

CASE STUDY

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Providing Specialised Care and Treatment for 'Looked After Children'

Amicus is an established Social Enterprise running a therapeutic children's home and school offering a specialised care and treatment programme for emotionally damaged children. Currently, it consists of one home, with another home due to be operational early next year. The houses are located on the outskirts of Littlehampton, with Head Offices and consulting rooms in Arundel.

Children admitted to the home are referred from Adult and Children and Young people's Services, throughout the country. They are admitted in accordance with the Children Act (1989) and Care Standards Act 2000 via a rigorous referral procedure.

The present home accommodates three children of either gender between the ages of seven and twelve. The home has staff comprising, Home Manager, Deputy Manager, six Therapeutic Care Workers and two Sessional Therapeutic Care Workers. This staffing structure will be reflected in the second home. A team of external consultants also supports the Amicus staff team, providing professional advice and emotional containment.

The children who are referred to Amicus will have experienced emotional and physical neglect and/or abuse from a very early age. They will have been deprived of an appropriate, consistent adult attachment figure and the corresponding 'containment' essential for healthy emotional and intellectual development.

The children will have found previous education extremely threatening, leading to low educational achievement. This and their disruptive, disturbing, frightening and sometimes withdrawn behaviour will have led to exclusion from mainstream schools.

Currently the children receive their curriculum-based education in an offsite school open by Amicus with a fulltime Primary Teacher. Amicus will also be opening by summer a separate art room adjacent to their offices.

The space that the art room provides will be maximised by the provision of an after-school, Saturday and holiday art club for mainstream primary-aged children during the periods when the school is not in use by Amicus children.