



## Information Booklet

*Uncommonly Resourced*



## Welcome

*Thank you for taking the time to look at our information we hope it is useful and informative. We at Common Thread have been busy listening to the needs of the sector and developing the kinds of services you have been asking for.*

*I hope this booklet will give you a clear and concise insight into exactly what Common Thread provides and our unwavering focus upon meeting the needs of young people who are looked after. We further hope if you have any questions or would like to discuss our services more fully that you will contact us and we will make every effort to complete your understanding.*

*As with all things we do the fundamental driving force being, of course, better outcomes for our children.*

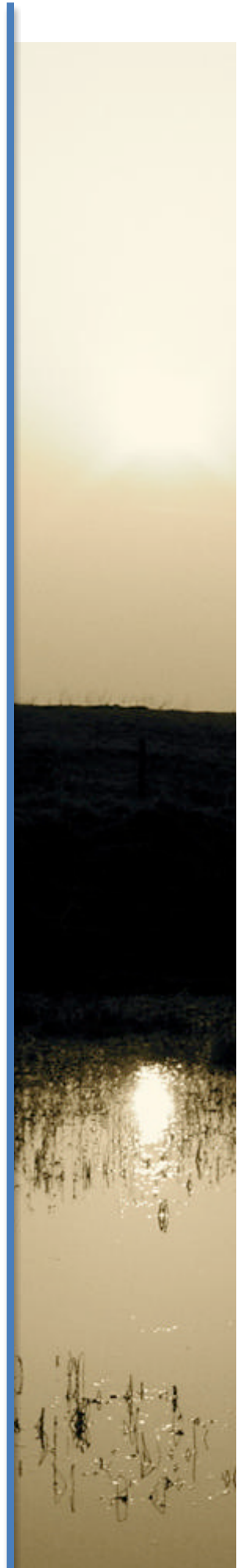


*Derek Bannon*

*- Head of Care Services*

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## Who We Are

Common Thread offers high quality care packages for young people within our services located in Dumfries and Galloway, Stirling and Glasgow. We also offer training to those working with children and consultancy to care organisations.

## Statement of Purpose

At Common Thread our fundamental goal is to provide healing environments for children and young people who have been hurt by trauma, neglect and abuse.



We believe in the positive potential of every child, we seek to offer genuine warmth, acceptance and understanding to those who feel that they are not wanted and who believe that they cannot be helped.

Ultimately our aim is to assist them to leave behind the stories that they carry about themselves which are limiting, restrictive and filled with pain, fear and despair and replace them with new ones filled with hope so that they can dare to live in the present with optimism.

## How we work

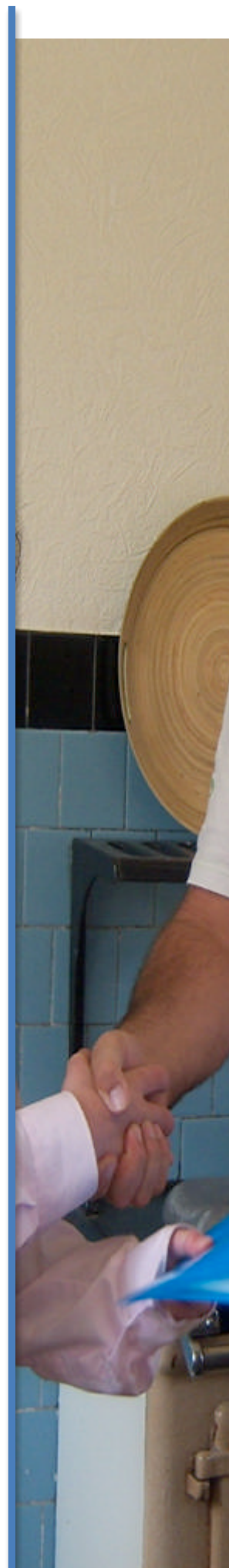
Our primary function is to provide high quality placements for young people aged between 6 and 18, who have experienced significant trauma, neglect and abuse often leaving them with profound attachment difficulties, with the intention of facilitating their recovery from the adverse effects of these experiences.



We make very effort to offer an opportunity to experience a lifestyle, which closely resembles that of other young people living in the community and positive re-parenting from skilled and experienced care staff in an environment that is conducive to the development of emotionally significant relationships.

All our homes are beautifully located in rural or semi rural settings and all are serviced well by local amenities. They have been adapted and modified to suit the needs of the young people, are domestic in style, are decorated and furnished to a high standard.

We have an established reputation for providing high quality residential care to extremely challenging young people.



# Our Services

- Singleton or Alternative to Secure
- Crisis Intervention
- Respite Care
- Medium/Long term accommodation
- Merrick School
- Preparation for Fostering
- Through Care - After Care

## **NLP and why we use it.**

Since Common Threads inception we have been careful to consider not only the needs of the children, but also the very real needs of staff teams working in this challenging field.

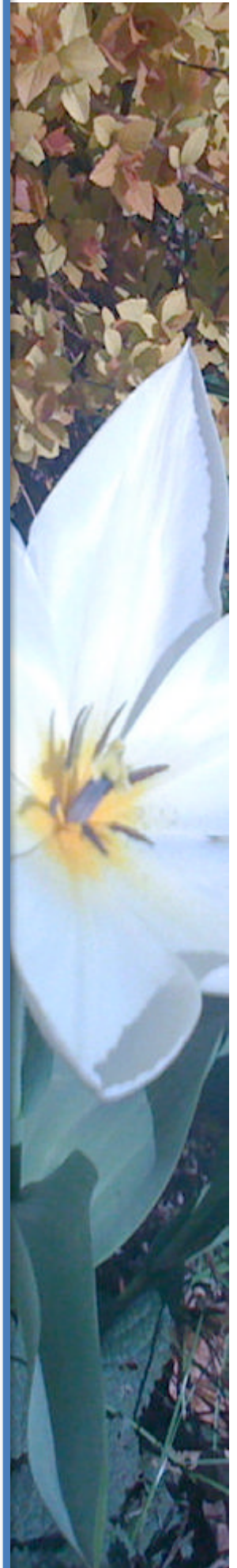
It was to that end we decided NLP would be useful tool enabling team members to increase their own awareness of themselves, manage intense emotional responses and also assist them in gaining perspective on the children they work with.



### **Our aims:**

- to improve relationships both amongst the teams and the young people.
- To create a culture of learning and non-judgemental practice.

Our evaluations and successful outcomes highlight the effectiveness for our teams of this particular practice model.



## The Foundations of our Success

### Julie Joseph BA (Hons), NLP Dip - Managing Director

With a career in childcare beginning in the late 1980's Julie has enjoyed a varied range of care and business experience culminating most recently with the creation of Common Thread in 2004.

Driven by a curiosity about why acceptable outcomes for young people seemed so difficult to achieve and a stubborn determination to challenge limiting beliefs Julie relentlessly asks of her team "Why?"



In Common Thread she has invested in a highly talented team all of who have a passion for residential childcare and all of whom (Directors included) are expected to do the job from time to time. This ensures that our children are at the heart

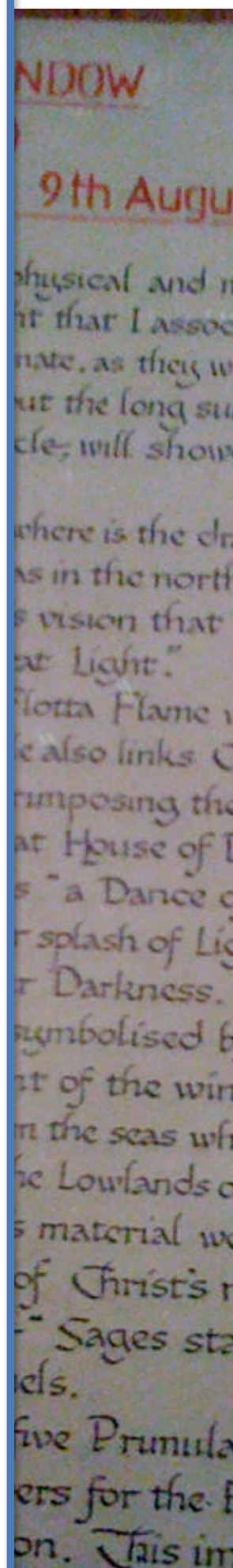
of everyone's role.

Julie has now embarked on her Masters (Dance Movement Psychotherapy) at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh and the Common Thread team, in true Julie fashion are "getting into movement"!

### Derek Bannon - Head of Care Services

Derek brings a wealth of experience to Common Thread, spanning 35 years of public service. He spent over two years in Housing followed by eighteen months in the Careers Service before accepting a post as a Residential Child Care Officer in an Assessment Centre in Glasgow. Derek spent a further seven years in residential child care in a variety of promoted posts moving to social work headquarters, initially in a community development role. His career in social work saw him occupy a number of middle and senior management posts with a range of authority wide operational and strategic responsibilities which included child protection, residential child care, fostering, adoption, through-care and aftercare, community child-minding, school hostels, and looked after children.

Derek retired from local authority social work in 2007 to pursue his interest in training, and joined a small company that had developed online training based on an attachment and trauma model. Derek was a director with this company until its acquisition in November 2009.



Derek joined Common Thread in March 2010 as the Business Development Manager, where he helped develop not only the outward facing elements of the company, but also increased the Care estate, and got involved in strengthening the theoretical framework and practice base of the houses. Derek's continues to deliver an improvement agenda while supporting business development.

**David Pithers BA & MA, SRN, CRCCYP - Care Practice Consultant**

Apart from a few academic appointments David has forty years experience in residential childcare. He was for ten years National Director of Education, Staff Development and Research with National Children's Home now NCH Action for Children. He has published many papers and three books on working with children including, with Sarah Greene, the best selling children's book 'We can say no' (Red Fox Books, 1989). Today his experience supports Common Threads innovative practice as well as leading the "preparation for fostering " work. He is also available as part of our consultation team.

**Care Staff Qualifications**

Over 76% of our practitioners are fully qualified or educated to degree standard. With a further 12% part qualified. We make every effort to attract fully qualified staff. However in the event that we do not we support our practitioners through the statutory process. All our practitioner are CALM restraint trained and First Aid qualified.

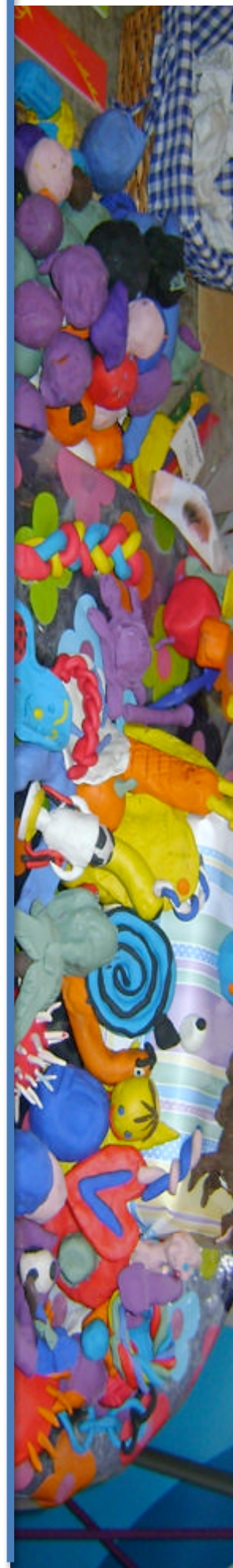
**Scottish Social Services Council Registration.**

All our practitioners are registered with the SSSC.

**Most recent Care Commission Gradings**

Service Details		Quality Grades		Provider Details	Inspection Reports	Enforcements	Complaints
Date	Quality of Care and Support	Quality of Environment	Quality of Staffing	Quality of Management and Leadership			
06 Aug 2008	4 - Good (1)	5 - Very Good (1)	4 - Good (1)	4 - Good (1)			

We are proud of our performance through announced and, more importantly for us, the unannounced inspection regime. In our 'feedback' sessions following inspections we are regularly praised for our child centred approach, our inclusion of the young people in our processes and most importantly the inspector has praised the outcomes our young people have achieved. 100% of the young people in our care are now either in full or part-time education, when they arrived with us 80% were not!



***"If Common Thread had not been vigilant and skilled in their observation and understanding of their children then a serious mental illness may well have gone unnoticed"***

**A Social worker**

***"I recognise that the philosophy of the unit is essentially person centred. (The workers would say child centred.) There appeared to be a strong emphasis on the core conditions of person centred work i.e. empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard. The child is recognised as the person they are, with valid reasons for their behavioural traits. The child is encouraged to embrace change and personal development at a pace that is consistent with their needs and their abilities. The unit strives to offset the emotional deficits in the child in the child and encourage self-realisation as a means of over coming personal inhibitions and difficulties.***

**A Safe Guarder**

**Details Services on Offer**

**Singleton/Close Support/Alternative to Secure**

This service is primarily aimed at young people who are exhibiting very high-risk behaviours and therefore at risk of meeting the criteria for secure accommodation. We are able to provide very high levels of adult support and supervision to young people who present a significant risk to themselves and/or others and who are experiencing real difficulty in regulating their behaviours and keeping themselves safe.

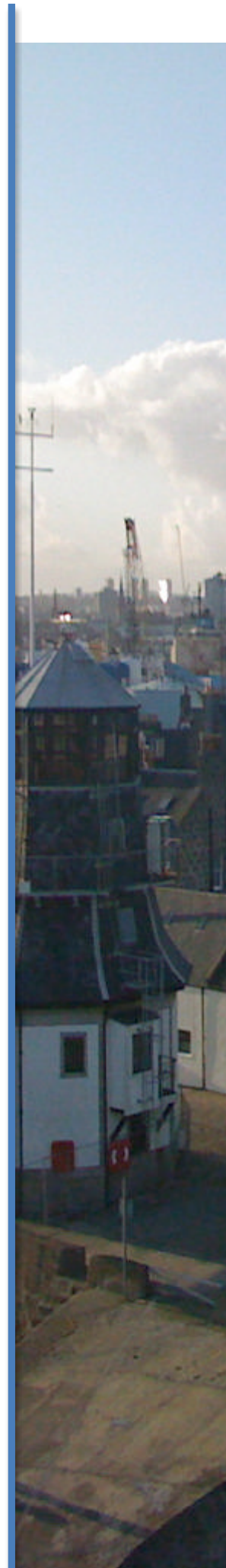


Such young people often benefit from a period, often brief, where they are the sole focus of their carer's attention, where they can experience high levels of intensive emotional support, where they don't have to compete with others to have their emotional needs met and where they are not exposed to many of the risks which they experience difficulty managing.



**Crisis Intervention**

This service provides a rapid response to children and young people whose current care placements have disrupted unexpectedly in order to offer a period of reflection and calm during



which they, their current carers and the placing authority can re-assess their care needs and formulate, where necessary, a new plan to meet their needs more effectively.

During this period we seek to provide high levels of practical and emotional support to the young person with a view to stabilising their behaviour and enabling them to engage in the process of considering what their needs are and how these can best be met.

We facilitate this by offering a low level, non-threatening activities/play/project based programme which enables us to observe and assess the young person through their interactions and relationships with the care team and other young people, which can hopefully inform the care planning process.

## **Respite**

Our respite service offers young people short periods of time away from their current care arrangements within which they may be experiencing some difficulty but to which the plan is for them to return.

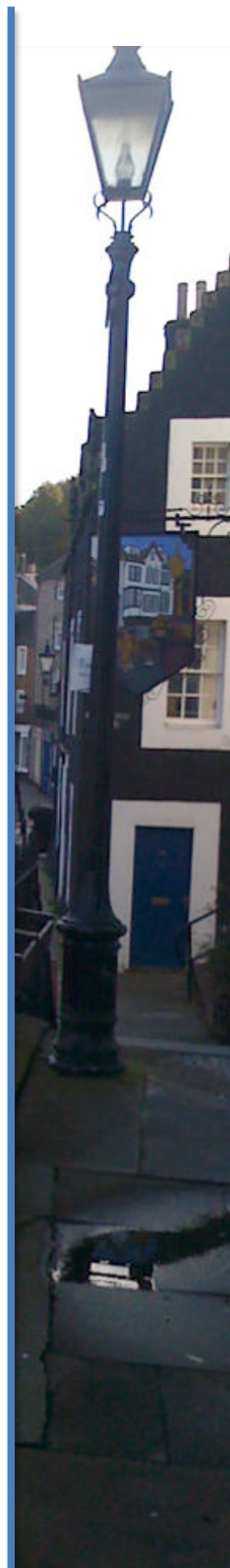


Providing time away from the stresses the young person is experiencing can often be enough to sustain their longer-term care arrangements. Where necessary, more focussed work can be done with the young person and their carers to address some of the difficulties they are experiencing and thus enhance their chances of succeeding.

## **Medium/Long-Term Care**

This service is aimed at children and young people with more profound emotional difficulties, whose assessment indicates that their needs cannot be met within a family placement. Our experience has shown us that the prospect of this again becoming a possibility requires a prolonged period of intensive therapeutic work during which we provide them with experiences intended to help de-construct unhealthy internal working models and replace them with more constructive ones which will enable them to function more positively.

We provide such young people with high levels of commitment, emotional support and nurturance within environments, which are highly conducive to



the development of emotionally significant and trusting relationships with their carers.

For some young people however, residential childcare will continue to be their best option for the remainder of their childhoods. For such young people we are able to offer the stability, security and support they need to prepare them for independence and adulthood.

### **Preparation For Fostering**

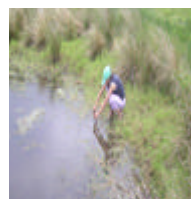
Increasingly we are seeing younger children whose experiences of family life have been such that their needs cannot be met within a family placement being referred to us. Often however such children can be supported back into a family placement within a relatively short period of time.

We are able to formulate individual plans to meet the needs of such children, providing them with the experiences necessary to stabilise their behaviours, begin to allow themselves to be parented and thus once again able to survive within a family environment, continuing to offer support both to the child and their carers once they have moved on.

### **Through-care/After-care**

Many young people placed with us will remain with us for the duration of their childhoods, developing highly significant relationships with our staff. We want to be able prepare these young people as effectively as possible for the challenges they will face in adult life and also be able to continue to meet their needs beyond their time in care and are therefore developing a through-care and after-care service which enables us to do so.

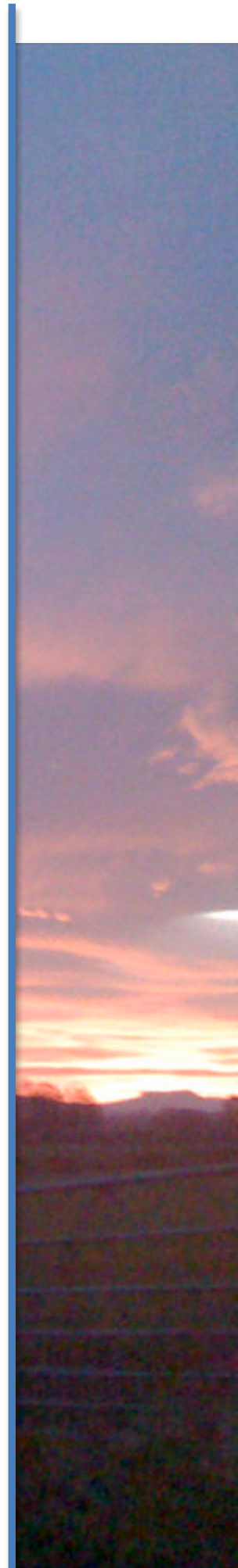
Again we are able to provide bespoke care packages tailored to meet the individual needs of young people, developing the service we provide specifically around those needs.



### **Merrick School**

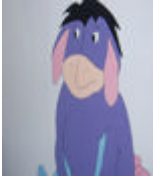
Some of the young people placed with us have experienced prolonged periods of interruption to their education and significant difficulties within mainstream educational settings. All of them however have great potential if provided with the right learning environment and experiences.

As a consequence we are developing our own small, registered school within which we can extend the care experience we provide, i.e. intimate and highly



supportive, to these young people, with a view to enabling them to fulfil that potential and often, for the first time, experience the pleasure of learning and sense of achievement that it brings and, where possible, enable them to re-integrate back into mainstream education.

## **Our Environment**



We know that getting the environment right is an essential component of the work that we do with the young people. To that end huge efforts go into the preparation of our houses and specific attention is placed on young peoples rooms. This we believe helps to provide the right environment within which the therapeutic task can take place.

Considerable effort has been put into ensuring that each house offers a warm, homely, 'uninstitutional' experience to our children and young people, one that enables them to feel valued and a real sense of belonging and ownership.

They have been chosen because we believe they offer the right combination of location, privacy, intimacy and security whilst conveying messages of normality and providing an experience, which closely resembles positive family living.



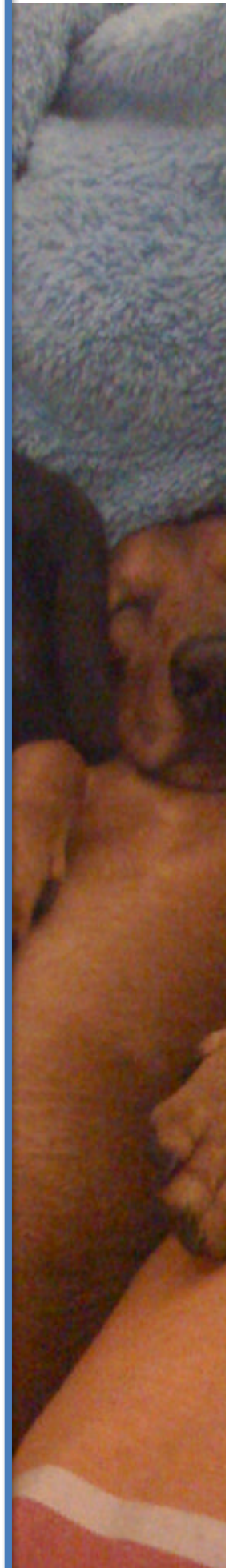
### **Whitcastles Cottage**

Whitcastles is a small, traditional farm cottage in a remote location, a few miles from the town of Lockerbie, which offers young people a real sense of space and the opportunity to reflect on their situation, free from many of the distractions, which inhibit them from doing so. It can accommodate up to two young people on a short-term/close support/respice basis.



### **Woodside Cottage**

Woodside is a larger family home located on the outskirts of Dalbeattie. It is very integrated into the local community and offers up to three places to young people on either a long-term or respice basis.



## Dalveen Farmhouse

Dalveen is a substantial Victorian farmhouse nestled at the foot of the Dalveen Pass a few miles from the village of Thornhill, offering up to four places on a long-term basis. Adjacent to the house is our education facility, Merrick School.

### The Cottage



The Cottage is the most recent addition to Common Threads houses. Another wonderful rural location matching with the healing environments we provide elsewhere.

Despite its thoroughly rural setting this cottage is only 10 minutes from the centre of Lanark which has all the facilities the house might need day to day. It is 15 minutes from the motor way and approximately 30 mins from Hamilton, Motherwell so whilst it feels wonderfully tranquil and undisturbed it is well situated to provide easy access to all the modern amenities.

The Cottage has rooms for two young people. The decor within house has been carefully designed using modern, tasteful furniture the intent to provide a warm and comfortable environment.

### Bogton Farmhouse



Bogton is a large newly renovated farmhouse located close to Kirkintilloch, within easy reach of Glasgow. Again it offers the perfect balance between rural living and access to all of the amenities that are to be found in the city to three young people on a medium to long-term basis.



## Contact Details

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