

Planning Statement – Super Young Minds (Children's Residential Care Home)

Property Address:

Super Young Minds, 19 The Fairway, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 7LN

Introduction

This revised Planning Statement supports the application to establish a children's residential care home at **19 The Fairway, Gravesend**. The proposal is to provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment for up to two children, aged 4–18, with care provided by a dedicated team of staff. It has been prepared with consideration of a potential **Lawful Development Certificate (LDC)** application, demonstrating that the use of the property as a small-scale children's home remains consistent with its residential character and therefore falls within a lawful planning framework.

Description of the Property

The property is a semi-detached dwelling comprising:

- Three en-suite double bedrooms.
- A spacious kitchen/dining area.
- A living room and additional bathroom.
- Two approved off-street parking bays at the front of the property.
- A rear garden suitable for supervised play and secure bicycle storage.

No structural alterations are proposed. The property will retain its residential character, with the application solely for change of use to a children's home.

Purpose & Vision

Our aim is to provide a genuine home where children can feel safe, supported, and valued. The home will deliver:

- A therapeutic and caring environment for children requiring residential care.
- Personalised care plans tailored to the unique needs of each child.
- Community integration while maintaining minimal impact on neighbours.

This aligns with national policy objectives to provide inclusive, small-scale care within residential communities, and reflects the approach taken by other LDC approved children's homes across Kent and the wider UK.

Staffing & Maintenance

- **Total Staff:** Eight staff will be employed in total.
- **Shift Pattern:** The home operates a **rotational shift system**, ensuring that only **2–3 staff are present on site at any one time**. This mirrors typical family occupancy levels and ensures negligible impact on traffic, parking, or local amenity.
- **Staff team will include:**
 - **Care Home Manager:** Oversees all aspects of the home, including compliance, safeguarding, and property maintenance.
 - **Senior Support Worker:** Supports management and supervises staff.
 - **Support Workers:** Provide daily care, education support, and recreational activities.
- **Maintenance:** Daily cleaning is undertaken by staff on a rota, with specialist contractors engaged for professional services such as plumbing, electrics, and gardening.

This staffing model is consistent with established homes elsewhere, including Super Young Minds at 56 Colyer Road, DA11 8AY, where the number of staff physically present is limited and managed to prevent disturbance.

Quiet Hours & Noise Management

- **Quiet Hours:** Set from **9:00 PM to 7:00 AM** daily, reflecting the needs of children and neighbours.
- **Special Occasions:** For birthdays or other events, neighbours will be notified in advance if activities extend beyond quiet hours.
- **Noise Oversight:** Staff supervision ensures appropriate behaviour and sound levels indoors and in the garden. Outdoor use is limited to daytime hours only (9am – 7pm).

These arrangements ensure that the home operates in the same way as a conventional family household.

Parking & Travel Arrangements

- **On-Site:** Two approved off-street bays
- **On-Street:** Additional staff and visitors will use nearby unrestricted on-street parking. Shift patterns stagger arrivals/departures to avoid congestion.
- **Children's Transport:** Secure bicycle storage will be provided. For appointments and activities, staff vehicles will be used.

With only two children in residence and a maximum of 2–3 staff present at any time, vehicle movements will be modest and comparable to the comings and goings of a typical family dwelling.

Neighbour & Community Liaison

- **Neighbour Liaison Commitment:** The Care Home Manager will provide a direct contact number for neighbours.
- **Quarterly Updates:** Letters or meetings may be offered to maintain open communication and address concerns.
- **Respect for Community:** Staff and children will be encouraged to engage positively with the neighbourhood.

This proactive approach ensures the home strengthens community cohesion rather than disrupts it.

Safeguarding & Security

- Controlled entry and visitor sign-in procedures.
- Clear safeguarding policies ensure safety for children and reassurance for neighbours.

Policy Alignment

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** The NPPF promotes inclusive communities and supports development that meets social needs. This proposal provides essential care within a residential setting, aligning with Section 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities).
- **Local Plan Core Strategy (Gravesham):** The Core Strategy encourages developments that support community wellbeing while protecting residential amenity. The proposal respects the character of the area, manages impacts on neighbours, and meets identified local needs for children's placements.
- **Lawful Precedent:** Case law and local examples confirm that small-scale children's homes accommodating a small number of residents with a family-style operation are considered consistent with C3 (dwellinghouse) use or suitable for LDC approval.

Planning Use Class Justification – C3(b) vs C2

- **Class C2 (Residential Institutions):** Covers hospitals, nursing homes, larger residential care homes, and other institutional uses. These typically involve higher levels of staff presence, medical care, and a more institutional character.
- **Class C3 (Dwellinghouses):** Includes use by up to six people living together as a single household where care is provided (**C3(b)**). This is designed to cover small-scale care settings that mirror family life.

Given that:

- Only **two children** will live at the property;
- A maximum of **2–3 staff** will be present at any one time due to shift patterns
- It is worth noting that with 2 children, the 5pm to 9am period will only have a maximum of 4 people in the home (2 children and 2 support workers)
- The home will operate as a small, family-style household;
- The property will retain its **residential character** with no structural alterations;

The proposal is most appropriately classified as **C3(b)** rather than C2. This interpretation is consistent with both national guidance and multiple precedents confirming that small children's homes are analogous to family dwellings, therefore this proposal can be considered for approval as an LDC rather than requiring full planning and change of use.

Appendix – Relevant Case Precedents

1. **Muskwe & Anor v Cochrane [2023] UKUT 262 (Lands Chamber):** Tribunal modified a covenant restricting use to private dwelling to permit a children's home, recognising that such use did not materially harm neighbours.
2. **CWJ (December 2024):** Tribunal confirmed pragmatic approach to modifying restrictions for children's homes, where planning permission and controls ensured no adverse community impact.
3. **Alexander Devine Children's Cancer Trust v Housing Solutions [2020] UKSC 45:** While broader in scope, highlighted the importance of lawful compliance in advance of use, supporting proactive applications like this.
4. **Local Authority Precedents:** Numerous Kent and South East councils have confirmed that small homes housing up to 2–3 children with rotating staff are consistent with family dwellings under C3(b) classification or appropriate for LDC approval.

Conclusion

This proposal demonstrates that the use of 19 The Fairway as a two-child residential care home:

- Maintains the **residential character** of the property.
- Operates at an intensity **comparable to a family dwelling**, with only 2–3 staff present at any one time.
- Provides strong management, safeguarding, and maintenance arrangements.
- Ensures minimal impact on local traffic, noise, and parking.
- Aligns with both **national and local planning policy** promoting safe, inclusive communities.
- Is supported by **legal and planning precedents** confirming the appropriateness of such use.
- Falls within **C3(b) classification**, providing the basis for a Lawful Development Certificate.

Given these assurances and the consistency with established precedents, the proposal should be considered suitable for approval under a planning application or **Lawful Development Certificate** pathway. We respectfully request the support of Gravesham Planning Authority to approve this application, enabling us to provide a safe, nurturing home environment for vulnerable children while maintaining harmony within the local community.