

Mini Mansions Children's Homes Ltd – proposed children's home at 15 Orchard Street West, Longwood, Huddersfield, HD3 4TE

My name is Laura Counce and I am a Director of a new company called Mini Mansions Children's Homes Ltd. I have set up the company with my partner, Neil Heath, after many years of running children's homes; for the last 3 years I have been working as a consultant supporting Local Authorities to run good children's homes and set up new ones. I have a proven track record of running homes that are rated Good and Outstanding providing stable and nurturing placements to looked after children.

I have purchased the above property with the intention of setting up a children's home to provide a home from home environment to children who need care and stability in their lives. Having worked for Kirklees Council previously in a Senior Management role in Children's Social Care I am already in touch with Tom Brailsford, the Director of Children's Services and Stewart Horn, the Head of Commissioning. I intend to place local children looked after by Kirklees Council in the home. Tom Brailsford told me when I met with him that Kirklees would like exclusivity over this home as they really need more local placements for children. He has also offered to support the company with identifying a 2nd house to open another home.

1. Introduction and the building

The Management Plan provides information about the day-to-day operation of the new Children's Home and its integration within the local community. There will be no visible changes to the exterior of the building; the gardens and exterior areas were very overgrown and messy when we bought the property; we have already started to clear all of this making the property much more appealing and a better fit with others in the area. The interior will also remain the same in terms of the layout; we are making improvements to the property such as a new kitchen and will be installing a fire alarm system and some additional fire doors.

Waste will be managed accordingly as Trade Waste; the bins are currently stored in the front garden of the house and are of adequate size to manage the waste that will be generated.

2. Scope of the Home

The Children's Home will care for up to two children aged 11-17 years old and will be registered with Ofsted, who regulate all children's homes in England. The home will be managed by a Registered Manager and overseen by myself.

Children are no longer able to live with their parents for a number of reasons i.e., neglect, domestic abuse in the family, parental substance misuse, poor parental mental health, limited parental boundaries and unable to keep the child safe. When it is no longer safe for children to live with their parents or family, the Local Authority

become their Corporate Parents. My experience tells me that children start to thrive and make progress when they have a stable, loving home living with adults who understand them and are committed to helping them to succeed.

3. The Registered Managers Role

The Registered Home's Manager will be responsible for the day to day running of the home, ensuring that staff are well supported, the child/young person's needs are being met, the home is compliant with Ofsted requirements and that the home integrated within the wider community.

The Manager and staff are keen to develop positive relationships with the local community. We have 24-hour management oversight which is provided by an on-call manager, when the Registered Manager is not on site. This ensures that there is always management oversight and support provided to the home.

4. The Responsible Individuals Role

I will be the Responsible Individual and will support the Registered Manager in their role. The Responsible Individual has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the home and provides scrutiny and challenge to ensure that the home is compliant with Children's Homes Regulations (2015) and that children's needs are being met.

5. Levels of staffing within the home and staff change over

There will be two members of staff on shift, who will directly support children/young people who live in the home. The staff will change every 24 to 48 hours. Staff on shift will sleep in the home overnight.

The change in staff takes place during the day and outside of peak times, in order to minimise any disruption to both children living in the home who will be accessing education, and to neighbours. The home will operate 365 days per year.

Some staff will travel to the home by car, others will use public transport, dependent on their individual circumstances.

6. Local Resources and Investment

The new home will offer employment opportunities to local residents. Where possible, we seek to recruit experienced and skilled staff from the local community, enabling staff to walk to work or to use public transport.

Longwood and Milnsbridge offers a range of shops, supermarkets, activities, clubs and other community resources, which staff and young people will be able to access. Our home will directly support the local economy.

7. Visitors to the home

From time to time, we will have visitors to the home, as any family home would.

An Independent Visitor will visit the home on a monthly basis, to meet with staff and the young people living in the home. They will verify that the home is safe and

is promoting the wellbeing of young people. They will make observations about the quality of the home and make recommendations for development. This report is shared with Ofsted as part of their oversight of children's homes in England.

Other visitors will include – trades people, community police, the young person's Social Worker etc. It's hard to put a number of vehicle movements on as it depends on the needs of the young people, school arrangements etc, but I would estimate between 8 and 10 over a 24 hour period.

Family time will take place away from the home. This is planned time between the young person and their parents/wider family.

8. Parking

There are 2 dedicated car parking spaces to the rear of the property to be used by staff on shift.

Visitors will be able to park to rear of the property or at the front of the property on the road where there are no parking restrictions. I will ensure that visitors are considerate to the neighbours.

9. CCTV

At this point we don't intend to install CCTV outside the property; if at a later stage we decide to this will focus on monitoring individuals accessing and leaving the home. The privacy of our neighbours will not be impacted in any way as the cameras will only cover number 15.

10. Engagement with Community Police

We work closely with community police to ensure that our children are safe within the community where they live. Community Police will develop a close working relation with young people that live in the home, and they also support staff to develop strategies which support both the young people and the wider community.

If we see something suspicious or we are concerned about something happening within the local community, we will use our close links with the police to report this and will ensure that this is followed up.

11. Integration with the Community

It is important that the home integrates within the local community and that the Manager and staff develop positive relationships with neighbours. We are keen to take part in community life and will remain in regular contact with our neighbours. We will be considerate neighbours and will also support and encourage the children/young people that we care for, to do the same. We have already met the neighbours and been transparent with them about our plans; some have asked questions, but haven't objected to what we are planning to do.

12. Contact with the home

The main point of contact for the home currently is myself, Laura Counce. Please get in touch if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything further.

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