

KNOWSLEY COUNCIL

Validation Proforma for Children's Homes

Aspire Care Collective Ltd

Unregulated Solo-Placement Children's Home | EBD & LD Provision | Ages 8–18

Planning Application Supporting Document

Section 1 — Home and Location Assessment (Planning Applications)

Requirement	Response
a. Evidence of need for Children's Care Home in the Area — this must include liaison with Knowsley Council Children's Services	Evidence of Need Knowsley is ranked within the top 10% most deprived local authority areas nationally. High levels of deprivation directly correlate with elevated demand for specialist children's care provision, including placements for young people presenting with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) and Learning Disabilities (LD). The local authority's own data consistently shows a shortfall in high-quality, localised placements, resulting in many children being placed far from their home communities — a situation this provision directly addresses. Aspire Care Collective Ltd is providing a high-specification, purpose-adapted property staffed by experienced, qualified professionals. The provision is designed to offer a genuinely nurturing, home-like environment for a single young person aged 8–18 with complex EBD and/or LD needs, reducing the need for out-of-area or institutional placements. Liaison with Knowsley Children's Services The property is currently undergoing a programme of refurbishment to ensure full compliance with all relevant standards. In parallel, staff training is being updated and all policies and procedures are being comprehensively reviewed and tailored to this specific provision. Our operational preference is to present a fully compliant, inspection-ready premises with completed documentation before formally engaging with Knowsley Children's Services commissioners, so as not to waste either party's time. The granting of planning permission is a necessary precondition to approaching commissioners, which is why this application is being progressed first. Should Knowsley Council's Planning Department require that formal liaison with Children's Services takes place prior to determination, Aspire Care Collective Ltd is prepared to initiate that contact immediately.
b. Evidence that the proposed Children's Care Home location and format aligns with the type of accommodation needed by Knowsley.	The property is a residential dwelling situated within an established suburban neighbourhood. Its format — a family-style home with appropriate internal space, private garden, and proximity to local amenities — directly aligns with the accommodation model required for young people with EBD and LD needs, who benefit most from a settled, non-institutional domestic environment. The solo-placement model (one young person at a time) is particularly well-suited to children with complex EBD presentations, where a low-stimulus, relationship-focused care

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	environment has evidenced significantly better outcomes than multi-placement settings. Knowsley's own commissioning priorities, as reflected in national policy guidance, favour small, community-embedded placements of this type. The property's size, layout, and location make it wholly appropriate for the intended use and consistent with the type of accommodation Knowsley Children's Services seeks for this cohort of young people.
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.	Appropriateness of the Premises The property is a well-proportioned residential dwelling that has been selected specifically for its suitability as a solo-placement children's home. It occupies a residential street with a mix of family homes, providing a normalised community setting. The property includes private front and rear garden space, allowing safe outdoor access. Its layout supports the separation of communal and private spaces, enabling appropriate staffing arrangements while affording the young person in care a genuine sense of home. A full independent premises compliance survey has been commissioned as part of the ongoing refurbishment. This survey identifies and addresses all physical hazards including fire safety, electrical systems, gas appliances, structural integrity, and environmental risks. All remedial works are being undertaken by qualified, specialist contractors. Upon completion, the property will be certified as compliant with all applicable standards. Hazard Identification and Environmental Risk Aspire Care Collective Ltd operates a comprehensive suite of risk assessment policies. Area-level risk assessments are compiled using local crime statistics, environmental mapping, and consultation with relevant agencies. These are not finalised as generic documents but are tailored to the specific young person placed, following a thorough pre-placement assessment conducted jointly with the placing authority's social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). Liaison with Merseyside Police Prior to any placement being made, Aspire Care Collective Ltd will formally liaise with the local Merseyside Police Safer Neighbourhood Team to obtain a current assessment of risks relevant to the property's location. This will include intelligence on County Lines activity, missing persons risks, exploitation networks, and any area-specific concerns. This information will be integrated into the individual young person's risk assessment and care plan. All staff are trained in recognising and responding to indicators of criminal exploitation and will follow the Merseyside Safeguarding Children Partnership (MSCP) escalation procedures where concerns arise.
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	General Approach All risk assessments are individualised. A generic 'worst case scenario' framework is maintained, which is then refined in collaboration with the placing local authority at the pre-placement

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ii. Traffic, Railway, Waterways, CSE, Gangs, Crime, ASB, Missing from Care, Substance Abuse, Drug Involvement iii. Agencies consulted as part of the risk assessment	stage to reflect the specific risks, vulnerabilities, and strengths of the individual young person. i. Internal Property Risks The refurbishment has been designed with risk minimisation as a central principle. Roof access is not possible from within the property. Staircases are fitted with appropriate banisters. Windows on upper floors are fitted with restrictors that comply with current guidance. All hazardous materials, tools, and substances are stored in locked facilities inaccessible to young people. Sharp implements, medications, and cleaning products are stored securely in line with Aspire Care Collective's medicines management and environmental safety policies. ii. External and Community Risks The property is located in a residential area. Traffic management controls are present on surrounding roads. There are no railway lines or waterways in the immediate vicinity. The local area risk assessment will document the nearest relevant hazards and the controls in place, including safe route planning for school journeys and community activities. Risks related to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), gang association, criminal exploitation, Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), missing from care episodes, and substance misuse are all addressed within Aspire Care Collective's policy framework. Individual risk assessments will identify the specific vulnerability level of each young person and apply proportionate, evidence-based responses including monitoring protocols, return-home interview procedures, and multi-agency communication plans. iii. Agencies to Be Consulted The following agencies will be consulted as appropriate in the development of individual risk assessments: Merseyside Police (Safer Neighbourhood Team and MSCP channels), Knowsley Children's Services, the allocated social worker and IRO, the young person's Virtual School Head (where applicable), relevant health services (CAMHS, GP), and any specialist support services identified during the pre-placement assessment. Additional agencies will be engaged on a case-by-case basis.
d. That the premises is located in a suitable and sustainable location; This must include an assessment of accessibility, local amenities and social infrastructure.	Location The property is situated within an established residential area comprising predominantly 2–3 bedroom family homes, which is wholly consistent with the family-home ethos of this provision. The character of the immediate neighbourhood is settled and community-orientated, providing a stable and non-stigmatising environment for a young person in care. Accessibility and Transport The property benefits from good access to public transport, enabling young people to travel independently (where their care plan supports this) to school, appointments, and social activities. The provision's staff vehicles further ensure that all required journeys can be facilitated safely. The location is accessible for visiting social workers, family contact supervisors, and other professionals.

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	Local Amenities Within a short distance of the property there are primary and secondary schools, green spaces suitable for recreational activities, health services including GP practices and pharmacy facilities, and community amenities appropriate to the age range of young people who will be placed. This infrastructure supports the normalisation of daily life and the participation of young people in their community, which is central to Aspire Care Collective's therapeutic approach.
e. That it provides suitable access and parking provision to accommodate activity associated with the premises.	The property is situated approximately 15 metres from a spacious communal car park that provides more than adequate off-street parking for visiting professionals, staff members, and occasional family visitors. Aspire Care Collective operates a car-sharing policy for staff members and actively encourages the use of public transport where practicable. At any given time, the vehicle footprint generated by the provision is no greater than that which would be expected from a typical family occupying a 3-bedroom home. Traffic movements will therefore be minimal and will not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring residents.

Section 2 — Management Plan (Planning Applications and Lawful Development Certificates)

Requirement	Response
a. The name of the company proposing to operate the facility and background.	Aspire Care Collective Ltd is the company proposing to operate this provision. The organisation has been established with the specific purpose of delivering high-quality, small-scale residential care for children and young people with complex EBD and LD needs. The founding directors and management team bring substantial combined experience in children's residential care, including operational management, therapeutic care practice, and regulatory compliance. Aspire Care Collective Ltd is committed to providing care that is child-centred, relationship-based, and outcome-focused. The company's values are grounded in the belief that every young person, regardless of their history or presentation, deserves a safe, nurturing home in which they can develop, grow, and thrive.
b. Whether the home will be registered with Ofsted and any evidence of communication with Ofsted relevant to this home?	This provision operates as an unregulated supported accommodation placement for young people aged 16 and above, or as a non-regulated arrangement for younger children where the care is delivered under a specific contractual arrangement with the placing local authority that does not trigger mandatory Ofsted registration under the current Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015. Notwithstanding the above, Aspire Care Collective Ltd is committed to operating to standards that are consistent with or exceed those required for Ofsted registration. All policies, procedures, staffing ratios, and premises standards are being

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	developed with reference to the Ofsted inspection framework. Should the regulatory position require registration — including as a result of the age range of placements made — the organisation will initiate the Ofsted registration process without delay. Ofsted has not been formally contacted at this stage, as the property refurbishment is ongoing and registration cannot be progressed until a compliant premises is available. This will be addressed in the appropriate sequence following completion of works.
c.i. Type of provision and statement of purpose c.ii. Type of registration	c.i — Type of Provision Aspire Care Collective Ltd operates a solo-placement residential provision offering crisis, short-term, and long-term care as required by the placing authority. The home provides a stable, nurturing, family-style environment for one young person at a time, with care delivered by a consistent team of experienced staff operating on a 24-hour basis. The Statement of Purpose reflects the organisation's commitment to therapeutic, trauma-informed care. The statement of purpose is currently being created but will not be completed or ready to share until the refurbishment is completed as we feel that showcasing a visual of a fully furnished property is key for the children services to appreciate the homely setting that is provided. The provision aims to create a home environment in which the young person in care feels safe, valued, and supported to develop their emotional regulation, social skills, and personal resilience. Individual care plans are developed in partnership with the young person, the placing authority, and all relevant professionals. c.ii — Type of Provision (Needs) The provision is designed to accommodate young people presenting with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) and mild to moderate Learning Disabilities (LD). The home is not equipped to support young people with severe physical disabilities requiring specialist medical intervention, or those with acute substance misuse presentations requiring clinical detoxification support. Each placement is subject to a thorough pre-placement assessment to ensure suitability.
d. How many children would be accommodated and the age range?	The property accommodates one young person at a time (solo placement). The intended age range is 8 to 17 years of age. The solo-placement model is a deliberate and evidence-based choice. Young people with EBD and LD needs respond significantly better in low-stimulus, high-consistency environments where they receive the undivided attention of a well-matched care team. Multi-placement settings frequently exacerbate EBD presentations and can expose vulnerable young people to harmful peer influences.
e. What will happen if any children reach 18? Will they remain?	When a young person in placement approaches their 18th birthday, Aspire Care Collective Ltd will engage proactively with the placing local authority's social worker and the IRO to ensure a planned, timely transition to appropriate adult provision —

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	typically a supported living or semi-independent living arrangement. The decision to extend any placement beyond the age of 18 rests entirely with the placing local authority. Aspire Care Collective Ltd does not operate supported living or semi-independent provision, and therefore young people will transition out of this placement upon reaching adulthood in accordance with their Pathway Plan.
f. What is the ratio of staff to children required — the delivery model?	The standard staffing ratio for this provision is 2 members of staff to 1 young person (2:1) at all times. The property's layout and facilities are capable of supporting an enhanced ratio of 3:1 where an individual young person's assessed needs or risk profile require a higher level of supervision. All shifts are covered by at least two staff members, ensuring no young person is ever in the sole care of a single adult. The management team provides additional oversight and on-call support at all times.
g. What is the likely level of need of the children accommodated? Will the home have a particular specialism?	The provision is designed to support young people with moderate to complex EBD and mild to moderate LD needs. This includes young people who may present with challenging behaviours arising from trauma histories, attachment difficulties, neurodevelopmental conditions (including ADHD, autism spectrum conditions, and similar presentations), and associated mental health difficulties. The home does not operate a single narrow specialism. Aspire Care Collective's philosophy holds that all young people in need of care deserve access to a safe and nurturing home environment. The staffing model, physical environment, and care approach are sufficiently flexible to respond to a range of presentations within the stated client group. Every potential placement is subject to a rigorous pre-placement assessment and suitability meeting involving the provision's management and the placing authority's representative, prior to any young person being admitted to the home.
h. What is the likely shift pattern of staff? How many staff would be at the premises at any one time and when would shift changes occur? A staff rota should be provided.	The provision operates on a 24-hour, 7-day-a-week staffing model. A minimum of two care staff are on duty at all times. Typical shift patterns are structured as follows: Day shift: approximately 07:00–19:00. Night shift: approximately 19:00–07:00. Waking nights are the default; sleep-in arrangements are only considered where the individual young person's risk assessment expressly supports this. Shift handovers are managed within the property and are conducted as a structured briefing between outgoing and incoming staff. Handovers are not conducted at the front of the property and are not visible to neighbours. A detailed staff rota is available and can be provided to the Planning Department or included as a planning condition if required. The rota is reviewed regularly to ensure continuity of the staffing team around the individual young person.

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i. What support officers would be likely to visit the property?	The primary professional visitor to the property will be the young person's allocated social worker from the placing local authority. In-person visits typically occur monthly, with additional contact maintained via Microsoft Teams or telephone between visits, in line with current professional working norms. Additional visitors may include the IRO (at statutory review intervals), CAMHS clinicians or other health professionals, education welfare officers, and any specialist support workers identified in the young person's care plan. All visits are planned and scheduled in advance through the home's management team. This would not have any impact to any surrounding properties and would be comparable with a relative or a friend visiting a family home
j. How would visits be scheduled and would staff/support-worker meetings take place at the property?	All professional visits are scheduled in advance with the home's management team. Ad-hoc visits are accommodated where necessary, subject to the welfare needs of the young person in placement. Routine, one-to-one meetings between visiting professionals and the young person take place at the property where this is appropriate and in the young person's best interest. However, formal multi-agency meetings, statutory reviews, and professional strategy discussions that require the attendance of multiple parties are held off-site — typically at the placing authority's offices or a neutral community venue. This approach ensures the property retains its character as a home rather than an institutional setting, and protects the young person's sense of privacy and security.
k. Is the intention that the children will be home schooled or will they attend local schools? If home schooled, will additional teachers/tutors attend and how often?	Young people placed at the provision will be actively supported and encouraged to participate in a form of structured education appropriate to their needs and circumstances. Options include mainstream school, specialist educational provision (including SEMH schools), or a virtual school programme. Aspire Care Collective Ltd does not propose to provide home tuition at the property as a standard model of education delivery. Where a young person's education plan includes any element of home-based support, this will be arranged in consultation with the Virtual School Head and the placing authority, and will be subject to appropriate DBS checking and professional oversight. The frequency and format of any such visits would be determined by the individual's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or personal education plan. Should an additional tutor ever be required to visit the property this would not be any different than a teenager receiving additional support in a normal family home
l. Would therapeutic care be offered on-site?	Formal clinical therapeutic interventions (such as psychotherapy or CAMHS-led treatments) are not delivered on-site. These are coordinated through external health services and take place in appropriate clinical settings.

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	However, Aspire Care Collective's care model is inherently therapeutic in its approach. All staff are trained in trauma-informed practice, de-escalation, and relationship-based care. The day-to-day environment, routines, and interactions within the home are designed to support emotional regulation and psychological wellbeing in a manner consistent with recognised therapeutic frameworks.
m. Would case reviews take place on or off-site?	Statutory case reviews and Looked After Child (LAC) reviews are held off-site in local authority or neutral community venues, given the number of professionals typically involved and the importance of preserving the home's domestic character. The provision welcomes visits by any placing authority representative and fully supports the young person's participation in all statutory processes. Where a professional wishes to visit the property informally in connection with a young person's care, this is always facilitated.
n. Are children ever left alone unsupervised at the property?	No. A minimum of two members of staff are present at the property at all times, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The young person in placement is never left alone in the property without adult supervision. The young person is of course afforded full privacy in their own bedroom and bathroom at all times, in keeping with their right to personal space and dignity. Supervision is maintained in a manner appropriate to the young person's age, assessed risk, and individual care plan.
o. Under what circumstances are children allowed to leave the property?	Decisions about when and how a young person may leave the property are made on an individual basis, guided by the young person's care plan, risk assessment, and the instructions of the placing authority's social worker and IRO. Some young people are assessed as able to travel independently (e.g. to school or local amenities), while others require staff accompaniment at all times when outside the property. In all cases, the specific arrangements are documented in the young person's individual care plan and reviewed regularly. Staff maintain clear communication protocols to ensure the whereabouts of the young person is known at all times.
p. Would staff members be informed/aware if a child left the property?	Yes. At all times, at least two members of staff are present in the property. Any movement by the young person — whether planned or unplanned — is immediately known to the on-duty care team. Where a young person leaves with staff accompaniment, this is recorded in the daily log. Where a young person leaves without authorisation, the home's Missing from Care protocol is activated immediately, in line with Merseyside Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and the placing authority's own protocols.
q. Is there a curfew?	Curfew arrangements, where applicable, are specified in the individual young person's care plan and agreed with the placing authority. As no specific placement has been made at the time of this application, a specific curfew time cannot be stated.

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	Aspire Care Collective operates on the basis that young people's routines and boundaries should be age-appropriate, proportionate to their assessed risks, and consistent with what would be expected of a child in a stable family home. Young people are not expected to return at unreasonable hours, and all routines are structured to support healthy sleep patterns, school attendance, and general wellbeing.
r. What would happen in the event of a breach of the curfew?	Any breach of an agreed curfew arrangement is addressed in accordance with the young person's individual Missing from Care plan and the home's behaviour management policy. Responses are proportionate, non-punitive, and focused on understanding the reasons for the breach and reducing the risk of recurrence. Where a curfew breach constitutes a missing from care episode, the home's Missing from Care protocol is activated without delay, including notification to Merseyside Police and the placing authority's out-of-hours service. All incidents are documented and reviewed as part of the ongoing care planning process.
s. What security provisions are proposed e.g. security and access controls on doors?	The property will be secured to a standard appropriate for a residential children's home, including quality external door locks, window restrictors on upper floors, secure storage for hazardous materials, and coded or restricted access to relevant areas of the property where required by an individual young person's care plan. Security measures are proportionate and considered — the aim is to create a home that feels safe and nurturing rather than institutional. All security provisions will comply with fire safety regulations and will not compromise emergency evacuation routes.
t. Would CCTV be installed?	Yes. CCTV will be installed at the property covering external areas including the front entrance, rear garden access, and key communal areas. Internal areas — in particular bedrooms and bathrooms — will not be subject to any form of surveillance, in accordance with the young person's right to privacy and dignity. The CCTV system will be operated in compliance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and relevant ICO guidance. A CCTV policy will be in place, and young people and relevant professionals will be informed of the system's operation. CCTV will not impact on the character of the property to the outside and is directly comparable with ring door camera that is fitted in a high percentage of family homes
u. How would local residents know how to raise a concern in the event of an issue?	Aspire Care Collective Ltd is committed to being a responsible and considerate neighbour and operate a "good neighbour policy" that can be shared upon completion on request. Prior to any young person being placed at the property, the management team intends to introduce themselves to immediately adjacent neighbours and provide a direct contact number for the home's management team. A clear complaints and concerns process will be in place, enabling any member of the local community to raise a concern

Requirement	Response
	with the home's management directly. A dedicated WhatsApp contact group will be established for immediate neighbours, providing a simple, accessible channel for raising day-to-day matters. All concerns will be acknowledged promptly and addressed within a reasonable timescale.
v. How long is each placement within the children's care home?	Aspire Care Collective Ltd operates a model that accommodates crisis (short-notice), short-term, and long-term placements, as directed by the placing local authority. The organisation's preference, consistent with best practice in children's residential care, is to support long-term, stable placements wherever possible. Placement length is ultimately determined by the placing authority in accordance with the young person's Care Plan, LAC review outcomes, and the assessment of the social worker and IRO. The provision will work collaboratively with all parties to ensure that any transition — whether planned or emergency — is managed in the young person's best interests.
w. Would any rooms be used as a dedicated meeting, training or therapy room?	No. All rooms within the property are used for domestic residential purposes consistent with a family home. No room is designated or used as a meeting room, training facility, or therapy room. Multi-professional meetings and case reviews are held off-site.
x. Would the parents or family of the children visit the home and, if so, how often?	Family contact arrangements are determined by the Care Order or care plan and are managed under the direction of the placing authority's social worker and IRO. Where family contact is appropriate and authorised, Aspire Care Collective fully supports and facilitates this. Contact visits may take place at the property, at a neutral community venue, or at the family home, depending on what is assessed as being in the young person's best interest. In-home visits by family members are managed carefully to ensure the young person's sense of safety and security in their home is preserved. The frequency of visits is set by the placing authority and may vary considerably between individual placements. Family visits would not have any impact to any surrounding properties and would be comparable with a normal family visit to a relatives hoome
y. What dedicated parking provision exists and how will vehicle movements be controlled?	There is no dedicated on-site parking. However, an unusually large communal car park is situated approximately 15 metres from the property, providing more than sufficient off-street parking for staff members and visiting professionals. Aspire Care Collective operates a car-sharing policy for staff and encourages the use of public transport wherever practicable. The total vehicle movements generated by this provision will be no greater — and in many respects significantly less — than those generated by an ordinarily occupied 3-bedroom family home. There will be no parking or traffic impact on the local area beyond that which is entirely normal for a residential street.

Additional Information

Aspire Care Collective Ltd has endeavoured to answer all questions in this proforma fully and transparently. Where specific details relating to an individual young person's care plan have not been provided, this is because no placement has yet been made — such details are, by their very nature, individualised and cannot be determined in advance of a specific referral.

The organisation is at an active stage of property refurbishment and policy development, both of which are being progressed concurrently. The sequence of steps — securing planning permission, completing the premises to the required standard, finalising policies and procedures, and then approaching local authority commissioning departments — is the standard and most efficient pathway to establishing a compliant, high-quality provision.

Aspire Care Collective Ltd is committed to being a positive presence in the local community, a responsible operator, and a provider of genuinely outstanding care for vulnerable young people. If the Planning Department requires any additional information, further documentation, or wishes to impose specific planning conditions to address any of the matters raised in this proforma, the organisation welcomes that engagement and is ready to respond promptly.