you first come to live at Whiteleas Way, we will talk to you and try to find out what sort of food you like. If you have any special dietary needs or are allergic to anything, tell the adults who work with you and they will try to find the foods which are suitable and things you like.

All young people need a healthy balanced diet. We like to encourage young people to try new foods as well as enjoy the foods that they are used to. We also encourage you to help out in the kitchen and even learn to cook for yourself.

Young people are encouraged to plan a healthy balanced menu with staff – and if there is something on any day that you don't like, you can have something else – within reason! All you have to do is let the staff know what you would prefer to eat instead.



## Laundry facilities

Our staff are here to care for you and this means we will help you to do your washing and look after your clothes. You will be expected to learn to do your own washing and ironing as you grow up and this will depend on your age and ability. We will encourage and help you to do this when you move in - don't worry if you don't know how, staff will be happy to help you to learn.



## Pets

We are in the process of thinking about having a shared pet in our home. We need to do some research and plan this carefully. We are sorry we cannot have lots of pets and animals at the home as they take lots of looking after and cost a lot of money to keep healthy. We also need to be aware that some people may have allergies, so we need to keep everyone safe and well.



## Money

Everyone who lives at Whiteleas Way receives some kind of weekly allowance. How much you receive and how this is paid to you depends on your individual circumstances. How you receive your money will be explained to you when you first arrive.

You will receive:



## Pocket Money

- Pocket money is paid according to your age in two instalments (Monday and Friday)
- We want to save towards your future and will give you £5.00 which we will pay into an individual savings account, which you will be able to access when you are 18 years old.

## Clothing, Footwear and Toiletry Allowance

Everyone at Whiteleas Way gets a clothing allowance that is given on a monthly basis. It will help you to buy new clothes and get you used to managing your own money.



When you need to go for new clothes all you have to do is talk about it with your keyworker. Your keyworker will be happy to arrange to go out shopping with you if that's what you prefer – and maybe make a day of it!

## Clothing and Toiletries

- £48.00 per month clothing and shoe allowance
- £12.00 toiletry allowance
- A weekly bus pass will also be purchased for you, if you are able to travel safely
- A monthly phone top up of £10

## Toiletries



Basic toiletries will be provided for you when you at Whiteleas Way, however all other toiletries will have to be purchased using funds from your monthly allowance.

## Activity and Leisure

At Whiteleas Way we have a variety of options available such as; Netflix, Amazon Firestick, Disney plus and lots of board games and books. We also have a games console which is shared with the household.

We offer a range of activities and outings – especially during the weekends and holidays. Where we go is usually decided during group meetings or in key working sessions.

Other than group activities we can help you to continue with any hobbies you already have as well as develop new ones – just talk to your key worker and see how they can help.

## Family, Friends and Contact

It is really important that you stay in touch with your family and friends if this is positive for you and we are happy to help you in any way we can:

- The office phone is available to young people to phone their family or social worker.
- If you haven't got a mobile when you arrive, staff will purchase a basic one for you to ensure everyone can keep in touch with each other.
- Family and friends can visit you (the only thing we ask is that you check that it's okay – just think if everyone's family and friends visited at the same time!)
- Provide paper and stamps to send letters/cards
- Support you to send emails.

## Rules and Responsibilities

Just like every home, Whiteleas Way has rules, which everyone must stick to (including the staff). The rules are to make it safe for everyone to live here (and follow the law!).

All of the rules need to be respected by everyone living at Whiteleas Way – and they will be fully explained to you when you come.

If you do not respect the rules staff may consider giving you an opportunity to complete the reparation- (to repair, fix or improve a situation.) This will be after they have discussed with you what they are not happy with.



Examples of reparations are:

- Doing a chore
- Paying back money from your pocket money if you damaged something, although you will be offered the opportunity to make things better by fixing broken things or doing other tasks if you agree.
- If you make a mess – cleaning it up
- If you damage the home - helping to fix or redecorate things

We have a zero tolerance of bullying at Whiteleas Way and measures in place if you ever feel this is happening to you. We would encourage you to speak with any staff member or a trusted person (teacher, social worker, family member or friend) if you feel this is happening to you both in and out of the home.

We do not allow smoking in Whiteleas Way – either young people or adults. This also includes vaping. It is not only bad for your health; it is not fair for those who don't smoke to have to put up with the smell. We will help anyone who smokes to get some help and support to give up.



## Working Towards your Independence



Life Skills training is all about learning to do things for yourself – so when you leave, you're much more able to manage.

The training covers such things as:

- Cooking
- Shopping
- Preparing for employment
- Having a good social life
- Solving problems
- Making decisions
- Budgeting
- Plus loads more

We don't expect you to be able to do everything when you first arrive, that's what your key worker and the other staff members are here for – to help.

You will have a Life Skills file which will include any work you have done and record the progress you have made,

Your key workers will give you a welcome pack when you first arrive. The pack will include lots of information about services and help you can expect whilst at Whiteleas Way. You will also receive a gift box with all useful bits and bobs you may need when you first get here such as toiletries, a diary, a photo album that you can fill with any photos you may have or photos while at Whiteleas Way.

## The Team

It will take you a little while to get to know the team as they all work shifts and come in at different times. It is the job of staff members to support our young people at Whiteleas Way and two staff members will be responsible for key working you.

As well as the Manager, there are two Deputy Managers and a team of Residential Childcare Workers. There are also two cleaners who help to keep the home nice and clean. There are always at least two staff members on duty – though most of the time there are 3.



Laura Brennan – Registered Manager



Stevie Steele – Deputy Manager



Julie Wardale – Deputy Manager



Tracey Connor – Residential Childcare Worker



Katie Hedley – Residential Childcare Worker



Angela Armstrong – Residential Childcare Worker



Jimmy Redpath – Residential Childcare Worker



Colleen Parkin Stewart – Residential Childcare Worker



Lynn McManus – Residential Childcare Worker

- Gill Angus – Residential Childcare Worker
- Grace Havenga – Residential Childcare Worker
- Julie Croft – Residential Childcare Worker

There are also lots of experienced relief members of staff who may be on shift who are able to help and support you! Most do lots of shifts and will become as regular to you as the permanent members of staff.

The relief staff you will see most often are:

- Bradley Chapman
- Rachel Burton
- Susie Devlin
- Jane Milward
- Claire Nemiloff
- Diane Richardson

## Key Workers

You will be allocated a team of two key workers who will work with you on areas which will be identified in your Care Plan. You can also do your own Care Plan and tell your Key Workers what you want to do and how you want to do it. This is so when you leave, you will be better prepared and more independent.

With your Key Workers, you will:

- Receive help with working through a programme of life skills You will hear us refer to this as GRAL-**G**etting **R**eady for **A**dult **L**ife.
- Be supported with any problems you have in dealing with relationships and problem solving.
- Be supported with your health needs.
- Be supported in developing your education, training or seeking employment.
- Receive help in improving contact and relationships with your family and friends.
- Be encouraged to discuss issues when things aren't going so well
- Celebrate when things are going well.
- Having fun and enjoying yourself!

## Education & Training



Whiteleas Way will do everything they can to make sure you get all of the support and help you need to further develop your education, attend training, find employment and reach your ambitions: We work with lots of providers including colleges and apprenticeship providers, so we will try and find what's best for you! We understand that you

may not know what you want to do, so we can speak to other professionals who can help.

- We will make sure you have all of the things you need for college/training/work (like pens, books, correct clothing etc.)
- We will go to all of your open days
- We will help with any revision/homework
- We will help sort out difficulties/problems you may have
- We will encourage you and celebrate effort and successes

If you're not in education, work or training there is help available from services such as ILAC, The Place, Princes Trust and Connexions (to name only some) who can help you find the right route for you.

- We love to hear about and celebrate your achievements, no matter how big or small - and we will try to do this as a group as often as we can.
- We'll also seek additional educational support from 'The Place' (Project for Looked After Children's Education) if you would like help to you improve / achieve your goals.



## Your Health

We think that your health is really important and we will do everything we can to make sure you are fit and well.

If you need to see a doctor, dentist, optician or sexual health advisor we will support you in making appointments and go with you if you would like us to.

All young people who are looked after are invited to have a health assessment – this is something that is carried out by either a doctor or nurse. It's a good thing to have, but you only have to have it if that's okay with you.



Being healthy is also learning about what's good for you and what's not so good. We have good links with a service called Matrix who can offer help and advice around alcohol or drug use and a Nurse in respect of sexual health; both these services can attend the home or arrange appointments for you at their service.

We can even help you relax if you're feeling stressed or tired by arranging a massage or a facial for you by trained professionals called Holistic Therapists, or by undertaking a yoga session, just let us know.

If you have any worries about your health, don't be frightened to talk to staff about it – we will be happy to listen and see what can be done to sort things out.

Some young people need additional support to help them work through life events and experiences. Support is available from the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) staff will go with you to any appointments made if you want them to. Our staff team work closely with a clinical psychologist and she helps us to care for you in a nurturing and caring approach. We have monthly discussions with her to ensure we are looking after to you in the best way possible. We work in a way to help you recover from any early life experiences which may cause you difficulties in your life. We understand some things you have lived through can effect you as you grow and develop and we want to help with these.

## Identity

We treat everyone as individuals and celebrate differences. This is what makes the world interesting. We are

strong believers in treating everyone as equal. We also understand that for some young people this can be a challenging time when trying to figure out who they are whether this is through their sexuality, race, cultural difference, religion, backgrounds, abilities, appearance or even individual likes such as music, fashion styles, friendship groups (the list can go on).

Difference doesn't matter.  
Understanding does.



If you need any support or to build your networks around things such as your sexuality we are here to help, if you or the team feel you may benefit from other services such as support groups we can point you in the right direction. Sometimes it helps being with people who are on a similar life journey to you.

We know being in care can impact the way young people think of themselves and those around them. It is important for us to help and support you in understanding your past and how this can influence who you are today.

South Tyneside Council offer a life story service using different artists from a company called Blue Cabin. If you are not already known to the service we can help with this. We also see the benefit of life story work and would support you with this alongside this service or with your social worker.

We know that people can have different beliefs which can negatively affect the way people feel about themselves. We would always positively support and challenge negative views and behaviours.

## **Safety**

Whiteleas way has specific policies in place to deal with any child protection issues that may need to be addressed. The team in the home are familiar with the policies and understand what has to be done if there are concerns.

The team are trained to notice signs that might mean a young person may be at risk. They receive regular training and are supervised by managers. Whiteleas Way has a member of staff, who is a Deputy Manager, and she takes lead responsibility for any child protection concerns. This person is called the Designated Child Protection Officer (Julie Wardale).

If you tell a member of staff of any concerns or staff members are concerned about your safety, this member of staff or the manager, (Laura) will inform your social worker and the Local authority designated officer and a meeting will be arranged quickly to talk about it and make arrangements to keep you safe.

There might be other people invited to the meeting such as, teachers, police, parents or other people who might know you. The team at Whiteleas way will support you every step of the way!!

## **Missing from Home**

It's really important that if you want to stay with family or friends for an overnight this will need to be agreed by staff and your social worker.

If you fail to return at the time we are expecting you, and we can't contact you and find out where you are – you will be reported to the Police as being missing.

This is something we have to do - so please, if you're going to be late home, let us know. You can contact Whiteleas Way by phone on 0191 536 3525 or you can text us on 07821 150697.

All of our young people who have been missing will be offered a return home interview, this is an opportunity for you to talk to an independent person who does not work at Whiteleas. The focus of this interview is to ensure you are safe and well and to look at reasons why you were missing to see how they can help and to prevent you becoming missing again.

If you feel that you are not happy at Whiteleas Way for any reason, and feel the need to run away, there are lots of people you can talk to. Any member of staff, not just your key worker, would be happy to listen to you or if you would like to speak to somebody who does not work at Whiteleas way, you can telephone them in private on your mobile, if you have one, or you can ask the staff to contact them for you.

There is a list of useful telephone numbers at the end of this guide. We will always try our best to make your time at Whiteleas Way a safe and happy time.

## **Consultation with Young People**

At Whiteleas Way we think it is very important that you are as involved as much as possible in what happens in your home. When you come to Whiteleas Way, you and your key workers will plan out everything you need to do for the following three months; this is called the residential care plan. You can write your own plan out and you can say everything you would like to do and who you would like to help you.

### **Group meetings**

We meet monthly with all of the young people to discuss all sorts of things that are happening, this might include:

- Plans for activities or outings
- Issues that some people aren't happy with which are causing problems.
- Plans for our home that we want you to help with (like choosing new furniture, décor etc.)
- Discussing the rules of the home.
- Sharing positive experiences and things which are working well so we can do more of it!



Group meetings are generally arranged by the staff but if you would like to have a group meeting, just ask the staff and this will be sorted for you. We would love the young people at Whiteleas Way to arrange the group meetings themselves with the help of staff, but it's up to you.

## Complaints, Compliments and Questions

If you are really happy about something in our home, we really want to hear about it, equally, if you feel unhappy about anything – please talk about it to a member of staff if you can. Most things can be sorted out quickly and easily – remember if we don't know what's troubling you, we can't help.

If you feel you can't talk it through with staff, it's important that you do discuss it with someone. You could try talking it through with a member of your family or social worker.

We do have a formal complaints procedure, which is easy to follow. You will be given some complaints forms when you arrive in your welcome pack and there are always spare ones around the home (so you don't even have to ask staff for one). You can contact the complaints officer on the following address; Customer Services Manager, Children, Adults and Families, South Shields or by ringing 0191 427 1717.

If you do make a formal complaint, the complaints officer will contact you quickly and ask you if you would like an advocate to help you work through the problem. The advocate does not work for us – so is totally independent; they can help you explain what the problem is and what you want done about it.

The advocate works for NYAS, which is the National Youth Advisory Service. They are independent from Whiteleas Way and offer a confidential service, so they will keep what you say private unless you or someone else is in danger. You can contact them by calling **0800 616 101**.

You can also get advice and assistance from the Children's Commissioner for England, by contacting them on: 0800 528 0731, or e-mail [adviceteam@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:adviceteam@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk) or by writing to The office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT.

## Your Plan, Meetings and Important People



Whilst at Whiteleas Way, the staff team have to write down things that you have done during the day and also anything that has been said in your meetings etc. This information is kept in your personal file on the home's computer and is called Daily Recordings. This information is confidential and no other young person will see it. We make sure of this by locking it away in a safe

place or store on the computer database (protected). You can discuss looking at of your files with your Key Worker but you must give them some notice as sometimes we will need to speak with your social worker around this. Some information you will not be able to read which is known as third party information-this can be explained to you further.

The aim of this is to record things that are important in your life from your point of view. This will help you and us be clear about your opinions and wishes and how we care for you whilst you are living here.

### What are “Care Plans”?

Care plans are plans of the care you can expect to receive whilst living here at Whiteleas Way. They will include a plan of actions that will help you enjoy and achieve during your time here at Whiteleas Way.

### Meetings

There will be meetings held with you quite regularly, however we do understand that attending these meetings can make you nervous for young people, but it is really important that you are part of them – after all, it is about you. Your keyworker will attend the meetings with you and if appropriate, your parents will also be invited to attend.



One of the meetings is called a **Review** – this meeting is to make sure your **Plan** is right and you are getting all of the support and help you need.

Before the review, you will be able to share your views, which asks you about how you feel about things.

## **Your Social Worker**

Staff work closely with your Social Worker and you will see them popping in often to join our team meetings as well as visit you and other young people.

Your Social Worker will work with you and your key workers throughout your placement to discuss your future options regarding where you might move on to. They will also continue to support you once you have left Whiteleas.

Whiteleas Way will offer you some support (if you want it) when you have left. Any support you receive from Whiteleas will be included in your Plan when you leave – but even if you don't want any, you can always pop in for a 'cuppa and a chat' or discuss any problems we might be able to help you with.

## **Your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)**

The person in charge of your review is called the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO); they will come and see you before your review takes place to see how you are doing. The IRO will ensure that all your wishes and feelings are taken into consideration in all aspects of your care and ensure that everybody is doing what they said they would, to help you. If you want to, staff will support you to chair your own review, invite the people you would like and set your own agenda, you can even say where you would like your meeting to be held. You can contact your IRO by calling [0191 4545021](tel:01914545021) or by writing to the Children's Standards Unit.

## **Advocacy**

An advocate is someone who can support you in ensuring that you are listened to. It might be about things like:

- Wanting some help in getting something stopped, started or changed.
- Decisions that are being made that you don't like.
- Helping you make a complaint.

NYAS are independent from Whiteleas Way and offer a confidential service, so they will keep what you say private unless you or someone else is in danger. You can contact them free on [0800-616101](tel:0800-616101) for help or advice.

## **Inspections**

All children's homes get inspected twice every year by Ofsted and we never know when they will arrive. The Inspector will check we are taking care of you properly – they will appreciate it if you spend a little bit of time to tell them how you feel you are being looked after.

If you ever want to contact an inspector yourself about something, the contact details are at the back of this guide.

### **Regulation 44 visits**

This is another visitor who comes to Whiteleas Way every month. This person calls each month and checks that things are being done correctly and make sure you are being properly cared for. They will ask you how you feel about things if you're around at the time and they may ask if they can have a look at your room – if that's not okay with you, then they won't go in.



## **Independent Visitors**

At Whiteleas Way, staff will help you get involved with the independent visitor scheme, if you want to. They are a group of volunteers working for Action for Children, who will spend time with you, choose activities and fun days out together, listen and respect you, because they only want what's best for you and to make a positive difference. You can ask staff to help you or contact them yourself on 0191 230 3682.





## Useful Contacts

<b>Whiteleas Way</b>	0191 536 3525/ 07821 150 697
Action for Children	0191 230 3682
<b>ChildLine</b>	0800 11 11
Complaints Officer	0191 424 4679
<b>Connexions</b>	0800 328 1898
CYPS	0191 566 5500
<b>Grapevine</b>	0191 451 6180
ILAC Team	0191 427 2830
<b>Independent Review Officer</b>	0191 454 5021
LADO	0191 424 7430
<b>Local Safeguarding Partnership</b>	0191 454 5021
MESMAC NORTH EAST/SHINE	0191 233 1333
<b>Matrix</b>	0191 497 5637
NSPCC Helpline	0800 800 500
<b>NYAS (advocacy)</b>	0800 616 101
The Virtual School	0191 427 3490
<b>Social Work Teams</b>	0191 427 2830

### **Ofsted (Children's Services Regulator)**

Telephone	0300 123 1231
Website	<a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a>
Email	<a href="mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk">enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk</a>

**You can make notes here of any other contact numbers or questions you would like to ask the team at Whiteleas Way.**

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