



PLANNING/ DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Application for the change of use of a dwelling(Use Class C3a) to a children's home for up to three children, with a manager and three carers, two of whom would stay overnight, working on a rota basis (C2).

**61, BOTWELL LANE,
HAYES,
HILLINGDON,
UB3 2AD**

17/04/2026



1. Background

1.1. I am writing on behalf of my client, Lifepaths Care Ltd, which is seeking planning permission to use, 61 Botwell Lane, a dwelling (Use Class C3a), as a small specialist care home for up to three children, who will either have been diagnosed with learning disabilities (LD) and/or emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, (EBD) looked after by up to three carers and a manager, which falls within Use Class C2 of the Use Classes Order.

1.2. The need for the home is set out in the 'Evidence of Need' paper.

This application responds to the Council's identified:

- Sufficiency pressures
- Need for smaller, high-quality homes
- Requirement for trauma-informed care
- Priority for local placements

1.3. The proposal represents an appropriate, necessary and policy-aligned development which will support the Council in fulfilling its statutory duties and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people

1.4. In a ministerial statement from Rachel Maclean (Minister of State, Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities) in May 2023 she stated: *'The planning system should not be a barrier to providing homes for the most vulnerable children in society. When care is the best choice for a child, the care system must provide stable, loving homes close to children's communities. These need to be the right homes, in the right places with access to good schools and community support. It is not acceptable that some children are living far from*



where they would call home (without a clear child protection reason for this), separated from the people they know and love’.

1.5. *Local planning authorities should give due weight to and be supportive of applications, where appropriate, for all types of accommodation for looked after children in their area that reflect local needs and all parties in the development process should work together closely to facilitate the timely delivery of such vital accommodation for children across the country. It is important that prospective applicants talk to local planning authorities about whether their service is needed in that locality, using the location assessment (a regulatory requirement and part of the Ofsted registration process set out in paragraph 15.1 of the Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations) to demonstrate this.*

1.6. Under Section 22G of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a statutory responsibility to take steps, as reasonably practicable, that ensure children in care are provided with accommodation that ‘(a) is within the authority’s area; and (b) meets the needs of those children.’ Three reports were published in 2020 by the Children’s Commissioner: ‘Children who no-one knows what to do with; Private provision in children’s social care’ and ‘Stability index 2020’, which point out the failings of local government to meet this responsibility.

1.7. Under the requirements of Ofsted, such care homes must be run as closely as possible to a typical family household; while accepting staff are employed on a rota basis to provide the parental support to the children so many have missed in their early years. The only



physical requirements specified by Ofsted are security cameras (although not essential and not materially different from a system found in many households), emergency lighting (no external visual distinction from normal lighting) and locks on bedroom doors for the privacy of each child (not a material issue for planning).

2. The Proposal

- 2.1. The home will aim to provide a smooth transition for children who will come to live there through careful planning and consideration. It will primarily serve medium to long-term placements to minimise disruption to residents.
- 2.2. The property is a four-bedroom semi-detached house, with two off-street parking spaces to the rear. The road to the rear has double yellow lines, while on street parking to the front is unrestricted.
- 2.3. It is the company policy to require staff to use public transport (with free bus passes or subsidised taxi fares) or bicycle (with the provision of a secure cycle rack) and not to allow on-street parking. Please note the map of all the bus routes close to the property.
- 2.4. The application is to ensure that the property acquired will meet the necessary planning requirements to achieve Ofsted registration.
- 2.5. There will be no external alterations to the property. The existing room sizes and amenity space standards meet the requirements of Ofsted. Prior to the registration of the home, Ofsted would be the



organisation responsible for ensuring these internal standards have been met.

2.6. In terms of fire regulations for care homes, the only physical requirement is to have fire doors on those leading to the kitchen. The physical appearance of such doors is not materially different from normal doors and has no material impact on the character of the property.

2.7. Three children (aged 7-17) would live at the house, supported in the day by a manager (9 am until 5 pm or until required), daily carer (8.30 am to 8.30pm) plus two of the carers working on a rota basis, staying overnight.

2.8. The two overnight carers would work for 48 hours, sleeping overnight, with a manager attending each weekday (8:30 am until 6:30 pm, or until required) and a daily carer. The overnight carers would operate on a 48-hour shift pattern, followed by 72 hours off. Except at changeover times, which last around fifteen to thirty minutes, there will be no more than four staff (a manager and three carers) on the premises at any one time. The changeover of one of the overnight care staff members occurs every 48 hours, usually around 8.30 am.

2.9. If a child with a higher level of need is allocated to the home, it is sometimes necessary for an overnight carer to stay awake. In these circumstances, one of the two overnight carers would arrive around 8:30 pm and work until 8:30 am, when a daytime carer would replace them. The maximum number of staff in the home would remain at two overnight and three in the daytime.



- 2.10. These comings and goings are set out in the table below.
- 2.11. The purpose of the home would be to support the child in building their confidence, help them develop life skills and prepare them for adult life outside of care provision. This type of support has been found to be most effective in helping these children lead normal lives and avoid problems in later life.
- 2.12. During the day it is expected that the child would engage in various activities, plus attend a mainstream or special school. In some cases, the child may receive some home schooling or via virtual school but only while he/she settles in. Clearly, this is no different from a family choosing to have home tutoring.
- 2.13. With regard to schooling, it is often the case that when young people come into care, they have missed an extensive proportion of their education or are affected in a way that they could not work effectively in a large classroom environment. Given this, they would be tutored from home initially. This is all achieved online without any tutors having to go to the house. They may then progress to a specialist unit (smaller class sizes) then onto mainstream. In cases where parents of children in an ordinary family choose to have their children educated at home, it makes no difference to the planning status of the use.
- 2.14. The children's home model is to create a warm and nurturing family style environment for the medium to long-term care of a small number of children. This type of provision is operated in the same



manner as a regular family home with two primary carers, to provide consistency and stability to the children who live there (similar to a fostering model).

2.15. Care is provided in small sized family units where residential carers help to develop the social and life skills needed when the children no longer live within an institution. Without such homes and positive interventions, these children, when they leave the controlled environment of care homes, will often end up in adult institutions, suffering from long term health and mental problems.

3. Planning Assessment

3.1. The planning policy framework is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), the London Plan (2011), the Hillingdon Local Plan, Strategic Policies (2012) and Development Management Policies (2020).

NPPF

3.2. The relevant sections of the NPPF are as follows:

Paragraph 2 of the NPPF is highly relevant, as it states that planning permission applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 61 makes clear that in order to *'support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes..... the needs of*



groups with specific housing requirements are addressed'. Paragraph 63 makes particular mention of the needs of looked-after children.

Paragraph 62 makes clear how housing need in an area should be assessed and understood, and paragraph 63 advocates that planning policies should reflect the housing needs for different groups in the community.

3.3. Recent Government advice emphasises the provision set out in Paragraph 63 of the NPPF, which notes that local planning authorities should assess the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community and reflects this in planning policies and decisions. Paragraph 63 states: *'These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing (including Social Rent); families with children; looked after children.'* Evidence of need for looked after children can be found in the relevant local authority's Children's Social Care Sufficiency Strategy.

3.4. In a ministerial statement the then Housing and Planning Minister said councils *should consider whether it is appropriate to include accommodation for children in need of social services as part of the NPPF assessment*'. She went on to say that *'Local planning authorities should give due weight to and be supportive of applications, where appropriate, for all types of accommodation for looked after children in their area that reflect local needs and all parties in the development process should work together closely to facilitate the timely delivery of such vital accommodation for children across the country'*.



3.5. Paragraph 116 is specifically relevant, *'Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios'*.

3.6. Section 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities emphasises the need to make appropriate provision for the special needs of young people.

3.7. In terms of the London Plan, the relevant policies are policies: H9 (Ensuring the best use of stock), D6 (Housing quality and standards), D11 (Safety, security and resilience to emergency), T5 (Cycling), T6 (Car parking), T6.1 (Residential parking), S1 (Developing London's social infrastructure), S2 (S2 Health and social care facilities).

Hillingdon Local Plan

Principle of Use

3.8. This form of children's home is located within established residential areas, where the young people learn to integrate into society, ready for the time when they leave to hopefully lead rewarding independent lives.

3.9. Policy H12, the London Plan supports the delivery, retention and refurbishment of supported and specialised housing which meets an



identified need should be supported. The form this takes will vary, and it should be designed to satisfy the requirements of the specific use or group it is intended for.

3.10. The provision of appropriate housing to meet the specialist needs of local people will be supported where it can be robustly demonstrated that:

i. There is an identified need within the borough.

This is set out in the 'Evidence of Need' paper.

ii. The site has access to essential services and shops by walking and cycling.

In terms of the sustainability of the location, the nearest shops/services would be approximately 10 minutes' walk from the property which is not considered to be unacceptable.

iii. The site is well served by public transport

The location of nearby bus stops and bus routes are shown

iv. The proposal contributes to a mixed, balanced and inclusive community

The proposals would, by nature of the use sought, contribute to mixed, balanced and inclusive community 6(iv).

v. The site is suitable for the intended occupiers in terms of the standard of facilities, the level of independence, and the provision of support and/or care.



OFSTED is the regulatory body which must approve the property as being suitable for accommodating the young people. The activity which will take place will be similar to that of a normal family, hence is acceptable in this family dwelling.

- vi. *An appropriate level of amenity space is provided to meet the needs of the intended occupants taking account of the need for an attractive outlook.*

The property has adequate internal amenity space and a large rear garden.

- vii. *Consideration has been given to all possible future needs and the development can be easily adapted to meet the needs of future occupants.*

The property will be registered by OFSTED to accommodate a specific number of children and carers.

- viii. *The proposal does not have any adverse impacts on the surrounding area and will not be likely to give rise to significantly greater levels of noise and disturbance to occupiers of nearby residential properties.*

The children will receive a high level of care and support, more than would be expected in a normal family environment, mitigating any prospect of noise nuisance. A Good Neighbour Policy and complaints procedure will be in place in the unlikely event of a problem.



- ix. *The proposal meets the parking requirements set out in Policy 24 and it will not have an unacceptable impact on parking conditions and traffic congestion in the area.*
- x. Only the manager is likely to bring a car to the site, with care staff given the incentive to use public transport, taxis or bicycles to get to work. Due to the nature of the young people, all visitors, both professional and family and friends, are carefully managed in advance, to avoid being present at the same time. The car parking in the area is certainly not near the threshold in NPPF Paragraph 116.
- xi. *Adequate provision for visitor and carer parking facilities is provided and where appropriate, provision is made for the safe and convenient storage of wheelchairs and mobility scooters.*
- xii. Adequate parking facilities are available in the area to meet the anticipated need. Children with physical disabilities would not be allocated to this home.

Location of Specialist Housing

3.11. Ofsted will require a local risk assessment before approving the property as a care home (attached). Planning is therefore not the only form of regulation which controls the suitability of the location. A basic principle in assessing a planning application is whether there is other legislation which is more appropriate to regulate the



proposed development. In the case of children's care homes, the relevant powers are set out in:

Care Standards Act 2000

The Care Standards Act 2000 (Registration)(England) Regulations 2010

The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015

Children's Homes and Looked after Children (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2013

Housing Balance and Loss of a Dwelling

3.12. Policy seeks to protect the borough's housing supply. However, the assessment of proposals involving specialist residential accommodation requires consideration of whether the use would result in a harmful loss of housing in planning terms.

3.13. In this case, the proposal retains a residential function and character, providing a home environment for children and operating at a scale and intensity comparable to a family household. No external alterations or institutional features are proposed and the day-to-day operation of the use is controlled through defined occupancy limits, staffing arrangements and management procedures

3.14. Where a proposal is supported by evidence of local need and continues to function as a residential use, the planning balance does not rest solely on the numerical change from C3 to C2. Instead, it turns on whether the proposal delivers a justified social infrastructure benefit without causing harm to residential amenity or



the area's character. In this instance, the identified need for use provides clear justification, and the property's residential role is maintained.

- 3.15. As recognised in recent appeal decisions, a change of use to a small-scale C2 children's home does not necessarily equate to a harmful loss of housing where the property continues to operate as a residential unit and where the use remains domestic in character. In this respect, the proposal is materially different from schemes refused on the basis of where no local need was demonstrated, and where refusal was therefore justified by reference to the loss of a residential dwelling. In this case, the identified need for small scale children's residential care provision provides clear justification for the proposed use, and the housing balance must be assessed accordingly.

Neighbouring Amenity

3.16. Policy seeks to protect the borough's housing supply. However, the assessment of proposals involving specialist residential accommodation requires consideration of whether the use would result in a harmful loss of housing in planning terms.

- Policy D13 of the London Plan (2021) states - C) New noise and other nuisance-generating measures to mitigate and manage any noise impacts for neighbouring residents and businesses.
- Policy DMHB 11 of the Hillingdon Local Plan: Part Two - Development Management Policies (2020) seeks to ensure that development proposals do not adversely impact on the amenity, daylight and sunlight of adjacent properties and open space



- 3.17. There is no evidence to suggest that this form of care home, with highly supervised children, would result in more noise than the current dwelling.
- 3.18. Vehicular movements and access frequency resulting from increased activity in and around the site, particularly during unsociable hours, can be disruptive to the residential setting and affect residential amenity. On this basis, proposals for children's homes will only be supported where there is no impact on the living conditions of existing residents.
- 3.19. Comings and goings, and visits by friends, family and tradespersons are commonplace in residential settings. There is no control over how often or when these activities take place in a typical residential dwelling. However, the potential intensification of such activities on a regular and daily basis, to a point that it would be out of character with the residential area, requires consideration.
- 3.20. The comings and goings would also not have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbours.
- 3.21. Day-to-day activities in the home will mirror those of a typical large family. Staff shift changes, school runs, and visitors will all follow a schedule similar to that of a family with young children. Additionally, evidence from other similar care homes suggests that the level of comings and goings will not differ materially from that of a typical household.



- 3.22. As stated in 2.13 above, if a child with a higher level of need is allocated to the home, it is sometimes necessary for an overnight carer to stay awake. In these circumstances, one of the two overnight carers would arrive around 8:30 pm and work until 8:30 am, when a daytime carer would replace them. The maximum number of staff in the home would remain at two overnight and three in the daytime.
- 3.23. A typical week at the home will include regular school runs, staff changes, and occasional social worker visits. These activities will follow a predictable schedule, and all efforts will be made to minimize traffic and disruption to the surrounding area.
- 3.24. The comings and goings, whether by car or other means, are similar to a typical family dwelling. The home manager would arrive each weekday in the morning and leave each evening (9am and 5pm). In terms of the other staff on the premises, the care staff would work on 48-hour shifts with only one of the two staff changing each day around 8.30 am.
- 3.25. An elderly person or someone with special needs living in a dwelling with four carers arriving throughout the day does not have a material impact on the amenity of neighbours, hence nor would the proposed movements.
- 3.26. The nature of the area is also relevant, with comings and goings in a busy area having less impact than in a quiet residential area.



3.27. In addition to Ofsted's one visit per year, there will be visits by local social services circa every four to six weeks and one Regulation 44 each month. Usually, each child's social worker would visit them individually but if they are from the same local authority one of the social workers may visit both children. This means these visits are quite rare and with one or two inspectors visiting the property each month, this is not going to have a material impact on the character of the property.

3.28. Depending on the needs of the individual children, there may be occasional visits by other professionals. In addition, there may be visits by family members and friends, although these are carefully managed in advance or the home will facilitate family contact outside the home, subject to child's individual care plan. These visits are no more frequent than those to a typical family by friends or relatives. They are quantified in schedule 2 below.

3.29. An estimate of the average number of comings and goings in a week of the existing and proposed use are set out below.

3.30. All household chores such as cleaning, cooking and gardening involve the children and no additional staff are employed at the premises.

Schedule 1 (estimated comings and goings from the current use)

Activity	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Journeys to work , e		4	4	4	4	4	



School run		4	4	4	4	4	
Shopping/ Social/recreational outings	2				2		2
Other visitors	4			2		2	4
Total Movements (in and out)	6	8	8	10	10	10	6

Schedule of Proposed Use (based upon experience of other similar homes)

Activity	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Home Manager / daily carer	2	4	4	4	4	4	2
Care workers starting and finishing shift	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
School run		4	4	4	4	4	
Shopping/ Social/recreational outings	2						4
Visitors (inspections/ social workers/ family and friends)	2			2			2
Total Movements (in and out)	8	10	10	12	10	10	10

3.31. The above schedule shows that the comings and goings would be similar to the current use.

3.32. It is not considered that the proposed use would have an adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents and would accord with Local Plan Policy.

Parking considerations



3.33. Policy T2 of the London Plan (2021) states that development proposals and Development Plans should deliver patterns of land use that facilitate residents making shorter, regular trips by walking or cycling.

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3.34. The Council's parking standards for residential institutions require one space per three employees. With a maximum of four staff on site at any one time, the two spaces satisfy the requirement.

3.35. A secure bicycle rack will also be provided for staff.

Impact of the presence of staff

3.36. Visually, the property would look no different to the adjacent houses. During the day, there would normally be only three members of staff present at any one time, but this would have no impact on the residential amenity of neighbours, or the character of the area.

3.37. In an appeal in Stockport (Appeal Ref. 2162636) an Inspector noted that although the building would be fitted with an office [and fire alarm], this was not uncommon in many dwelling houses around the country and would not materially alter its basic character as a dwelling house. There are no major modifications required to this property.

3.38. A similar conclusion is drawn in the Dale Road Appeal (Appeal ref. 3263178) : *'The number of these movements is unlikely to be*



significantly more than the number that would be undertaken by a family and certainly not enough to result in a level of intensification in the use of the site that gives rise to concerns from a planning point of view. There is insufficient evidence before me to show that the use would be likely to result in greater levels of noise and disturbance than the existing authorised residential use.'

3.39. Appeal (Ref. 32993519) also provides a useful assessment of a similar care home. In paragraph 12 it states: *'Whilst there will be some additional comings and goings associated with the use as a residential care home, there is no evidence before me to dispute the appellant's case that the use will not give rise to a greater level of disturbance than could be generated by the lawful use as a C3 dwellinghouse. The additional comings and goings identified by the appellant and Council are at a sufficiently low level so as to remain within the parameters of what could be usually expected of a family home and not therefore materially different so as to change the character of the property. Similarly, the number of people who will be typically present at the property, and therefore the associated waste generated, is not significantly higher than could be expected with its current lawful use'*.

3.40. On this basis it is maintained that the proposed use as detailed in this supporting statement would not be materially different from a typical household. This is also supported by the Egerton Appeal (Appeal Ref.3161037) where the Inspector concluded a similar use would not result in significantly more movements to give rise to planning concerns.

Fear of Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour



- 3.41. The fear of crime and anti-social behaviour is a material planning consideration which might weigh against the granting of planning permission. Any concerns that disturbance from anti-social behaviour would be more likely as an impact of the proposed use are not supported evidentially. Moreover, the operation and provision of care services and supervision of occupation would be regulated and controlled in compliance with OFSTED³ standards. As such, there is no reason to consider that off-site impacts with regard to this matter would be significantly different in the local area compared to currently.
- 3.42. The children who will live at the home will undergo a thorough impact risk assessment conducted by multidisciplinary teams before admission to ensure they are well-suited to this environment. Professional carers, trained in managing emotional and behavioural needs, will provide 24-hour care and support. These measures will minimise the likelihood of any disturbance to neighbours.
- 3.43. A management plan could also be secured and implemented by a planning condition. Amongst other matters this could include, for example, how any problems affecting neighbours would be recorded and managed, contact phone numbers for neighbours to report incidents, and other measures and safeguards to deal with any identified persistent problems.
- 3.44. The nature of the children is not therefore material to the determination of this application. In addition, the level of professional care would also act to minimise any likely disturbance.



3.45. The task must be to compare against that 'baseline' the character of the current land use with what is now proposed. In so many respects the use would operate in a way that is very similar to a normal family home. The property would provide the young person with their sole and main residence, with free and shared access to living, dining, and kitchen facilities, and the ability to take shared meals prepared for them or make their own food or drink.

3.46. The young person would interact with the property in a way that is very similar to an adult resident, parent or guardian. The young person and staff would eat together and carry out domestic chores. The home aims to create a lifestyle similar to that of a typical family home. In fact, it is the main role of a Children's home to ensure it provides a place for young individuals that is as close as possible to a normal family home.

Community Engagement

3.47. The applicant recognises the importance of integrating the proposed children's home into the local community and will actively engage with neighbours through an information session prior to opening. Additionally, a point of contact will be provided for local residents to raise any concerns directly with the management of the home.

4. Conclusion

4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) encourages the delivery of specialist accommodation, including children's homes



(Use Class C2), where such provision meets an identified need and supports mixed and inclusive communities. London Plan Policies GG3, GG4 and H12, together with Hillingdon Local Plan Policies DMH1 and DMH8, all support the principle of specialist housing where the proposal demonstrably responds to an evidenced requirement and where the loss of existing C3 housing is justified in the wider public interest.

4.2. It is maintained that the proposal meets all the required policy standards and hence the application should be supported to meet a clearly identified need.

4.3. Furthermore, it is maintained that there would be no material difference in planning terms from the current use as a dwelling. The carers, working on a rota basis, would effectively live at the dwelling house to provide 24-hour care, as a single household. Facilities such as the bathroom/wc, kitchen and living rooms would be shared and the living mode would be communal. The comings and goings associated with the use would not be materially different from a typical residential household.

4.4. The proposed use is to provide a stable home environment for the occupant as their main and sole residence and that the length of stay is more than temporary or passing. It would not be a 'halfway' house or provide overnight emergency lodgings for example. However, in any event, the courts have provided some assistance in determining the significance of there being a commercial factor to a residential use or an arrangement where the occupants have generally only a limited period of stay.



4.5. Following *Gravesham BC v Secretary of State for the Environment* [1982], the court accepted that the distinctive characteristic of a dwelling house was its ability to afford to those who used it the facilities required for day-day private domestic existence. It did not lose that characteristic if it was occupied for only part of the year, or at infrequent intervals, or by a series of different persons or if it was under commercial management.

4.6. Comings and goings would be significantly less than could occur at present, hence there would be no undue disturbance to any neighbours. The local authority is therefore respectfully requested to support the application to establish this much-needed facility.