

Hillside Secure Children's Home

Hillside is a Secure Children's Home located in the town of Neath Port Talbot, in Wales. There are 14 Secure Children's Homes that form the Secure Accommodation Network within the UK, Hillside being the only one located in Wales. Within Hillside, there are three homes called Nedd, Afan and Tawe. Hillside is a home for children referred via the Youth Custody Service (YCS) or the Secure Welfare Commissioning Unit (SWCU). Hillside provides a home for children between the ages of 10-18 years old, of either gender.

Hillside SCH adopts a therapeutic approach, in line the Trauma Recovery Model. Alongside this the staff at Hillside work in accordance to the Children's Rights Approach, ensuring the children are given opportunities that they desire. It is ensured that the children have voice and control and their well-being promoted. Hillside works in a multi-agency and co-production manner in order to support the children and provide a high quality of care.

The children have access to a youth council which was created by the children in Hillside. This council is known as 'L.O.V.E'- Let Our Voices Explode. This forum enables the children within Hillside SCH to have a voice, empowering changes and influencing different things to happening within Hillside. A meeting is held every month for all of the children to attend, the children are able to raise the topics of discussion or there is a topic provided for them to discuss. The children are encouraged to take part and to be involved in implementing changes on areas that affect them on a daily basis.



The children also have weekly meetings that take place on the homes that they live on. The meetings are a time for them to discuss positive outcomes from the week and have the opportunity to raise any other thoughts. This meeting can also include discussing any activities they would like to do or if any items need to be purchased for their home, that will contribute to their well-being.

The staff at Hillside SCH are trained in the UNCRC and promote the children's rights. Hillside's ethos is to "Improve the well-being of children and young people" to empower "All of our children and young people to have the best start in life, so they can be the best they can be".

All policies in Hillside highlight the rights of the child and are often discussed through the L.O.V.E Group. The most recent one was the 'Bullying Policy' where the children read through the policy and expressed their views on what they felt should be added into the policy. In addition, processes that effect the children during their time at Hillside are also explored with them first, and their views are always taken into account and are implemented. A recent example of this would be the 'Incentive scheme', which aims to work for the children as individuals, whilst promoting positive behaviours and helping to develop the children's skills, in building and maintain positive relationships.

One child who has lived at Hillside for 2 years takes pride in being one of the L.O.V.E groups longest and main participants. He has been involved in many of the changes that

has taken place and feels that the group has been really beneficial, not just for his time at Hillside, but for his own personal well-being. He stated:

“The L.O.V.E group has allowed me to gain confidence and helped a lot with my self-esteem. I feel valued and my voice is heard when it comes to making changes and I enjoy being involved in decisions that affect me on a daily basis. I really like being part of something and knowing I can help make changes”.