

Local and National Need Statement

Proposed Use: Residential Dwelling with Care (Class C3(b)) to Residential Care Home (Class C2)

Address: 7 Glennon Close, Reading, RG30 3HT

Prepared on behalf of: Nehal Ahmed

Local Planning Authority: Reading Borough Council

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1.0 Introduction

This statement demonstrates the clear national and local demand for small-scale residential care homes for children such as the one proposed at 7 Glennon Close, Reading.

The proposed home will accommodate up to three young people aged 7–16 with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) within a structured and supportive residential environment.

The proposal directly contributes to the ability of local authorities to meet their statutory duties under the Children Act 1989, the Children and Families Act 2014, and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010, which require local authorities to secure sufficient accommodation for looked-after children within or near their home area.

This statement demonstrates that the provision of small, community-based residential homes remains an essential component of meeting both national safeguarding obligations and local sufficiency strategies.

2.0 National Context and Growing Demand

Across England, the number of children entering the care system has continued to increase steadily.

According to the Department for Education, there are now over 83,000 looked-after children in England, representing the highest figure recorded to date.

A significant proportion of these children require residential care placements due to complex needs, trauma, or behavioural challenges that cannot be adequately supported in foster care settings.

National evidence consistently demonstrates that the number of children requiring residential placements continues to rise, while local authorities frequently experience difficulty securing suitable placements close to a child's home area. As a result, many children are placed at considerable distances from their communities due to a shortage of appropriate provision.

These challenges have been widely recognised by government and regulatory bodies, resulting in an increased emphasis on the delivery of small, community-integrated children's homes capable of providing stable and therapeutic environments.

3.0 Regional Pressures in the South East

The South East of England faces particular pressures in relation to the provision of children's residential care.

High property values, planning constraints, and limited availability of suitable housing stock have contributed to a shortfall in the number of operational children's homes across the region.

Consequently, local authorities are frequently required to place children outside of their home area.

Out-of-area placements are widely recognised as having negative implications for children's wellbeing. They can disrupt educational continuity, limit access to family members, weaken established support networks, and reduce consistent engagement with social workers and local services.

For children who have already experienced instability, such displacement can significantly impact long-term emotional and developmental outcomes.

4.0 Local Need – Reading Borough Council Sufficiency Strategy

Reading Borough Council's Children Looked After Sufficiency Strategy identifies an ongoing challenge in securing appropriate residential placements for children with complex needs.

The strategy recognises that the Council must ensure sufficient local provision to meet demand and reduce reliance on external placements.

A key objective is to increase the availability of placements within the borough, enabling children to remain closer to their communities, education providers, and support services.

The strategy also highlights the importance of delivering smaller, well-managed residential settings that can provide tailored care for children with emotional and behavioural needs.

The proposed development directly responds to these priorities by delivering a small-scale residential home within an established residential area.

5.0 Benefits of Small Residential Homes

The proposed home at 7 Glennon Close reflects the type of provision encouraged by both national policy and local authority strategies.

Smaller residential homes provide a more stable and nurturing environment, closely resembling a family household. This enables young people to develop within a setting that supports routine, structure and emotional security.

Such settings also allow for a higher level of individualised care, enabling staff to respond more effectively to each child's specific needs.

In addition, integrating residential care within established communities promotes social inclusion and reduces the stigma often associated with larger or more institutional forms of care.

For children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties in particular, smaller therapeutic environments are widely recognised as delivering improved outcomes.

6.0 Alignment with Local Authority Objectives

The proposed development aligns closely with the objectives identified within Reading Borough Council's sufficiency planning.

It contributes to increasing the availability of local residential placements, providing a small and stable care environment, and supporting children with complex emotional and behavioural needs within the borough.

By reducing reliance on out-of-area placements, the development supports improved safeguarding outcomes and greater placement stability.

The provision of small, well-managed homes such as this enables local authorities to develop a more resilient and responsive placement system.

7.0 Conclusion

There is a clear and sustained need for additional small-scale residential children's homes at both national and local levels.

Reading Borough Council's own sufficiency strategy highlights the importance of increasing local provision to meet demand and improve outcomes for looked-after children.

The proposed home at 7 Glennon Close represents a proportionate and policy-aligned response to this need, providing a carefully managed residential setting for young people with emotional and behavioural needs.

The development will support the delivery of local placements, reduce reliance on distant accommodation, and contribute positively to the wider social care system, while remaining fully compatible with the residential character of the surrounding area.