

Local and National Need Statement

Proposed Change of Use: Residential Dwelling (Use Class C3) to Residential Care Home (Use Class C2)

Address: 166 Woodrow Avenue, Hayes, UB4 8QR

Prepared on behalf of: Family First Care Ltd

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Hillingdon

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1.0 Introduction

This statement sets out the clear and evidenced need for small-scale, regulated children's residential care homes within the London Borough of Hillingdon and the wider London region.

The proposed home at 166 Woodrow Avenue will accommodate up to two children aged under 18 with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and aspects of Learning Disabilities. The home will operate under Ofsted registration and in full compliance with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015.

The proposal responds directly to increasing national demand for regulated residential placements and to local authority sufficiency duties under the Children Act 1989.

2.0 National Context

The number of looked-after children in England has steadily increased over the past decade and remains at historically high levels.

National data published by the Department for Education confirms that:

- Over 83,000 children are currently looked after by local authorities in England
- Approximately 10 to 11 percent of looked-after children require residential placements
- Demand for regulated children's homes continues to outpace supply

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care and subsequent Government responses have highlighted a structural shortage of appropriate residential placements, particularly for children presenting with complex emotional or behavioural needs.

The May 2023 Ministerial Statement specifically urged Local Planning Authorities to support and fast-track small, well-managed children's homes in order to address chronic placement shortages.

The proposal at Woodrow Avenue directly aligns with that national direction of travel.

3.0 London and Regional Pressures

London boroughs face particular pressures in securing appropriate residential placements.

Key challenges include:

- Limited in-borough provision
- High land values restricting new development
- Increased complexity of needs among looked-after children
- Growing reliance on out-of-area placements

Children placed outside their home borough are statistically more likely to experience:

- Educational disruption
- Social disconnection
- Increased safeguarding vulnerability
- Breakdown of placements

Small, community-integrated homes such as the proposal at Woodrow Avenue help reduce these risks by providing stable placements within mainstream residential environments.

4.0 Local Need – London Borough of Hillingdon

The London Borough of Hillingdon has ongoing statutory duties under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 to secure sufficient accommodation for looked-after children.

Like many outer London boroughs, Hillingdon faces pressures relating to:

- Availability of in-borough residential placements
- Increasing complexity of need
- Costs associated with independent sector placements
- Use of distant or emergency provision

Children requiring placements for Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties and Learning Disabilities often require smaller, highly structured environments rather than larger institutional settings.

A two-bed home such as this offers:

- Highly individualised care
- Improved placement stability
- Reduced risk of placement breakdown
- A lower-intensity residential footprint within the community

The scale of this proposal is deliberately modest and proportionate to residential surroundings while still addressing identified placement gaps.

5.0 Policy Alignment

The proposal directly supports national and local planning objectives.

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 62 requires planning authorities to assess and meet the needs of different groups in the community, including children in care.

Paragraph 92 promotes inclusive and safe communities.

London Plan

Policy H12 supports specialist housing and community-based care provision.

Hillingdon Local Plan

Policy DMCI 1 supports infrastructure provision required to serve local communities.

The proposed home constitutes essential social infrastructure and is consistent with these policy objectives.

6.0 Scale and Appropriateness

This is not a large institutional facility. It is a two-child home within a semi-detached dwelling, operating in a manner comparable to a small family household.

The modest scale ensures:

- Minimal traffic generation
- No physical intensification of the building
- No external alteration
- No visual distinction from neighbouring dwellings

The proposal represents a balanced and proportionate response to identified need.

7.0 Conclusion

There is a clear and demonstrable need at national, regional and borough level for additional small-scale, regulated children's residential placements.

The proposed home at 166 Woodrow Avenue:

- Supports Hillingdon's sufficiency duty
- Aligns with national policy direction
- Provides specialist care in a community setting
- Operates at a modest and proportionate scale

In planning terms, the identified social need carries significant weight in favour of the proposal.

The development is therefore justified both in policy and in public interest terms.