

**Sticks N Stones
Maxine Taylor
42 Birmingham Lane,
Meltham,
Holmfirth,
HD95LH**

Monday 8th September 2025

Re: Appeal Against Restriction Limiting Care to a Maximum of 9 Children at [Sticks N Stones, Birmingham Lane, Meltham]

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to respectfully appeal the planning restriction which currently limits the number of children in my care to a maximum of 9 at Sticks N Stones to 15, this number is not for the day time care of the children but for an hour or so at the end of the day. While I fully recognise the importance of ensuring childcare provision is managed carefully, I believe the modest increase to 15 children can be permitted without any adverse effect on the community, while delivering clear benefits to local families and supporting national priorities.

Grounds for Appeal

1. Established Practice With No Change to Impact

We have offered before- and after-school care since opening, and our operations will remain unchanged from our proposal we put forward at our last application. There will be no increase in traffic, no increase in noise, and no disruption at drop-off or collection times. Numbers also naturally stagger – day-care children start to leave once our school children arrive, and many school children can attend only after 4:15 due to clubs and activities.

2. Evidence From Noise Testing

The Kirklees Council sound test was conducted when 15 children were present for the full 5 days, (which i'm not asking for) and was passed. A further acoustic test carried out with 8 children this confirmed that even if numbers doubled – which we are not proposing – noise levels would still be acceptable. This provides independent evidence that our setting does not create undue noise impact. All the tests, results and plans that were covered at the last hearing were all based on the number of children already attending the setting, I am not asking for the number I already have to be extended, I'm asking for the number I have already to be allowed to carry on.

3. Meeting Local Need

Meltham Moor School does not provide pre-school after-care, leaving parents without a safe and reliable option for pick-up and drop-off. The Moor Fun Wrap Around Club also don't offer pre school drop off or pick ups and is also at full capacity and have approached us for support many times, with the school itself also asking for our help. This demonstrates a genuine shortage of childcare places that our setting is already helping to address.

4. Continuity of Care

Going forward our wraparound provision will only be offered to children who attended our setting prior to school age. This ensures continuity and prevents any influx of new enrolments from outside our existing families. This is a unique selling point to our childminding service which insures that the children have followed on care at times in their life when changes are happening and they are progressing in their education. Stability plays a huge part in a Childs learning path.

5. Responsible Operation

We will not advertise this service publicly or expand beyond our current childminding business. Our provision remains small-scale, personal, and community-focused.

6. Space and Staffing Compliance

We have the correct square meterage for the number of children requested. We are also over-ratio in our staffing levels, operating with more staff per child than required. For context, one of the other childminders in the area operate with 2 staff for 11 children, while we maintain higher levels of supervision. We remain fully compliant with Ofsted regulations for space, staffing, and safeguarding. (see floor measurements attached)

7. Commitment to Compromise

When the original complaint was raised, I voluntarily reduced my numbers as a gesture of good faith and compromise. Since then, we have continued to operate responsibly and without disruption to neighbours or the community.

8. Alignment with Government Policy

Our provision is directly trying to support the Government's Wraparound Childcare Expansion Programme, which aims to increase access to affordable before- and after-school childcare for working families. Allowing this modest increase of 6 would contribute to meeting this policy objective locally, at no additional burden to the Council. I would also like to point out that this will not be the number every night, this is 1 specific after school day on a Thursday for no longer than 1 hour, all other days are lower and decrease on different days.

9. Alignment with OFSTED's EYFS

Staff: child ratios

3.47 Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.

Childminders must ensure that children are adequately supervised, especially whilst eating, and decide how to use any assistants to ensure children's needs are met. Childminders must inform parents and/or carers about how any assistants are organised, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.

3.48 Children must usually be within sight and hearing of the childminder and or/assistants and always within sight or hearing. See paragraph 3.63 which applies when children are eating.

3.49 The ratio requirements below apply to the total number of people available to work directly with children. Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made, but childminders cannot have more than six children under the age of eight per person providing care.

3.50 At any one time, childminders (whether providing the childminding on domestic or non-domestic premises) may care for a maximum of six children under the age of eight. This includes the childminder's own children and any other children for whom they are responsible, such as those being fostered.

3.51 Of these six children:

- A maximum of three may be young children (a child is a young child until 31st August following his or her fifth birthday).

- There should only be one child under the age of one.

26 Ofsted or their CMA, depending on how they are registered, may determine that childminders must observe a higher staff: child ratio than outlined here to ensure the safety and welfare of children.

3.52 Any care provided for older children must not adversely affect the care of children receiving early years provision.

3.53 If a childminder can demonstrate to parents and/or carers and, depending on how they are registered, Ofsted inspector or their CMA, that the individual needs of all the children are being met, exceptions to the usual ratios can be made. Examples of permissible exceptions include, but are not limited to:

- When childminders are caring for siblings, or
- when caring for their own child, or
- to maintain continuity of care, or
- if children aged three to five only attend the childminding setting before and/or after a normal school day, and/or during school holidays, they may be cared for at the same time as three other young children.

In all circumstances, the total number of children under the age of eight being cared for must not exceed six per person.

3.54 If a childminder employs an assistant or works with another childminder, each childminder (or assistant) may care for the number of children permitted by the ratios specified above.
Indoor space requirements

3.81 The premises and equipment must be organised in a way that meets the needs of children. Providers must meet the following indoor space requirements where indoor activity in a building(s) forms the main part of (or is integral to) the provision:

- **Children under two years: 3.5m² per child.**
- **Two-year-olds: 2.5m² per child.**
- **Children aged three to five years: 2.3m² per child.**

3.82 These judgements should be based on useable areas of the rooms used by the children, not including storage areas, thoroughfares, dedicated staff areas, cloakrooms, utility rooms, and toilets. Childminders should consider what areas within their kitchens are safely usable.

10. Complaints considered

I acknowledge that certain complaints were raised regarding this application and we have carefully considered each of them and we have listened and addressed them and made changes where possible.

11. Drop-off and Pick-up Times and Arrangements

Concerns have been raised about potential disruption during drop-off and pick-up periods, including suggestions that we are not fully adhering to our agreed schedule. We were expecting that this was probably going to happen and will probably be an ongoing issue, so I have approached all parents to re-iterate the importance of trying to adhere to these times, even though we believe that we do follow them consistently and will do this regular. (See pick up and drop of letter attached)

12. To further minimise any impact,

We will be using the side entrance to our extension for drop-offs and pick-ups within the next few weeks. This measure is intended to prevent any noise previously reported as disturbing, thereby reducing disruption to neighbouring properties.

13. Noise/Disturbance

Additionally, the doorbell volume has been turned down to a level that minimises disturbance to neighbours. Alongside the revised drop-off and pick-up arrangements, these steps ensure that any impact on the local environment is negligible.

Overall, these concerns have been fully considered and addressed, and I respectfully submit that they do not constitute sufficient grounds to refuse the application.

Request

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Committee reconsider the current restriction and allow the increase in the number of children permitted from 9 to 15 (please see additional attendance support letter attached). This would not change how we operate in practice but would allow us to continue meeting urgent local childcare needs in a safe, sustainable, and nationally supported way.

Thank you for your time and careful consideration and time.

Yours sincerely,
Maxine Taylor
Owner of Sticks N Stones