



PLANNING STATEMENT

14 OLD ROUGH LANE, KIRKBY, L33 8XB

Change of use of a dwelling (C3a) as a Mother and
Baby Parent Assessment Centre

1. Introduction

This statement has been prepared on behalf of Aruna Care NW LTD to change the use of 14 Old Rough Lane from a C3a use, to a C2 Mother and Baby Parent Assessment Centre for maximum of 2 Parents and 2 babies old with 24-hour care provided by carers.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted plans and application form, which together make up the planning application.

This Planning Application is supported by the following information and documentation:

- Existing and Proposed Plans
- Planning Statement
- Aruna Care NW Ltd Statement of Purpose

2. Application Site

The application site is a two storey three-bedroom semi-detached house situated on Old Rough Lane. There is hard standing to the front of the property with a large garden to the rear. The area is residential in character.

There are no parking restrictions on Old Rough Lane and there are bus stops in close proximity, on Old Rough Lane itself.

The current residential property has been occupied as a single-family unit C3a since its construction.

As detailed on the existing plans, the ground floor that comprises of a Lounge, Kitchen, Dining Area and conservatory and the first floor comprises of 3No. Bedrooms and bathroom with separate WC.

3. Proposed Development

The property at 14 Old Rough Lane is currently in use as a Class C3 - Residential Dwelling. The applicant however wishes to change the use of the property to a Mother and Baby Assessment Centre. The purpose of the Centre would be to assess whether parents have the necessary skills and capabilities to look after their children; with a view to providing them with the necessary support and guidance moving forward.

The proposal would involve the use of two bedrooms in the property being used to house a parent with their child with the third bedroom being used as an office for staff. The ground floor will have a communal living area, kitchen and conservatory space. The parents would be accommodated at the property for 12–13 weeks, offering a structured and closely monitored environment supported by a team of skilled professionals. These placements are designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of family dynamics and parenting capabilities.

Weekly meetings are held to review the progress of each family's plan, address areas for improvement, and set clear goals and activities for the week ahead.

Throughout the 12-week programme, detailed weekly documentation is maintained, including daily records and progress reports. These capture the quality of care provided to the child, the parent's self-care practices, and the level of support and guidance offered. All documentation is shared with the Local Authority, ensuring transparent collaboration and accountability.

Upon arrival, families are warmly welcomed with a two-week initial assessment. This introductory phase identifies the family's strengths and establishes a solid foundation for ongoing support and development.

The assessments are carried out by the qualified Manager and her team of qualified support workers, the social worker will assess the parents weekly as part of their parenting assessment.

At the conclusion of the placement, a comprehensive parenting assessment report is prepared by a Registered Social Worker within our team. This detailed report plays a crucial role in decision-making processes, including use in Court Proceedings, to determine whether the placement should end, be extended, or if additional services are required to support long-term, sustainable family outcomes.

The maximum number of parents residing at the site would therefore be two, with their two children (4 persons in total).

The assessment centre will operate with a robust 2:1 staffing ratio, providing two dedicated staff members on-site around the clock. A manager is present weekdays to oversee operations and remains on call for additional support. Overnight, a vigilant staff member is on waking night duty from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., ensuring continuous care and security. This unwavering support structure creates a safe, stable, and therapeutic environment tailored to each family's unique needs.

The team will be made up of highly qualified staff including a registered manager, assistant manager and support workers. There would also be a "responsible individual" assigned to the property. The RI would oversee management and ensure the assessment centre is safe, well run and complies with regulations. The RI would visit the property on an ad-hoc basis and this is only likely to be once or twice weekly.

Parents will be supported and assessed as to how satisfactorily they can complete certain tasks relating to the bringing up of their children, such as the ability to buy and prepare food for their family. Whilst at the property, parents and children will only leave the premises accompanied by trained staff, until it has been determined their unaccompanied excursions are possible. Furthermore, whilst at the property, the use of alcohol or non-prescription drugs will be strictly prohibited and any misuse will result in immediate exclusion.

Families would be referred to the Parent and Child Assessment Centre either by a Local Authority or Court. Such families would fall into one of the following categories:

- Parents with children on child protection plans;
- Parents seeking reunification with their children;
- Parents with children which a Local Authority might undertake care proceedings;
- Parents with learning disabilities, mental illnesses, alcohol or substance abuse difficulties where the children's care and needs require assessment;
- Families where domestic violence has occurred;
- Expectant mothers; and,
- Parents learning parenting skills.

Whilst at the property, assessments will be conducted by an experienced and qualified team of social workers, family assessment workers and managers. The assessments will focus on the parenting skills of those referred to the centre, the emotional and physical development of the children referred to the centre, promotion of parent's self-esteem and confidence, psychological assessments, and, child development and care needs. External professionals will also be brought in if required to assist in the assessment of families (such as mental health professionals). Transitional plans will also be developed whilst families are at the property, so that they have the skills to function long term within the community.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) are responsible for inspecting and imposing conditions upon the registration of family assessment centres, such as that proposed here at 14 Old Rough Lane. OFSTED will

be in a position to consider the registration of 14 Old Rough Lane upon the grant of planning permission. It is therefore the case that OFSTED has powers to closely monitor proceedings at 14 Old Rough Lane, to ensure that the requirements under the Care Standards Act and Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002 are met.

Consequently, a separate regulatory regime (separate to land-use planning) exists with regard to the inspection of Parent and Child Assessment Centres. Should standards not be maintained, proceedings to ensure the facility either undergoes improvement or ultimately closes can be implemented by OFSTED.

In addition to registering for OFSTED, Aruna Care NW will register with the Quality care commission, which is in line with governing bodies required for a Residential family centre.

The property's location is considered appropriate for use as a Parent and Child Assessment Centre, rather than a more institutionalised setting, because it will typify a residential environment. As such, it will be possible to simulate a typical household, and consequently assess innovatively the ability of parents to look after their children, providing training and support to parents as required.

Safeguarding the well-being of parents and their babies or young children is the highest priority of the applicant therefore CCTV will be installed both internally and externally to uphold this commitment. The surveillance may be used selectively as a tool to support assessments and maintain a secure environment. We ensure that any monitoring strictly adheres to regulatory guidelines, ethical standards, and best practices, respecting privacy while remaining proportionate to the specific needs outlined in each family's assessment plan.

4. Planning Policy

Section 8 of the NPPF promotes healthy communities. Paragraph 69 promotes the facilitation of social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities. In particular, planning policies and decisions should promote opportunities for meetings between members of the community who might not otherwise come into contact with each other; as well as safe and accessible environments.

The property will continue in residential use, albeit it will provide temporary housing for parents and their children, whilst they are being assessed by trained professionals. This particular use would additionally help to ensure that the skills of the children's parents are developed to a sufficient standard whereby a safe and harmonious family unit can be facilitated; to the benefit of the wider community. The proposed change of use would therefore complement the social function of sustainable development, as set out in the NPPF.

There would be a small amount of employment associated with this use, which would help to contribute towards meeting the economic function of sustainable

development, as set out in the NPPF. The level of employment would be commensurate to the property's location, with the overall operation of the property not readily discernible from neighbouring dwellings. There would be no adverse environmental impact arising out of the proposals.

5. Material Considerations

The fear of crime can constitute a material planning consideration however, the presence of staff members at the property at all times should help to alleviate the propensity for issues to arise. Furthermore, it may be possible for the Council to impose a condition upon any grant of planning permission, such as requiring an Operational Management Plan to be submitted and approved by the Council, to seek to ensure that the propensity for such issues to arise is further reduced.

In any event, as many appeal decisions have outlined, there needs to be a causal link between the proposed use and the fear of crime. At this stage however, no substantive evidence appears to have been submitted demonstrating such a link exists.

Furthermore, as noted previously, the use of alcohol and non-prescription drugs at the site will not be permitted. Moreover, families will be fully accompanied during off-site excursions for at least the first two weeks of living at the property. This should ensure that any risk of anti-social behaviour is minimised, as the propensity for such behaviour will be reduced. Families will not be able to leave the property unaccompanied at all until it has been determined during the process of assessment that it would be safe for them to do so.

6. Relevant Planning History

The application proposal seeks planning permission change the use of 14 Old Rough Lane from a C3a use, to a C2 Mother and Baby Parent Assessment Centre for maximum of 2 Parents and 2 babies old with 24-hour care provided by carers however it is worth noting the property has already received approval to use the residential dwelling as a children's home which falls under class C2 use (Application 24/00567/CLD) therefore there is no change in the Planning Use Class of the property.

Due to the limited number of Mother and Baby Parent assessment centres across the North West, the applicant believes having this facility would be more beneficial to the local authority and positive weight should be given to this.

7. Precedent Applications

There are recent applications setting precedent for similar proposals. These include the following:

Liverpool City Council - Application Number 18F/3132 - 1 Buckingham Road L13 8AY (Appendix 1).

Liverpool City Council - Application Number 23F/0345 - 8 Buckingham Road L13 8AZ (Appendix 2).

Hyndburn Council - Application Number 11/22/0004 - 15 Queens Road Accrington BB5 6AR (Appendix 3).

Ribble Valley Council - Application Number 3/2024/0579 - 114 and 16 Inglewhite Road and 1A Crumpax Avenue Longridge PR3 3JS (Appendix 4).

Harlow Council - Application Number HW/FUL/17/00310 - 165 Fir Park Harlow Essex CM19 4JU (Appendix 5).

8. Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, Arena Care NW Ltd are looking to establish a Parent Assessment Centre at these premises, which will be a caring environment, blend into the neighbourhood, support local families, providing both valuable services to the community as well as contributing positivity to the community.

The proposed scheme we have submitted is in accordance with both National and Local Authority Planning policies and has been demonstrated as part of this planning statement that the proposal represents an appropriate and acceptable form of development. It therefore can be concluded that the proposal will:

1. Deliver a sustainable form of development in a suitable location.
 2. Not have an overbearing impact on the street scene.
 3. Not have detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the street scene.
 4. Deliver an appropriate pattern and fenestration to the front elevation in keeping with the character of adjacent built forms, and
 5. Be acceptable in all other respects.
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The proposal provides a use 'fit for purpose' which is architecturally in keeping with the aesthetic / character of the area, with the property remaining distinct in its form within its own definite boundaries.

Arena Care NW Ltd and their professional team are confident that the sensitive, comprehensive and cohesive approach to design and access is reflected in the quality of the scheme presented, and we trust that this will be recognised by the Council and others sharing an interest in this site and our proposal.

Furthermore, the property has recently received approval to received approval to use the residential dwelling as a children's home which falls under class C2 use (Application 24/00567/CLD) therefore there would be no further change in the Planning Use Class the property could operate.

In light of the above, it is respectfully requested that the planning department consider these points in their determination of this application and permission be granted for this proposal.
