

93 Turpin Avenue
Romford, RM5 2LU

Design & Access Statement

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Chandran Hughes Architects Ltd on behalf of New Option Support in support of a planning application for the change of use of the existing dwellinghouse at 93 Turpin Avenue, Romford, RM5 2LU, from Use Class C3(a) to a children's home (Use Class C2), accommodating a maximum of three children with learning disabilities.

The home will provide a safe, supportive and domestic environment, staffed by appropriately qualified carers on a 24-hour shift basis to ensure continuous care and supervision tailored to each child's individual needs.

The proposal involves the relocation of the Applicant's existing children's home from 145 Turpin Avenue, Romford (Planning Refs: P0094.25 and P1009.25) to 93 Turpin Avenue. The existing children's home at No. 145 will cease operating once this new children's home is registered with Ofsted and operational. The proposal therefore represents a relocation of an existing operation, rather than the introduction of an additional children's home within the locality.

This statement should be read alongside the submitted architectural drawings and supporting documents accompanying the planning application.



Location of site

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2.0 SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 SITE LOCATION

The proposal seeks to provide a household environment to accommodate up to 3 children aged 10-17.

The existing property is a 6-bedroom 3 storey terraced dwelling, 0.3 miles away (a 7-minute walk) from the nearest Bus Stop on Lodge Lane.

The Site:
93 Turpin Avenue, Romford, RM5 2LU

Site Area:	165.2 sqm
Ward:	Havering-atte-Bower
Local Authority:	Havering
Constituency:	Romford
County:	Greater London

The site is not located in or near a Conservation Area.

Key

Site Boundary



Aerial map showing boundary line

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2.2 EXISTING SITE

The Existing Property

The existing property is a 3 storey, 6 bedroom terraced house with a front drive and rear garden.

Planning History

P1868.23
Conversion of integral garage to habitable use, front and rear ground floor infill extensions and installation of a ground floor front casement window.
Approved with cons. - February 2024

P0769.24
Change of use from dwelling house (Class C3) to 6 bedroom Homes in Multiple Occupation HMO (Use class C4)
Refused - July 2024

Site Location

The site is accessed from Lodge Lane from the west and Carter Drive from the east, for both pedestrians and vehicles. The surrounding road network provides convenient connections to the wider local area and nearby transport links.

The property's location, together with its proximity to public transport, healthcare facilities, local shops, parks, and other community services, makes it well suited for a home for children.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore considered to have a low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea. The risk of surface water flooding is high.

Transport Links

Bus Stops:

Stapleford Gardens (S)
Frinton Road (RM5) (N)
Portmore Gardens (S)
Frinton Road (RM5) (S)
Portmore Gardens (N)
White Hart Lane (RM7) (E)

Rail Stations:
Romford Station: 12-minute drive (3.2 miles)

Healthcare

The property is in close proximity to healthcare, being a 12-minute drive (3.2 miles) to Victoria Hospital, and Queen's Hospital (2.4 miles) nearby.

Amenity

The property benefits from nearby recreation spaces, including Collier Row Recreation Ground (0.4 miles away), and Lawns Park Summer Meadow (0.9 miles away).



View of front of property

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2.3 SITE AERIAL VIEWS







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3.0 THE PROPOSAL

3.1 PRINCIPLES & OBJECTIVES

The Applicant's Ethos

"At New Option Support, we are a team of professionals with years of experience in taking care of individuals with autism, learning disabilities and mental health issues. With our special care and services, we help people perform their day-to-day activities with minimum inconvenience.

Our aim is to create a comfortable and friendly environment for autistic people and those with learning disabilities where they can utilise their potential, make their own decisions and live independently. Our aim is to provide them with a quality lifestyle that promotes positivity and happiness."

Our Values, Aims & Objectives

The rpoposed Children's Home is committed to providing high-quality, individualised care within a safe, stable and nurturing home environment. The overarching aim is to support each child to reach their full potential, develop the skills and confidence needed for adulthood, and progress towards independent living. Recognising that children may have experienced trauma, disrupted development and multiple placement moves, the service places particular importance on continuity of care, consistent routines, supportive relationships and clear, appropriate boundaries.

The home adopts a trauma-informed approach, recognising the impact that past experiences can have on children's emotional well-being, behaviour and development. Its ethos centres on nurturing relationships, promoting trust and avoiding practices that may re-traumatise children. Positive Behaviour Support is used to encourage learning, emotional regulation and the development of positive relationships, with specialist input provided where required.

The home aims to promote positive outcomes for every child, including healthy relationships, emotional resilience, physical health, a positive sense of identity and self-worth, educational achievement, personal safety, and the development of self-care and independent living skills. Children's voices, wishes and individual needs are central to the care-planning process, ensuring that each child is listened to and supported in a way that reflects their circumstances and aspirations.

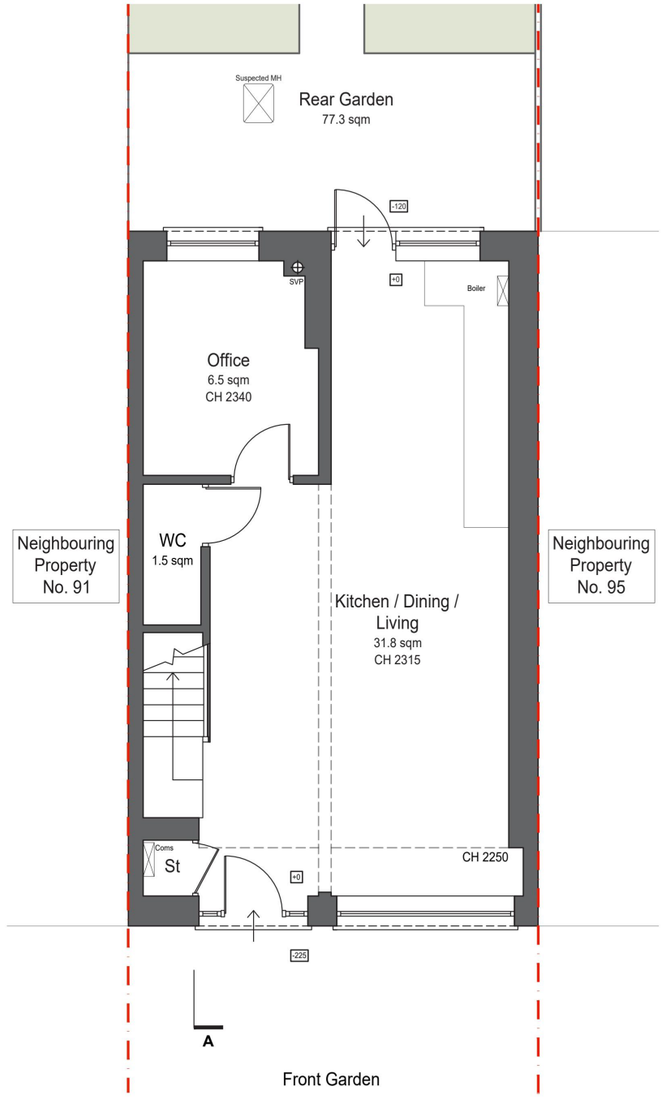
These principles inform the design and operation of the home. The physical environment should support a sense of safety, stability and belonging, providing a comfortable and domestic setting that promotes well-being, privacy, positive relationships and the development of independence. The design should contribute to a home that feels welcoming and non-institutional, enabling children to feel secure, valued and supported in their day-to-day lives.

Refer to Statement of Purpose submitted as part of this Planning Application for further details.

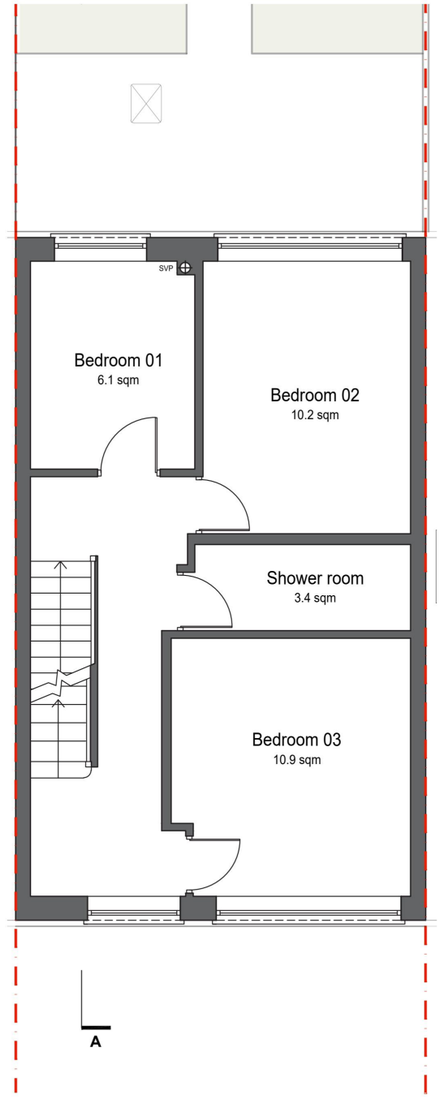
NEW OPTION SUPPORT

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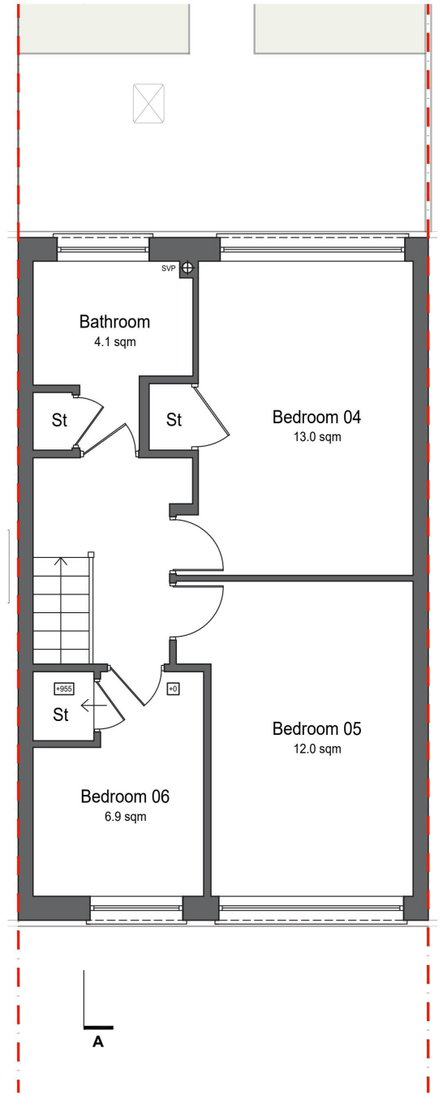
3.2 EXISTING DESIGN



Existing Ground Floor Plan



Existing First Floor Plan



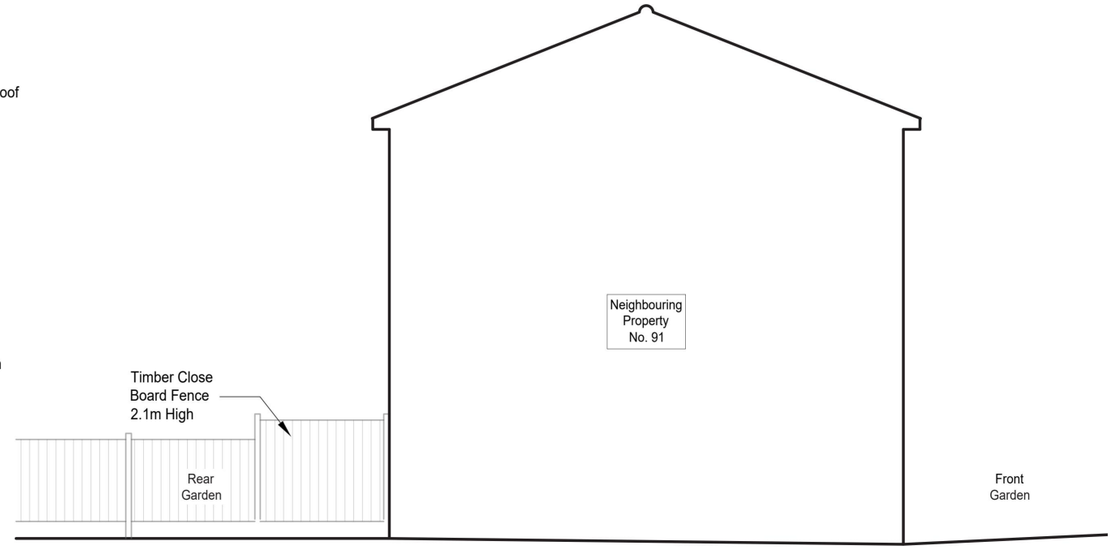
Existing Second Floor Plan

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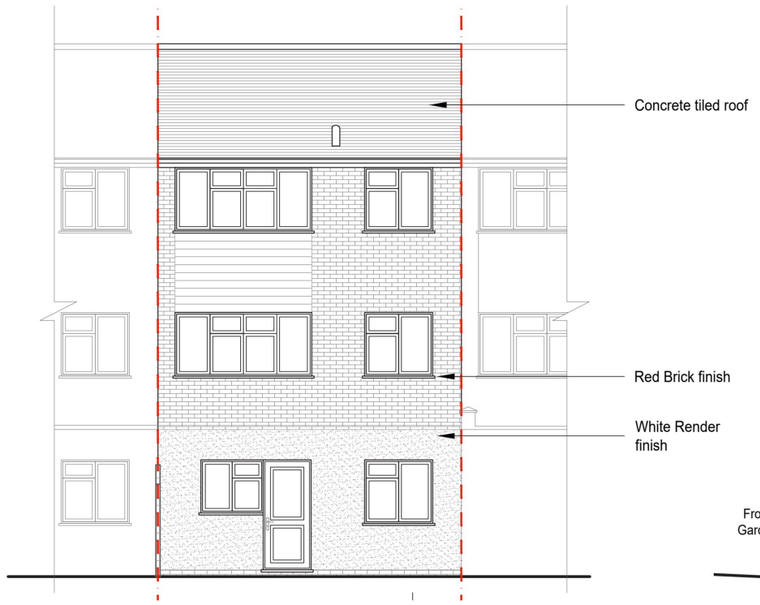
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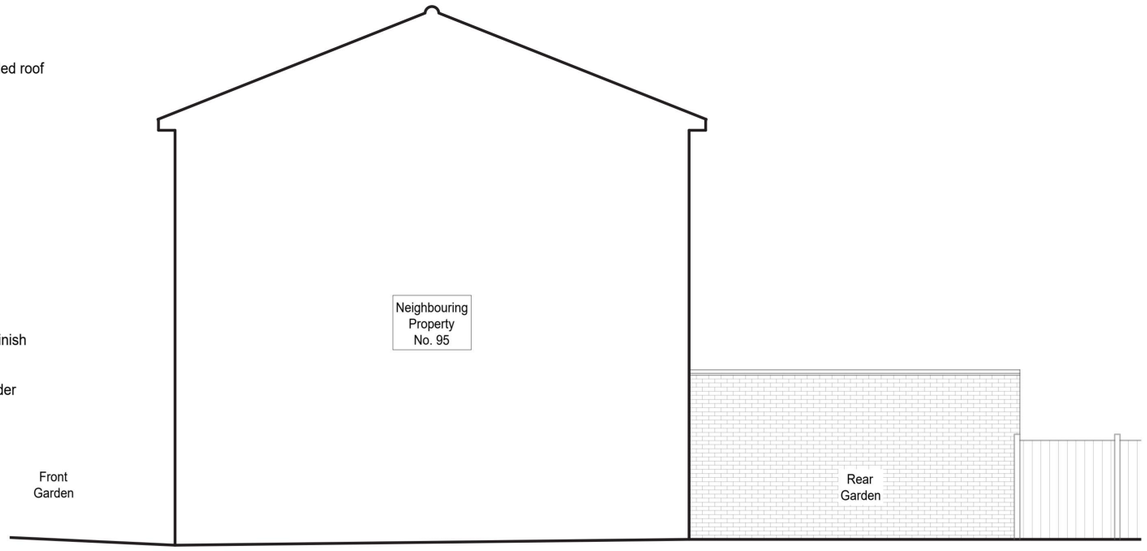
Existing Front Elevation



Existing Side Elevation



Existing Rear Elevation



Existing Side Elevation

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3.3 PROPOSED DESIGN

No significant external alterations to the property are proposed. The proposed works primarily involve internal reconfiguration to improve the functionality, circulation and overall quality of the accommodation, whilst addressing relevant Building Regulations requirements, particularly in relation to fire safety and means of escape.

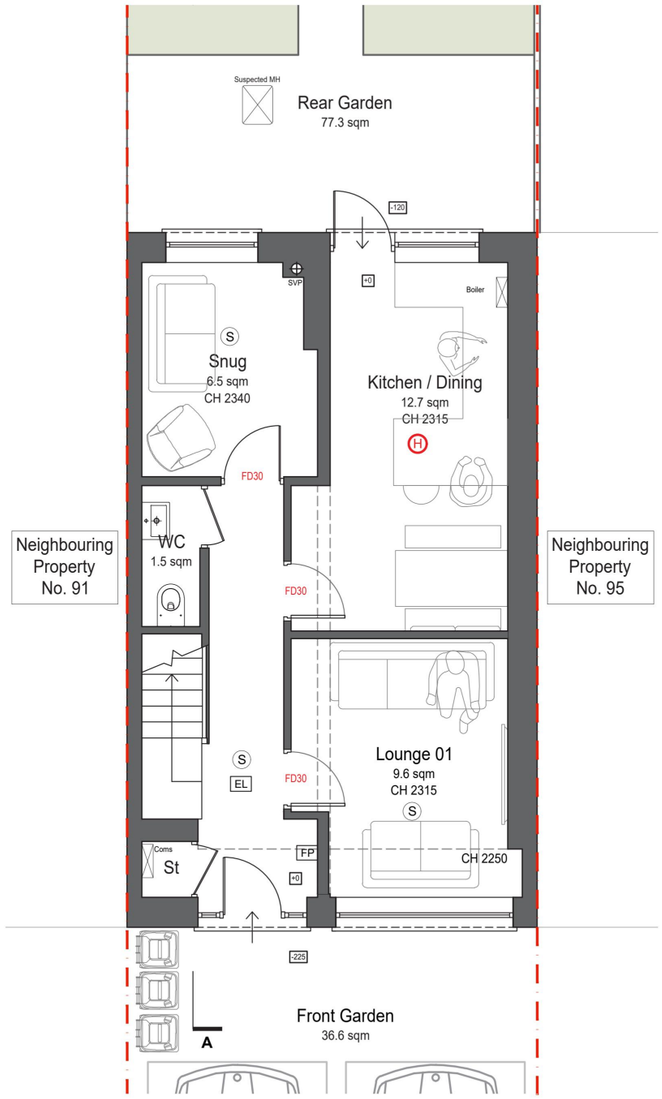
The existing open-plan ground floor will be reconfigured to incorporate a protected staircase, providing a safer means of escape in the event of a fire. Two separate reception rooms are proposed, comprising a lounge to the front and a snug to the rear, offering children and staff a choice of communal spaces for relaxation and social interaction. Separate access to the kitchen and dining area will also be provided, improving circulation and the functionality of the communal accommodation.

The first-floor layout will remain largely unchanged, with the smaller rear bedroom repurposed as a dedicated staff workspace to support the day-to-day operation of the home.

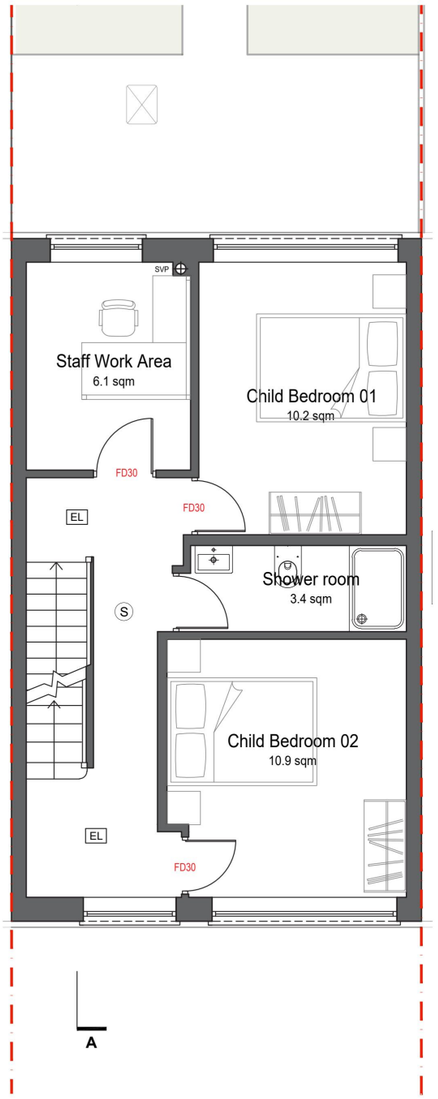
At second-floor level, the front bedroom will be enlarged to achieve the minimum single-bedroom floor area of 7.5m², providing suitable accommodation for sleep-in staff. The front bedroom will be repurposed as a dedicated space for games and play.

The remaining three bedrooms will accommodate the three children, ensuring each child has their own private bedroom alongside access to the shared communal facilities.

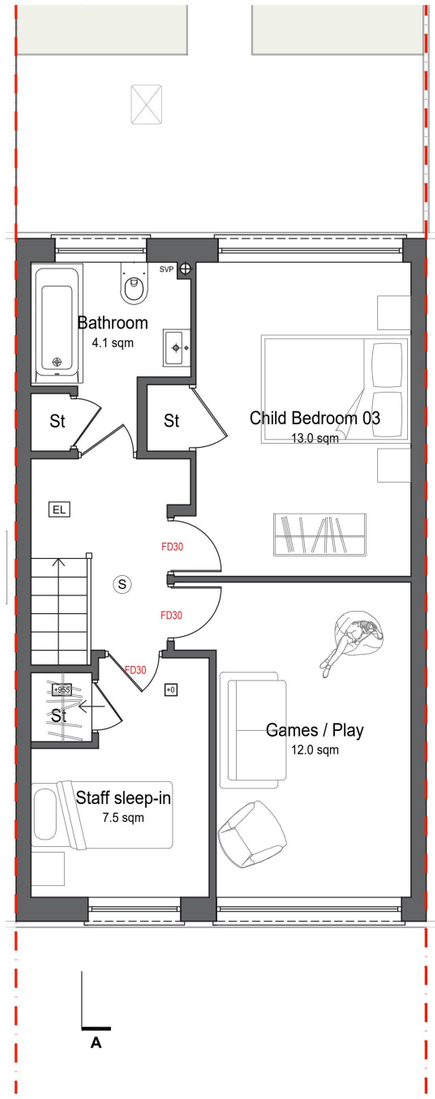
Overall, the proposed alterations will provide a safe, functional and comfortable residential environment, supporting the independence, wellbeing and day-to-day needs of the three children.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan



Proposed First Floor Plan



Proposed Second Floor Plan

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3.4 PROPOSED USE, LAYOUT & AMOUNT

Proposed Use

The development will not give rise to material harm in terms of residential amenity, noise, parking demand, or the character of the surrounding area. As such, the proposal represents a sustainable and policy-compliant form of development within an established residential setting.

Amount and Scale

The proposed development does not increase the external floor area, and the overall scale and massing of the building remain unchanged.

Internally, there will be some minor amendments to the layout to facilitate the operations of the home, whilst creating a homely and supportive environment.

Space Standards

The proposed development has a Gross Internal Area (GIA) of 130.2 sqm. The overall accommodation therefore meets the requirements of the Nationally Described Space Standard. The internal floor space ensures that each room meets or exceeds the minimum space requirements set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards, ensuring that the accommodation is both functional and provides a comfortable living environment for its occupants.

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3.5 ACCESS & MOVEMENT

Access

The access and entrance to the site and property will remain unchanged.



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3.6 AMENITY, LANDSCAPING & BIODIVERSITY

The property benefits from an established private garden of approximately 77.3 m². The existing landscaping and boundary treatments will be retained and maintained, preserving the established character and visual amenity of the garden.

Overall, the proposal retains and makes positive use of the existing garden, providing a functional outdoor environment for play, relaxation and amenity.







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3.7 CAR PARKING

The London Borough of Havering assesses parking provision for Children's Homes falling within Use Class C2 on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the scale and nature of the proposed use, staffing levels, operational requirements, site accessibility and the potential for parking overspill onto the surrounding highway network.

The London Plan also identifies parking associated with C2 care homes and secure accommodation in relation to staff and residents, with operational parking requirements assessed having regard to the specific circumstances of the development.

The proposed Children's Home will accommodate up to three children supported by three care staff during the day and two care staff members at night. Based on the operational requirements of the proposed use, the anticipated parking demand is primarily associated with staff and management, together with occasional (once every 6 weeks) visits from social workers and mental health workers.

The proposed parking provision is therefore calculated as follows:

2 spaces for staff members on the front drive.

In addition to this, there is ample car parking available on Turpin Avenue without any restrictions or permits, enabling parking for visitors, as with any typical dwelling setting.

The proposed development is therefore not expected to result in significant overspill parking, additional pressure on surrounding residential streets, or any adverse impact on highways safety.



Diagram illustrating proposed car parking spaces

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3.8 BICYCLE STORAGE

The London Borough of Havering supports the provision of secure and accessible cycle parking in accordance with London Plan Policy T5, which requires development proposals to provide appropriate levels of cycle parking that are secure, conveniently located and fit for purpose.

The proposed children's home will accommodate a maximum of three children supported by three care staff during the day and two care staff members at night. In accordance with the London Plan minimum cycle parking standards for C2 care homes / secure accommodation, long-stay cycle parking is calculated at one space per five full-time equivalent staff, with short-stay provision calculated at one space per twenty bedrooms.

Based on the proposed staffing and occupancy levels, the calculated requirement is:

Long-stay cycle parking: 3 staff ÷ 5 = 0.6 spaces, rounded up to 1 space;
Short-stay cycle parking: 4 bedrooms ÷ 20 = 0.2 spaces, rounded up to 1 space.

In accordance with the London Plan's minimum provision, the proposal will provide 4 long-stay and 2 short-stay cycle parking spaces, providing a total of 6 cycle parking spaces.

The cycle parking will be provided within a secure, covered and conveniently accessible storage area within the site, allowing cycles to be safely stored and protected from the elements.

The bicycle storage will encourage sustainable modes of transport and ensure that adequate cycle storage is available for staff, residents and visitors. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in terms of cycle parking and sustainable transport provision.

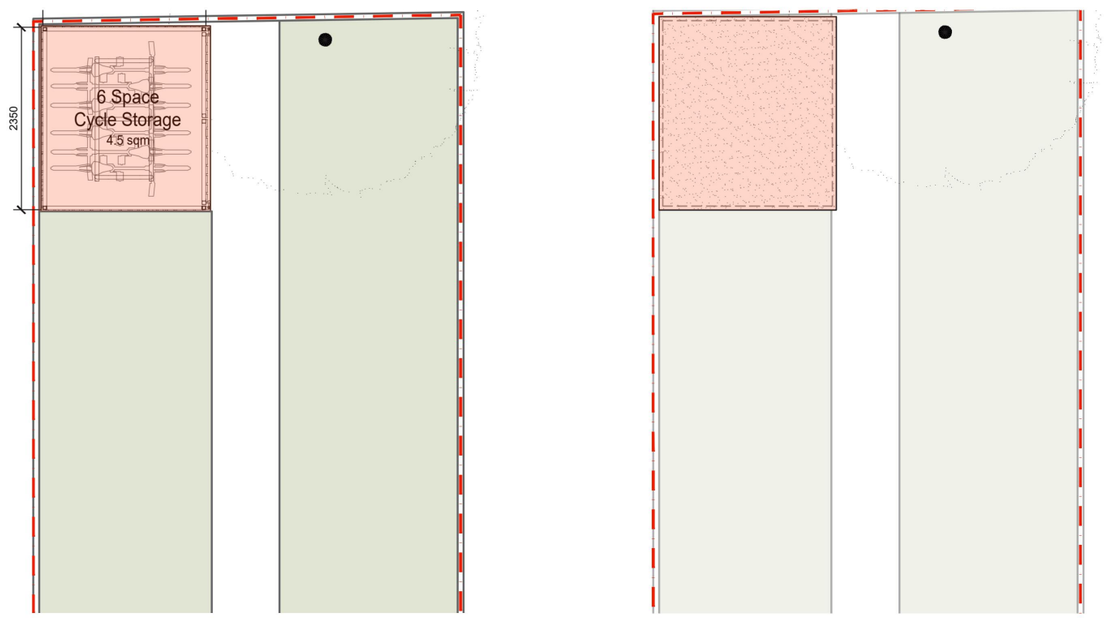
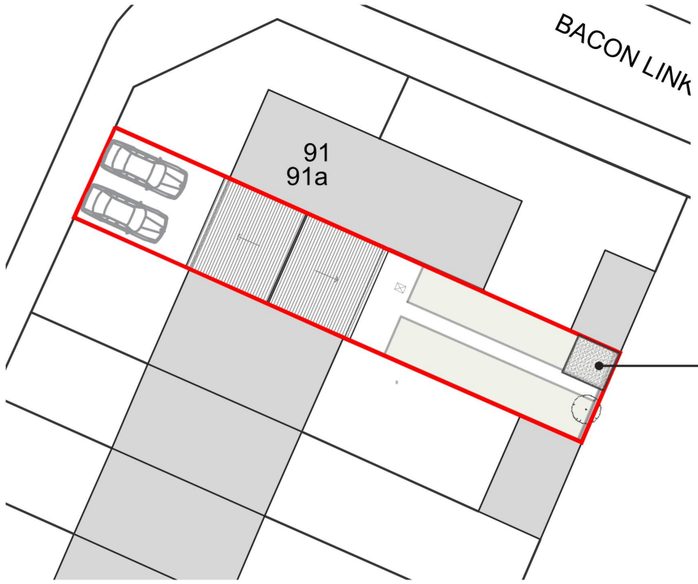


Diagram illustrating proposed Cycle Store





Example Bicycle Storage Product

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3.9 REFUSE & RECYCLING

The development will provide appropriate facilities for the storage and collection of general refuse and recyclable waste in accordance with Havering Local Plan Policy 35 and the Council's Waste Management Practice Planning Guidance.

The proposal will (as per the existing waste strategy) provide:

1 No. 240-litre general refuse bin; and
2 No. 240-litre recycling bins.

The bins will be positioned within the recommended 30m of the collection point and with a suitable accessible route for collection.

The proposed refuse and recycling provision is therefore considered appropriate for the development and will support effective waste separation, storage and collection without adversely affecting neighbouring residential amenity.

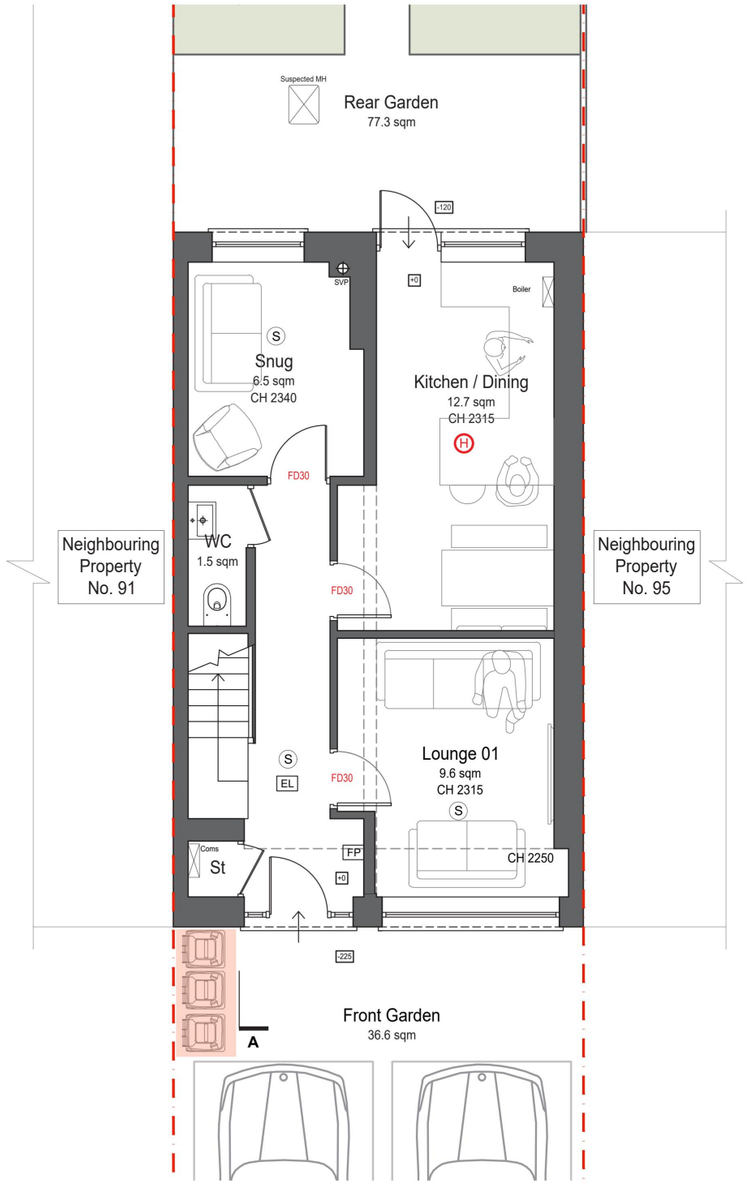


Diagram illustrating proposed refuse storage

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3.10 FIRE SAFETY

To ensure the highest standard of fire safety, the proposal will comply with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Approved Document B (Fire Safety) of the Building Regulations 2010.

All staff will complete mandatory training within their first three months of employment as part of their probationary period. A fire safety induction will be provided to all new staff on commencement, with at least one suitably first-aid-qualified member of staff on duty at all times. Refresher training will be provided at appropriate intervals so all staff will be fully prepared to follow best-practice procedures in the event of a fire.

Smoke Detection

The home will be fitted with a mains-powered, interlinked smoke detection system compliant with BS EN 14604 and BS 5839-6:2019 (Grade D1, LD1). Smoke alarms will be installed in hallways, with heat detectors in kitchens where required by the Building Control Officer (BCO). All detectors will be positioned within 7.5m of each habitable room door and at least 300mm from walls and light fittings.

Emergency Lighting

Emergency lighting will be provided in accordance with BS 5266 Part 1, covering all communal escape routes and stairwells. Additional fittings will be installed where escape routes are long, complex, or insufficiently lit. Monthly testing will be carried out, with records kept on site.

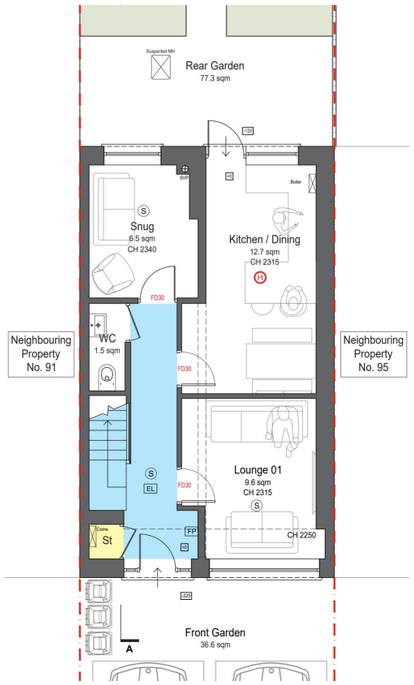
Means Of Escape

A protected escape stairway will be provided, constructed with 30-minute fire-resistant walls, floors, and ceilings. The stairway will lead directly to an external exit and must not contain inner rooms. All doors opening onto the escape route will be upgraded to FD30 fire doors (BS 476-22:1987) fitted with intumescent strips. Any glazing along the route will provide a minimum of 30 minutes fire resistance.

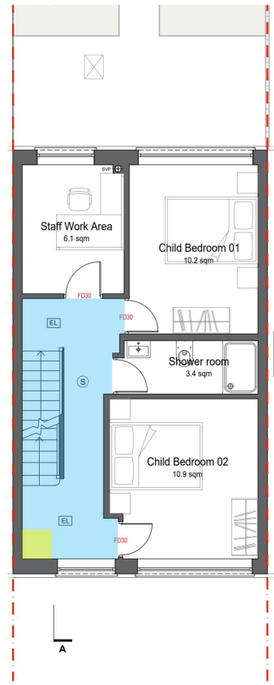
Evacuation Areas

In accordance with Approved Document B, escape routes must lead residents to a place of safety clear of fire danger. Courtyards or enclosed garden spaces will be assessed to ensure compliance with Diagram 2.5 of Part B, ensuring they are suitable for safe evacuation.

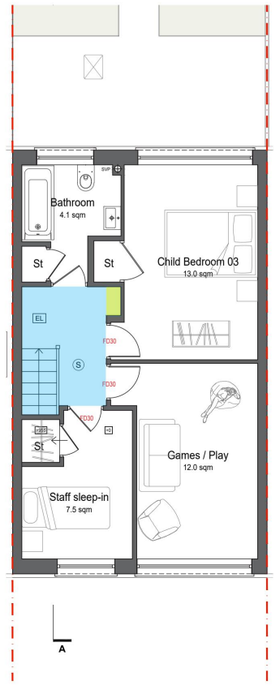




Ground Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

Unobstructed area for evacuation

Protected staircase

Unobstructed area for storage of fire equipment

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3.11 SECURITY

The existing boundary treatments will remain unchanged and will be retained and maintained as part of the proposed children's home. Any existing gates providing access to the rear or side of the property will remain securely maintained to help prevent unauthorised access to the rear garden, either via the side access route or neighbouring premises.

It is proposed for CCTV to be installed at the main entrance to monitor movements around the principal access point and assist with the security of the property. In some circumstances, staff may carry personal attack alarms and, where appropriate, body-worn video (BWV) cameras for safety purposes, subject to the home's operational policies and relevant privacy and data protection requirements.

External lighting will be used at the main entrance and other relevant access points to support safe movement and natural surveillance during hours of darkness. Lighting will be positioned sensitively to avoid unnecessary glare or disturbance to neighbouring properties.

All external doors and windows will remain in place, unless requiring an upgrade to comply with UK Building Regulations.

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3.12 NOISE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The proposed children's home will operate with a proactive approach to noise management, combining staff training, considerate day-to-day management and appropriate acoustic measures to minimise disturbance to neighbouring properties.

Operational Management

All staff will receive induction and ongoing training on noise management, with regular reminders to ensure that:

- Vehicle movements during staff shift changes are carried out considerately, avoiding loud music, unnecessary engine noise and excessive noise when arriving or departing.

- Garden activities, music and unnecessary outdoor noise cease after 21:00, with garden lighting switched off at this time except where required for safety.

- Evening activities within the home focus on calm and therapeutic pursuits.

- Residents and staff are encouraged to be considerate of neighbouring properties, particularly when entering or leaving the site.

- Windows facing neighbouring properties are kept closed by 21:00, and curtains or blinds are drawn during winter evenings to minimise light spill.

- Any behaviours likely to cause noise disturbance are managed proactively by the Home Manager and the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) team, in accordance with individual support plans.

- Contact details for neighbouring residents will be maintained where provided, and meetings will be arranged as appropriate to explain the purpose of the home and address any concerns. Neighbours will also be provided with the home's complaints procedure and relevant contact details.

Management of Noise Incidents

Should an incident result in increased noise, staff will respond promptly and in accordance with the individual's support plan. Doors and windows will be closed where appropriate to reduce noise transmission to neighbouring properties, and the situation will be managed according to the individual circumstances.

Complaints and Ongoing Review

The Home Manager will be responsible for receiving and investigating noise-related concerns, seeking to resolve complaints promptly and informally wherever possible. Unresolved complaints will be escalated through the operator's complaints procedure. Staff will be trained to handle all concerns sensitively and courteously.

This Noise Management Plan will be reviewed periodically and in response to relevant feedback from neighbours, with any necessary updates communicated to staff to ensure that noise management remains effective.

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3.13 PLANNING POLICY

The proposal must be assessed against the following key planning documents:

- **National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (NPPF)**
- **The National Design Guide 2019**
- **Technical Housing Standards - nationally described space standards 2015**
- **London Borough of Havering Local Plan (2021)**

National Planning Policy Framework August 2026

The proposal has been considered against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The following policies are particularly relevant to the proposed children's home:

Policy HO7: Meeting the Need for Homes
The proposal contributes towards meeting an identified local need for specialist accommodation for children with learning disabilities. The home is meeting this need whilst making effective use of an existing residential property.

Policy HO9: Specialist Forms of Accommodation
The proposal provides community-based specialist accommodation in an established residential area, with access to services for the children, such as education, healthcare, shops and activities. The accompanying Operational Management Plan demonstrates how the home will be safely and effectively managed, with appropriate staffing, supervision and operational arrangements in place.

Policy HC4: Proposals for new and improved community facilities, public service infrastructure and development providing public health benefits
This is specialist residential accommodation providing a public service to a particularly vulnerable group of children, therefore contributing to local health, well-being and social care provision.

Other Relevant NPPF Sections
Chapter 4 – Achieving Sustainable Development
Chapter 6 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
Chapter 14 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
Chapter 16 – Promoting Healthy Communities

London Borough of Havering Local Plan (2016-2031)

Policy 6 - Specialist accommodation
Supports specialist accommodation where an identified need within the borough is demonstrated and the location, facilities, care arrangements and amenity space are suitable for the intended occupants. Proposals should provide access to essential services and public transport, contribute to an inclusive community and avoid unacceptable effects on neighbouring amenity, parking and traffic conditions. The proposed children's home at 93 Turpin Avenue would provide a domestic setting for up to three children, with individual bedrooms, shared living accommodation, outdoor amenity space and staff support. Its location within an established residential community would support integration and access to everyday services.

Policy 7 - Residential Design and Amenity
Seeks high-quality, inclusive residential environments that safeguard the living conditions of existing and future occupants, including privacy, outlook, daylight, sunlight and protection from unacceptable noise and disturbance. The proposal would retain the property's residential appearance and provide individual bedrooms, communal living areas and access to outdoor space. With no significant external alterations proposed, the development is not expected to introduce additional overlooking, overshadowing or loss of outlook. The Operational Management Plan and Good Neighbour Policy would guide day-to-day activities, staff attendance and visits to protect neighbouring amenity.

Policy 23 - Transport Connections
Supports development in accessible locations and requires safe and efficient use of the highway, with adverse transport impacts avoided or appropriately mitigated. The proposal would make use of existing pedestrian connections and available public transport, with walking, cycling and public transport encouraged where appropriate to individual needs. Staff travel, children's transport, professional visits and deliveries would be managed through the Operational Management Plan.

Policy 24 - Parking Provision and Design
Requires parking provision and layout to respond to applicable standards, site accessibility and the needs of the development, alongside appropriate cycle parking and servicing arrangements. The proposal includes off-street parking and secure cycle storage to support staff and visitor access. Staff handovers and visits would be coordinated to manage peak parking demand.

London Plan Policy H12 - Supported and Specialised Accommodation
Supports the delivery of specialist accommodation where there is an identified need and where proposals are well integrated within existing communities, have good access to local services and public transport, and provide an appropriate standard of accommodation. The proposed Children's Home meets these objectives by providing high-quality specialist accommodation within an accessible residential location close to schools, healthcare facilities, public transport and other local amenities.

Other relevant policies and guidance include:

- **Policy 16 - Housing Mix and Choice** – Supports the provision of a range of housing and accommodation to meet the diverse needs of the borough, including specialist forms of residential accommodation.
- **Policy 27 - Heritage and Townscape** – Ensures development respects the character of the surrounding area.
- **Policy 29 - Sustainable Design and Construction** – Encourages sustainable development and efficient use of existing buildings.

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3.14 EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING NEED

Context and Need

Ofsted, the regulator for children's social care, continues to report significant pressures across the sector. Its national research highlights persistent challenges in securing suitable homes for young people, particularly those with complex needs. As Ofsted states, "More than nine in 10 local authorities struggle to find homes for children with complex needs," with many existing homes reluctant to accept such placements, further reducing availability.

According to Main findings: children's social care in England 2023 (Gov.uk), there were 2,880 registered children's homes as at 31 March 2023, representing a 9% increase on the previous year. These homes collectively provided 10,818 places, a 7% uplift from 2022. Although 365 new homes opened during the period, 116 closed, and overall growth continues to fall short of demand.

England is home to nearly 12 million children, of whom over 400,000 (3%) are involved with children's social care at any given time. Around 82,000 are children in care. Responsibility for meeting these needs lies with 152 local authorities, each required to ensure sufficient, appropriate placements.

Despite incremental growth, research consistently identifies a national shortfall in suitable provision. Studies by Research in Practice, the Children's Commissioner, and the Local Government Association have all called for reform of children's residential care, highlighting systemic challenges and the urgent need for more local, high-quality placements.

The Sufficiency Challenge

Ofsted has repeatedly raised concerns about placement availability. Its 8 July 2022 press release noted that many children are placed far from home simply due to the lack of suitable provision nearby. This is at odds with each local authority's statutory sufficiency duty, which requires them to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, enough accommodation within their area to meet the needs of children in care.

One of the most significant issues is the uneven distribution of children's homes across the country. As Ofsted explains in What types of needs do children's homes often care for?:

"Sufficiency of places in children's homes is an ongoing area of concern... the uneven distribution of homes across the country means that a child may be moved a long way from their family and friends... alongside concerns about the availability of nearby homes that can accommodate children with particular needs."

This lack of capacity disproportionately affects children with complex behavioural, emotional, and therapeutic needs, for whom finding appropriate placements is most challenging.

Policy Framework

National policy strongly emphasises the importance of high-quality, stable, and nurturing provision for children who cannot live with their families. The Secretary of State's foreword to the Department for Education's Government Consultation Response on National Standards (December 2021) states:

"Every child in this country deserves a stable loving home which keeps them safe, meets their needs and enables them to access a high-quality education... This is equally important for those children who are unable to stay with their families."

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3.14 EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING NEED

Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people. The following pieces of text are extracts from research and analysis articles published by Ofsted, available on www.gov.uk.

A report by Ofsted says "More than nine in 10 local authorities struggle to find homes for children with complex needs", highlighting a reluctance by homes to accept such referrals as a key factor behind the lack of suitable provision.

According to "Gov.uk - Why do children go into children's homes" (attached as part of this application), there is clear evidence for the need for children's homes. "Children's Homes are never far from the forefront of public debate. In 2020 alone, Research in Practice and the Children's Commissioner both published major research on children's homes. Both challenged the status quo on the subject and proposed an overhaul of the care sector. More recently, in 2021, the Local Government Association published research on the topic, and it is an important focus of the Independent Care Review.

According to a Press Release from Ofsted published on 8 July 2022, "Children in the care system are often placed in homes far away from their families because of a lack of suitable places near to where they live." (https://www.gov.uk/government/news/many-children-placed-in-homes-far-away-from-their-families-amid-national-sufficiency-challenge)

According to a Press Release on Gov.uk, Each LA in England has a 'sufficiency duty' to ensure, as far as is 'reasonably practicable', that there is sufficient accommodation within its area to meet the needs of its children in care. The lack of suitable accommodation for children and the uneven distribution of children's homes across the country is well documented. This is alongside an increasing need for homes and carers that can meet the diverse and complex needs of children.

Across the country, there are children who are living outside of their LA, particularly in children's homes. (For some children, this may be by choice and be a positive outcome for them.)

According to, "What types of needs do children's homes often care for?", an Ofsted article published on 8 July 2022, sufficiency of places in children's homes is an ongoing area of concern in children's social care. In large part, this is related to the uneven distribution of homes across the country, which means that a child may be moved a long way from their family and friends when they go to live in a children's home. Alongside this is a concern about the availability of nearby homes that can accommodate children with particular needs. Homes were not evenly distributed across the regions of England, and there were no close relationships between the children's needs, where the homes were situated and what needs those homes met.

According to an Ofsted Press Release on Gov.uk: (https://www.gov.uk/government/news/children-with-complex-needs-can-wait-years-for-a-stable-home) large numbers of children with complex needs live in homes alone, often with high numbers of staff. Although this may be right for some children, the report warns it should not be the default when planning children's care as it risks leaving them isolated and vulnerable to mistreatment.

"The number of children's homes continues to grow, but not in the right places or all offering what children need. I hope this report encourages local authorities and children's homes to work together in planning what is needed and where, in the best interests of children." - Yvette Stanley, Ofsted's national director for social care

"Councils want every child in their care to thrive in the best possible home for their needs, but as this report highlights, finding those homes can be exceptionally challenging, especially where children have complex needs." - Councillor Louise Gittins, chair of the Local Government Association's Children and Young People's Board

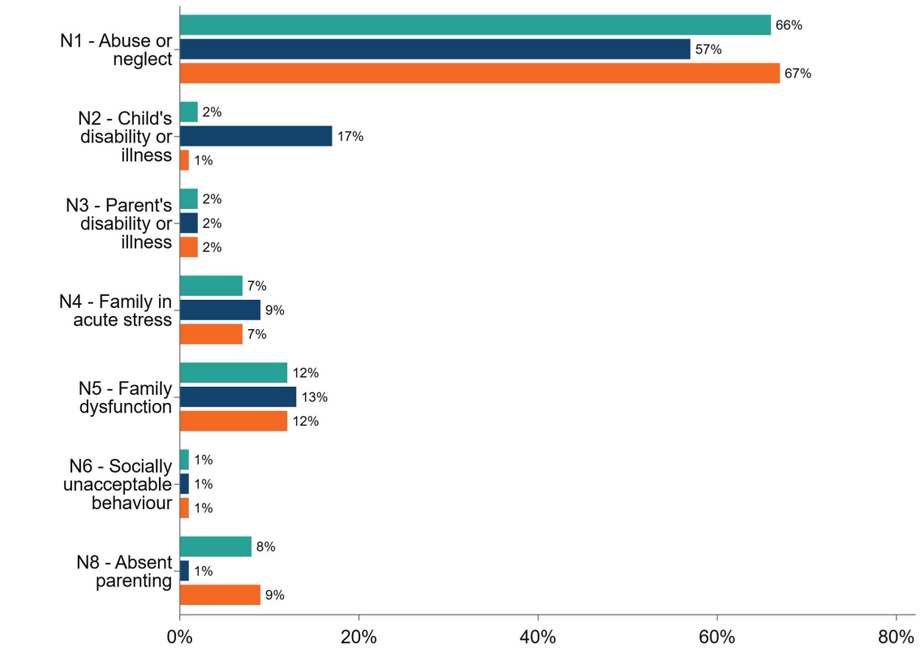
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3.14 EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING NEED

According to "Gov.uk Children in Need: A focus on disability - September 2026", CLA (Children Looked After) at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability had a slightly higher median age at first entry into care (8 years) compared to CLA without a recorded disability (6 years). Among CLA with a recorded disability, those with autism had the highest median age at entry (10 years).

'Abuse or neglect' was the most common reason for being looked after for both CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability (57%) and without a recorded disability (67%). 17% of CLA with a recorded disability had 'Child's disability or illness' as their primary reason for being looked after.

Children looked after at 31 March by category of need and disability, England, 2024



All CLA at 31 March
CLA at 31 March with a disability recorded
CLA at 31 March with no disability recorded

Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are children who have applied for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents and/or any other responsible adult. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide accommodation for these children. Details of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) can be found in the methodology section of the Children looked after publication.

Show 1 more footnote

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

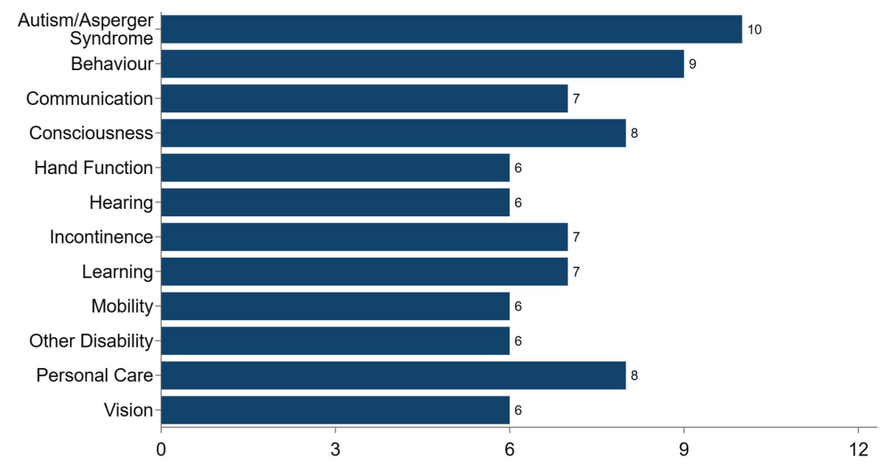
Locality of placements

> Local authorities have a general duty to provide accommodation that is within the local authority area, that meets the needs of the child and allows the child to live near their home.

A lower proportion of CLA at 31 March 2024 with a recorded disability were placed within their LA boundary (51%) compared to CLA without a recorded disability (56%). The percentage of children placed inside the LA boundary has decreased over time in both groups since 2015 (from 54% to 51% for CLA with a recorded disability and from 61% to 56% for CLA without a recorded disability).

CLA with a recorded disability also had a higher median distance of placement from their home (9 miles) compared to CLA without a recorded disability (7 miles).

Median age of entry to care for CLA at 31 March by disability type, England, 2024



Footnotes

1. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10. Percentages rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures in some tables may be suppressed, denoted by a 'c', percentages <0.5% are denoted by a 'k'.
2. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are children who have applied for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents and/or any other responsible adult. Local authorities have a legal duty to provide accommodation for these children. Details of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) can be found in the methodology section of the Children looked after publication.

Show 1 more footnote

Source: Longitudinal CIN dataset and SSDA903

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3.14 EVIDENCE DEMONSTRATING NEED

According to "Ofsted: Understanding children's social care sufficiency in England - July 2026", "Local authorities have a duty to make sure there are enough suitable places for children who need care. These places should be close to home and able to meet each child's needs. Over recent decades, the number of children looked after has increased, but in recent years this has levelled off at around 80,000 children.

Despite this, many children are still placed far from their home communities or in settings that are not well matched to their needs. There are now more children's homes than ever before, but children's homes are, on average, getting smaller and many operate with unfilled places.[footnote 2] Local authorities are spending record amounts on residential care, and there are continued pressures in recruiting foster carers and social care staff.

These challenges highlight that sufficiency is about more than the number of places available. It is also about whether those places are suitable, where they are located, and whether there is a suitably trained workforce to meet the needs of children placed in them."

According to "Ofsted: Main findings: children's social care in England 2026 - July 2026", "out of the 12.2 million children living in England, around 402,000 (3%) are in the social care system at any one time, including children in need and children with child protection plans. Nearly 82,000 of these children are in care."

Table 1: The number of children's homes (including short-break-only homes), providers and places as at 31 March 2026 and the net change in each since 31 March 2025, by region

Region	Number of children's homes	Number of children's home places	Net change in providers since 31 March 2025	Net change in places since 31 March 2025
North West	1,250	3,580	+230	+370
West Midlands	720	2,390	+91	+ 250
North East, Yorkshire and the Humber	650	2,240	+71	+100
East Midlands	610	2,030	+150	+400
South East	490	2,170	+74	+230
East of England	390	1,490	+56	+150
London	350	1,400	+96	+300
South West	300	890	+36	+99
England	4,750	16,200	+800	+1,910

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3.15 CATERING FOR LOCAL NEED

Havering's Children's Services Sufficiency Needs Assessment and Strategy 2025- 2028

Local Need and Sufficiency

The proposed development comprises a small residential children's home providing accommodation for up to three children with learning disabilities. The proposal responds directly to the needs identified within the London Borough of Havering's Children's Services Sufficiency Needs Assessment and Strategy 2025–2028, which recognises the growing demand for appropriate residential care for children with disabilities and identifies the development of additional local provision as a strategic priority.

The proposal would provide a small-scale, domestic residential environment specifically intended to accommodate children with learning disabilities, supporting the Council's wider objective of ensuring that children with additional and complex needs have access to care and support appropriate to their individual circumstances.

An Identified Need for Residential Provision for Children with Disabilities

The Strategy identifies an increase in the number of children with disabilities requiring residential education during 2023/24. It confirms that this contributed to an increase in the proportion of children requiring care outside the Council's boundaries (Section 6, page 14).

The Strategy also records a growing number of children with disabilities in care. The number increased from 16 in 2022/23 to 20 in 2023/24, representing a 25% increase in one year (Section 5, page 12). While this figure relates to children with disabilities across the care population, rather than exclusively to children requiring residential placements, it provides further evidence of the need for the Council to plan appropriate care arrangements for this group.

These findings demonstrate that the needs of children with disabilities form an identified part of Havering's wider sufficiency challenge. The proposed home would contribute to the provision of residential accommodation designed for a defined cohort of children whose needs may require a more specialist care environment than can be provided through universal services or family-based arrangements alone.

A Shortage of Appropriate Local Provision

The Strategy identifies a clear objective of enabling more children in care to remain living within Havering, where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

At 31 March 2024, 280 children were in care, of whom 41 were living in children's homes. This represented 14.6% of the total care population, compared with 19 children, or 7.6%, in 2018. The Strategy further explains that the increase in Havering's care population during 2023/24 was primarily accommodated through placements outside the borough (Section 6, pages 13–14).

Importantly, the Council specifically links the need for out-of-borough placements to the increase in children with disabilities requiring residential education, alongside other children requiring specialist care. This demonstrates that the sufficiency issue is not simply a matter of overall accommodation numbers, but also the availability of suitable provision capable of meeting children's individual needs.

Although the Strategy identifies 13 private children's homes operating within Havering, with a maximum capacity of 55 places, it also confirms that only four Havering children were placed in these homes at 31 December 2024 (Section 9, page 21). The existence of residential capacity within the borough therefore does not, in itself, demonstrate that appropriate placements are available for every child requiring specialist care.

The proposed three-place home would contribute to the range of local residential options available for children with learning disabilities, helping to address the need for suitable provision and supporting the Council's ambition to reduce reliance on placements outside the borough where local care is appropriate.

Direct alignment with the Council's Strategic Policies

The Strategy expressly commits Havering to ensuring that children with additional and complex needs have access to services and support proportionate to their individual needs. It also identifies the development of new children's homes and stronger relationships with local care providers as means of increasing the availability of local placements.

Of particular relevance is Action 7, which identifies the Council's intention to develop its own children's home for children with disabilities, providing both longer-term residential care and short-break care options. The action plan identifies the intended outcome as providing high-quality residential short breaks within Havering.

The proposed development aligns directly with this stated priority by providing residential accommodation specifically intended for children with learning disabilities. It would contribute to the local supply of specialist residential provision and support the Strategy's wider aim of ensuring that children's care arrangements are suited to their needs.

The Strategy also identifies, through Action 3, the need to improve relationships with local children's home providers so that more children can remain living within the borough. The proposed home would support this broader objective by adding to the availability and diversity of local residential care options.

Meeting the Needs of Children with Learning Disabilities

Havering's Strategy recognises that, while many children with special educational needs and disabilities can be supported through mainstream education and universal services, some children and families require additional assistance. The Council provides a range of short-break services for children with disabilities, including children with learning disabilities and autism (Section 10, page 24).

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3.15 CATERING FOR LOCAL NEED

During 2023/24, 865 children received short-break support, including 28 children who accessed a total of 937 nights of overnight short breaks. The Strategy notes that only a small number of children received overnight support outside the family home. These figures relate to the wider short-break service and do not establish the precise level of demand for the proposed type of residential home. Nevertheless, they demonstrate the scale and variety of additional support required by children with disabilities and the importance the Council places on services that meet their needs and support their families.

The proposed home would provide a dedicated residential setting for up to three children with learning disabilities. Its small scale would allow the accommodation and care environment to be organised around the needs of the children placed there, subject to appropriate individual assessment and care planning.

Responding to an Evidenced Local Need

Havering's Children's Services Sufficiency Needs Assessment and Strategy 2025–2028 identifies an increase in children with disabilities requiring residential education, a consequent need for some children to be placed outside the borough, and a strategic commitment to developing additional residential provision for children with disabilities.

The proposed children's home would provide three places for children with learning disabilities, contributing to the availability of specialist residential care within Havering. It would support the Council's stated objectives of increasing appropriate local capacity, meeting the needs of children with additional and complex needs, and enabling children to remain within their local area where this is consistent with their assessed needs and best interests.

The proposal therefore accords with the direction of travel established by the Council's Sufficiency Strategy and would make a proportionate contribution towards addressing an identified local need for suitable residential provision for children with disabilities.

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3.16 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Operational Management Plan

An Operational Management Plan is submitted in support of the planning application to provide clarity on the day-to-day operation and management of the proposed children's home. It sets out the staffing, visitor, travel, noise and neighbour liaison arrangements to demonstrate that the home will be responsibly managed and operate compatibly with the surrounding residential area.

Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose is a mandatory document for children's home providers as part of the Ofsted registration process and sets out how the children's home will operate, including its purpose, intended age range and occupancy, the needs of the children it will support, its care approach, staffing and management arrangements.

It is submitted in support of the planning application to provide the Local Planning Authority with a clear understanding of the proposed use and demonstrate that the proposal is for a small-scale, carefully managed residential care home for up to three children, operating within a domestic and family-style environment designed to support their safety, welfare and well-being.

Good Neighbour Policy

The Good Neighbour Policy sets out the operator's approach to maintaining positive relationships with the surrounding community and minimising the potential impact of the children's home on neighbouring properties. It establishes procedures for managing noise, parking, resident behaviour, staff training, communication with neighbours and the prompt resolution of complaints.

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3.17 CONCLUSION

The proposed change of use from a Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a Children's Home (Use Class C2) represents an appropriate and sustainable form of development that will provide high-quality residential care for a small number of children within an established residential neighbourhood.

The proposal has been carefully designed to operate in a manner comparable to that of a typical family dwelling, with limited staffing levels, low traffic generation and no significant external alterations to the property. Adequate off-street parking, secure cycle storage and suitable refuse and recycling facilities will be provided, ensuring compliance with the London Borough of Havering's transport, waste management and sustainable development objectives.

The development preserves the character and appearance of the existing dwelling, safeguards the amenity of neighbouring occupiers and will not give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, parking demand, highway safety or residential amenity. Furthermore, the site's accessible location, close to public transport, schools, healthcare facilities and local services, makes it well suited for the proposed specialist residential use.

In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that planning permission for the change of use from a Dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to a Children's Home (Use Class C2) be granted.

> ***"I want all children to have the brightest future possible. I will advocate for positive change for all children and particularly those who are most disadvantaged."***
>
> *~ Anne Longfield, Former Children's Commissioner for England*

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Chandran
Hughes
Architects