



Knowsley Council

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Validation Proforma for Children's Homes

1. Home and Location Assessment (Planning Applications Only)

Requirement	Response
a. Evidence of need for Children's Care Home in the Area this must include liaison with Knowsley Council Children's Services	We have engaged with Knowsley Council Children's Services by emailing artplacements@knowsley.gov.uk and Rebecca.Hastings@knowsley.gov.uk to understand the local landscape for children's residential provision. While we note that there is currently an oversupply of general residential homes, there is still a need for small-scale, single occupancy placements. These placements when commissioned will require a clear step-down plan, which is how we have intend to work with the Local Authority, as we become operational with the first placement.
b. Evidence that the proposed Children's Care Home location and format align with the type of accommodation needed by Knowsley.	The proposed location aligns with Knowsley Council's criteria for single occupancy or small step-down placements. It is situated within proximity to essential services, schools, and community support networks, ensuring that children can maintain continuity in education, health, and social connections. The home's format—a 2-bed residential setting with individualized support plans—is directly aligned with Council guidance for occasional commissioning of small-scale homes. Our model emphasizes a clear step-down plan, structured routines, and therapeutic support tailored to each child, ensuring smooth transitions and reducing the risk of placement breakdown. In summary, our proposal complements Knowsley Council's strategy by addressing a specific gap: small, single occupancy homes with a step-down pathway.

c. A justification and explanation as to the appropriateness of the premises. To include the identification of hazards and control to be put in place including the local and wider environment. This must include liaison with Merseyside Police regarding County Lines, missing persons, general hazards and exploitation.	The proposed 2-bed home provides a safe, structured environment for single occupancy, with a private bedroom, communal space and area for education. Key hazard including fire, health, and security risks will be mitigated through controls such as non-slip flooring, smoke detectors, secure storage, and staff safeguarding. The property is in a residential area with access to schools, healthcare, and community amenities, ensuring children can safely engage with the wider environment. Overall, the premises are fully appropriate to meet the needs of children requiring tailored support and step-down care. I have made contact with safer.knowsley@knowsley.gov.uk to make them aware of the proposal and to liaise with them with regards to County Lines, missing persons, general hazards and exploitation.
d. Identified hazards and controls to be put in place including but not limited to: i. Risks of injury within the home including access to roof ii. Traffic, Railway, Waterways, Risks of Child Sexual Exploitation, Risk of Gangs, Crime, Anti-social Behaviour, Risks of Missing from Care, Risk of Substance Abuse, Drug Involvement. iii. Please include agencies who you have consulted as part of the risk assessment.	Appropriate controls and safeguarding measures will be implemented in line with regulatory requirements for children's homes and safeguarding best practice. i. Risks of injury within the home Potential risks within the property will be assessed and will be controlled through appropriate environmental safety measures and staff supervision. Control measures will include: • Full compliance with health and safety requirements and fire safety regulations. • Regular property maintenance and risk

	assessments. • Secure windows and restricted access to any potential roof areas to prevent unsafe access. • Safe storage of hazardous materials, medication and cleaning products in locked cabinets. • Staff trained in safeguarding, first aid, behaviour management and health and safety procedures. • Clear supervision arrangements and staff presence within the home at all times. These measures ensure that the internal environment is safe and appropriate for children and young people living in the home. ii. External environmental risks The surrounding area will be assessed for environmental and safeguarding risks, including traffic, railway access, waterways, crime, anti-social behaviour and risks associated with child exploitation. • Traffic: The property is located within a residential area where traffic speeds are relatively low. Staff will provide supervision and guidance to young people regarding road safety and safe travel. • Railway: A railway line and station are located within the wider area. Staff will ensure children are educated about railway safety and supervised where necessary. • Waterways: No immediate waterways present a direct risk in the vicinity of the property. • Crime and Anti-social Behaviour: As with any urban residential area, there is some potential for anti-social behaviour. The home will operate clear safeguarding procedures and risk management plans for each child to minimise exposure to these risks.
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	• Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Gangs: Staff will receive safeguarding training to identify and respond to risks of exploitation, grooming or gang involvement. Each child will have an individual placement risk assessment and support plan. • Missing from Care: The home will operate robust missing-from-care procedures including immediate reporting, risk assessments, and close partnership working with local safeguarding agencies. • Substance Misuse or Drug Involvement: The home will operate a strict zero-tolerance policy towards drugs and substance misuse, supported by staff training, supervision and partnership with local safeguarding services where necessary. iii. Agencies consulted Risk management and safeguarding arrangements will be supported through partnership working with relevant agencies including: • The local authority children's services responsible for placing children within the home. • The local police service in relation to community safety and missing-from-care procedures. • Local safeguarding partnerships including the local safeguarding children partnership (LSCP). • Registration and regulatory oversight by Ofsted, which will ensure the home operates in accordance with national safeguarding standards. Through these measures, the proposed children's home will operate with a robust safeguarding framework that appropriately identifies, manages and mitigates risks to
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	ensure the safety and wellbeing of children placed at the home.
d. That the premises is located in a suitable and sustainable location; This must include an assessment of accessibility, local amenities and social infrastructure	The proposed children's home is located at 28 Mollington Road. The area is a well-established residential neighbourhood and is considered a suitable and sustainable location for a small residential children's care home. The property benefits from good accessibility to local amenities and transport infrastructure. Several local bus stops are located within a short walking distance of the property, providing regular connections to surrounding areas and the wider Liverpool region. In addition, Kirkby railway station is located approximately 0.4 km from the property, providing convenient rail access to Liverpool city centre and other nearby destinations. The surrounding area provides a range of local amenities and social infrastructure that support the needs of children and staff. Local shops, convenience stores and essential services are available within walking distance. The area also includes community facilities such as libraries, health services and community and leisure centres which contribute to a supportive neighbourhood environment. There are also several educational establishments in the local area including Westvale Primary School, St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, Kirkby High School and colleges, providing access to education for children placed within the home. The locality also benefits from accessible recreational and green spaces including a few parks that cater for children's play, which provide opportunities for outdoor activities, wellbeing and community engagement.

	Overall, the property is situated within a sustainable residential area with good transport connectivity, local amenities, education provision and community infrastructure. These factors make the location appropriate for a small children's residential home and allow children placed at the property to access local services, education and recreational facilities within the community.
e. That it provides suitable access and parking provision to accommodate activity associated with the premises.	The property benefits from an existing private driveway and provides off-street parking for staff. In addition, there are no parking restrictions on the road, allowing for additional on-street parking if required. The proposed use as a small residential children's care home (maximum of one child) will generate activity levels comparable to a typical family dwelling. Staffing levels will be low, with two or three staff members present per shift. As such, the existing driveway together with unrestricted on-street parking provides suitable access and parking provision to accommodate the activity associated with the premises.

2. Management Plan (Planning Applications and Lawful Development Certificates)

Requirement	Response
a. The name of the company proposing to operate the facility and background.	Empathy First

b. Whether the home will be registered with Ofsted and any evidence of communication with Ofsted relevant to this home?	The home will be registered with Ofsted in accordance with all regulatory requirements prior to becoming operational. Initial contact has been made with Ofsted to notify them of our intention to establish the provision. Ofsted have confirmed that they are currently unable to offer preliminary discussions or direct guidance; however, they have provided access to the relevant application forms, guidance documents, and supporting web resources required to progress the registration. A full application will be submitted upon the granting of planning permission, and the home will not operate until Ofsted registration has been successfully obtained. Email from Ofsted is attached
c. i. Type of provision (e.g. crisis, short or long term) and statement of purpose c. ii. Type of registration (emotional and behavioural difficulties, mental disorders, sensory, present alcohol problems, present drug problems, learning difficulty, physical disabilities)	The Statement of Purpose is attached separately. The Ofsted categories we propose to register the home with are: -children with emotional or behavioural difficulties -children with learning disabilities -children with mental disorders, excluding learning disability - children with sensory impairment
d. How many children would be accommodated and the age range (lower and upper limit)?	The home will accommodate one child at any given time. The intended age range for placements is between 4 and 18 years old, allowing the service to support children and young people with varying needs across a broad developmental range, in line with individual care plans and local authority requirements.

e. What will happen if any children reach 18? Will they remain?	The proposed home will operate solely as a children's residential care home for young people under the age of 18. The home will not accommodate adults. If a young person living in the home approaches their 18th birthday, appropriate transition planning will be undertaken in partnership with the placing local authority to ensure suitable alternative accommodation and support arrangements are identified prior to them reaching adulthood. Young people will therefore move on to appropriate adult or semi-independent accommodation as part of their planned transition into adulthood. As such, no residents aged 18 or over will remain living at the property.
f. What is the ratio of staff to children that is required i.e. delivery model?	The proposed staffing model for the home will be based on a 2:1 ratio, with two members of staff supporting one child. This approach ensures a high level of supervision, care, and individualised support tailored to the child's specific needs. This delivery model allows for consistent engagement, effective safeguarding, and the ability to respond promptly to any behavioural or emotional needs. Staffing arrangements will be organised on a shift basis to always maintain this ratio, ensuring continuity of care and a safe, supportive environment.
g. What is the likely level of need of the children accommodated i.e. is there a focus on complex needs? Will the home have a particular specialism?	The Ofsted categories we propose to register the home with are: -children with emotional or behavioural

	difficulties -children with learning disabilities -children with mental disorders, excluding learning disability - children with sensory impairment The home will be able to cater for these children and will be staffed adequately.
h. What is the likely shift pattern of staff i.e. how many staff (management and care staff) would likely be at the premises at any one time and when would shift changes occur? A staff Rota should be provided.	The home will operate with a staffing structure appropriate for a small children's residential home accommodating a maximum of one child. Staffing levels will be determined by the individual needs and risk assessments of the child placed in the home, but the staffing model will ensure that appropriate supervision and safeguarding is maintained at all times. During daytime and evening hours, staffing levels may be up to two members of care staff per child, depending on the assessed needs of the child placed at the home. This ensures that the child receives appropriate supervision, support and engagement in daily activities such as education, appointments and recreational activities. During the night period, the home will typically operate with one waking night staff member and one sleep-in staff member present at the property. This arrangement ensures that support and supervision are available throughout the night if required. Staff will generally work on a shift-based rota, with shifts typically operating on a 24-hour care model. A typical pattern may include: • Day Shift: approximately 8:00am – 10:00pm • Night Shift: approximately 10:00pm –

	8:00am Shift changes will usually occur during morning and evening handover periods to ensure continuity of care and the safe transfer of information between staff teams. The Registered Manager and/or Responsible Individual will also visit the home regularly during normal working hours to provide oversight, supervision and management support. The working hours of the Registered Manager would be 9-5, weekdays. A detailed staff rota will be developed and maintained once the home is operational and placements are confirmed, ensuring staffing levels remain appropriate to meet the needs of the children living at the home and in line with regulatory requirements monitored by Ofsted.
i. What support officers would be likely to visit the property?	A range of professionals and support officers may visit the home as part of the care, safeguarding and review arrangements for children placed at the property. These visits form part of the statutory oversight and support framework for children in residential care. Professionals who may visit the home include: • Social Workers from the placing local authority, who will regularly visit children to monitor their welfare and progress in accordance with statutory requirements. • Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) who oversee the child's care plan and chair statutory Looked After Child (LAC) review meetings. • Regulation 44 Independent Visitors, who

	undertake monthly independent monitoring visits to children's homes as required under children's homes regulations. • Education professionals, such as Virtual School representatives, education welfare officers or teachers supporting the child's educational placement. • Health professionals, including nurses, CAMHS practitioners, therapists or other healthcare professionals involved in supporting the child's physical or mental health needs. • Personal Advisors or Leaving Care workers (where appropriate) supporting young people as they approach adulthood. • Local Authority safeguarding officers where necessary as part of safeguarding oversight. In addition, the home will be subject to inspection and regulatory oversight by Ofsted, who may conduct inspections and monitoring visits to ensure the home is operating in accordance with the relevant regulations and standards. These professional visits form part of the normal support and safeguarding arrangements for children in residential care and help ensure that children living in the home receive appropriate care, oversight and support.
j. How would visits be scheduled and would staff/support-workers meetings take place at the property?	Visits to the home by professionals and support workers will generally be arranged in advance and scheduled in consultation with the home's staff team. The frequency and timing of visits will largely depend on the individual needs, care plans and statutory requirements for each child placed at the home.

	For example, social workers are required to visit children in residential care at regular intervals as part of their statutory duties, and other professionals such as health practitioners, education representatives or therapists may also arrange visits where required to support the child's wellbeing and development. Where appropriate, meetings relating to the child's care or support may take place at the property. These may include key worker sessions, professional discussions or small support meetings involving relevant professionals. Such meetings are typically limited in size and would involve only a small number of attendees. The scheduling of visits and meetings will therefore be coordinated by the home's staff to ensure they take place at suitable times, minimise disruption, and maintain the normal residential environment of the property. Overall, visits will be managed in a structured and professional manner in accordance with safeguarding and care planning arrangements overseen by Ofsted
k. Is the intention that the children cared for at the property will be home schooled or will they attend local schools? If children will be home schooled, will additional teachers/tutors attend the premises and how often.	The intention is that children placed at the home will attend appropriate local educational provision wherever possible, in line with their individual education plans and the requirements of the placing local authority. Supporting children to engage with education and maintain routine and stability is an important part of the care provided at the home. However, the educational arrangements for each child will ultimately depend on their

	individual needs, care plan and educational assessment. In some cases, children may attend local schools or specialist education settings within the area. In other circumstances, alternative education provision or temporary home tuition may be arranged where it is in the best interests of the child. Where home tuition is required, any tutors or education professionals would attend the property on a scheduled basis as arranged by the placing local authority and the child's education provider. Such visits would normally involve one education professional at a time and would be arranged during normal daytime hours. All educational arrangements will be made in partnership with the placing local authority and relevant education services to ensure the child receives suitable education and support in accordance with statutory requirements and the standards monitored by Ofsted.
I. Would therapeutic care be offered on-site?	Yes, therapeutic support may be offered on-site where it forms part of a child's individual care plan. Many children in residential care benefit from therapeutic input and providing this within the home environment can offer a comfortable and familiar setting for the child. Where required, appropriately qualified professionals such as therapists, counsellors or mental health practitioners may visit the property to provide one-to-one therapeutic support. These sessions would usually take place by prior arrangement and typically involve only the child and the professional involved.

m. Would case reviews taken place on or off-site?	Case reviews and professional meetings relating to the children placed at the home may take place either on-site or at alternative professional venues, depending on what is considered most appropriate for the child and the professionals involved. In many cases, statutory review meetings such as Looked After Child (LAC) reviews are typically held at local authority offices, schools or other professional settings. However, smaller meetings, key worker sessions or professional discussions may occasionally take place at the home where it is considered suitable and convenient for the child. Any meetings held at the property would normally involve a small number of professionals and would be arranged in advance to ensure minimal disruption to the home environment. The scheduling and location of such meetings will be determined by the child's care plan and the requirements of the placing local authority.
n. Are children ever left alone unsupervised at the property?	No, children will never be left unsupervised at the property. The home will always operate with appropriate staffing levels to ensure continuous supervision and support. This approach is essential to safeguard the welfare of the children, respond promptly to their needs, and maintain a safe and secure environment in line with regulatory requirements and best practice in residential childcare.
o. Under what circumstances are children allowed to leave the property?	Children are only permitted to leave the property following an individual risk assessment and in line with their care plan,

	age, level of understanding, and agreed permissions. This may include attending education, participating in planned activities, spending time with family or friends (where appropriate), or engaging in community-based opportunities that support their development and independence. Any time away from the home is carefully planned, with clear boundaries, expected return times, and appropriate levels of supervision depending on the child's needs. Staff remain responsible for ensuring the child's safety, maintaining regular contact where required, and responding promptly if there are any concerns. This approach promotes independence while ensuring safeguarding always remains the priority.
p. Would staff members be informed/aware if a child left the property?	Yes, staff members will always be informed and aware when a child leaves the property. No child will be permitted to leave without the knowledge and consent of staff, in line with their individual care plan and risk assessment. Clear procedures will be in place to record when a child leaves and returns, including the purpose of the absence, expected times, and level of supervision required. Staff will maintain appropriate oversight, which may include direct supervision or agreed check-ins, depending on the child's age and needs. This ensures the child's safety and wellbeing are consistently monitored and that any concerns can be responded to immediately.
q. Is there a curfew?	Yes, a curfew will be in place, tailored to each child's individual care plan, age, level

	of maturity, and specific needs. Curfews will be agreed as part of placement planning and risk assessment, ensuring they are appropriate and supportive rather than restrictive. The purpose of a curfew is to promote safety, structure, and routine, while also supporting the development of responsibility and independence. Expected return times will be clearly communicated, and staff will monitor and record compliance. Any deviations will be followed up promptly in line with safeguarding procedures.
r. What would happen in the event of a breach of the curfew?	In the event of a breach of curfew, staff will respond promptly in line with the child's individual risk assessment and the home's safeguarding procedures. Initial action will include attempting to contact the child to establish their whereabouts and ensure their safety. If the child cannot be located or there are concerns for their welfare, appropriate escalation procedures will be followed, which may include notifying the on-call manager, contacting parents/carers (where appropriate), and reporting the child as missing to the police in line with local protocols. Once the child returns, staff will carry out a welfare check and offer support to understand the reasons for the breach. A return home discussion will take place to identify any underlying issues and reduce the likelihood of recurrence. Records will be updated, and risk assessments and care plans reviewed if necessary to ensure

	appropriate measures are in place moving forward.
s. What security provisions are proposed e.g. security and access controls on doors?	The home will have appropriate security measures in place to ensure the safety of children while maintaining a welcoming, non-institutional environment. External doors will be fitted with secure, key-controlled or coded locking systems to prevent unauthorised access, while still allowing safe and easy exit in the event of an emergency. Access to the property will be controlled by staff, with all visitors required to be identified and always supervised. Windows and entry points will be maintained to a safe and secure standard, and the property will be risk assessed to identify and address any potential vulnerabilities. Where appropriate, additional measures such as door alarms or monitoring systems may be used to alert staff if external doors are opened. Staff will maintain awareness of who is in the building at all times, supported by visitor logs and signing-in procedures. These arrangements ensure the home remains secure, while respecting the rights, privacy, and dignity of the children living there.
t. Would CCTV be installed?	There are no plans to install CCTV at the property at this stage. However if this was recommended or required as part of the step-down plan for example, this would be put in place.

u. How would local residents know how to raise a concern in the event of an issue?	Local residents will be provided with clear and accessible ways to raise any concerns. The home will ensure that contact details, including a telephone number and email address, are made available to neighbours so they can easily get in touch with the manager or responsible person. We will work with the Local Authority for advice and if appropriate, an introductory letter or leaflet will be shared with local residents when the home opens, outlining the purpose of the service and how to raise any issues or concerns. Residents will be encouraged to make contact directly with the home in the first instance, so that any matters can be addressed promptly and effectively. All concerns raised will be taken seriously, recorded, and responded to in a timely and professional manner. Where necessary, concerns will be escalated in line with the home's complaints and safeguarding procedures. This approach promotes positive relationships with the local community and ensures transparency and accountability.
v. How long is each placement within the children's care home?	The duration of each placement will depend on the requirements of the local authority and the needs of the children requiring care at the time a placement becomes available within the home. It is influenced by factors such as the child's needs, family situation, education arrangements, and any court decisions or permanency plans in place. As a result, the home will accommodate a mix of placement lengths, ensuring flexibility to respond to local authority needs while

	maintaining a stable and supportive environment for the children.
w. Would any rooms be used as a dedicated meeting, training or therapy room?	There will be an office set up where all meetings and training can take place. Depending on the therapy, there will be a room designated for this to take place.
x. Would the parents or family of the children visit the home and, if so, how often is this likely to take place?	Yes, in most cases children will have contact with their parents or family members, but this is carefully planned and will vary for each child. The family contact will be determined by the local authority and set out in the child's care plan. This might mean visits to the home, time spent in the community, or supervised contact at a separate venue. The frequency of contact will vary widely depending on individual circumstances. Some children may have contact several times per week, while others may have weekly, monthly, or in some cases no direct contact at all. The home will support and facilitate these arrangements in line with the agreed care plan, always prioritising the child's best interests and emotional stability.
y. What dedicated parking provision (if any) exists for the dwelling and how is it intended to control vehicle movements and parking associated with the use arising from staff and other visitors?	The property benefits from a single-car driveway, with no parking restrictions in place on the surrounding roads. As a corner property, there is a significant amount of available on-street parking, including areas of road and pavement space next to the house, that are not directly in front of neighbouring properties or driveways. Vehicle movements associated with the use

	will be limited and managed appropriately. Staffing is arranged on a shift basis, reducing peak-time congestion, and visitors will be pre-arranged, and parking will be managed. The available driveway and ample surrounding on-street parking provision are considered sufficient to accommodate staff and occasional visitors without causing disruption to the local area.
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