

To – Kirklees Planning Dept F.A.O. Jennifer Booth or deputy case officer

From –

sent By Email Only

PLEASE NOTE:

In accordance with the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and Kirklees Council's own data-protection policy, I do not consent to the publication of any of my personal data, including my name, home address, email, and any other identifiable details. I request that all personal identifiers be fully redacted before my comments are made publicly available on the planning register. Any processing or disclosure beyond what is strictly necessary for the statutory planning process would be a breach of data-protection law. Thank you.

Subject: Objection to Planning Application

Dear Jennifer (Kirklees Planning Department)

Formal Objection to Planning Application – 143 Church Lane, Gomersal 2026/62/90484E

Dear Jennifer,

I wish to submit a formal objection to the above planning application. While I recognise the need for specialist accommodation for vulnerable young people, I have significant concerns regarding the suitability of this particular location and the way the development has been conducted to date.

1. Unauthorised and Unsafe Building Activity

Construction work began late last year. Throughout this period, building materials and waste were repeatedly left on the pavement in a hazardous manner, obstructing pedestrians and creating clear safety risks. The conduct of the works has not reflected professional standards, nor has there been any regard for the safety of residents or the general public.

The absence of any prior planning application raises questions about the applicant's transparency and adherence to required procedures. Extended seven-day working hours would have breached planning regulations had permission been in place, which further undermines confidence in the applicant's approach.

2. Dangerous and Obstructive Parking

Vehicles associated with the development have frequently been parked fully on the pavement, forcing pedestrians—including children, elderly residents, and those with mobility issues—into the road. This has occurred directly opposite a bus stop, causing traffic congestion when buses stop to collect passengers. Despite the planning application now being submitted, one vehicle continues to park on the pavement at the bus stop, and another remains fully obstructing the pavement outside number 143.

This will surely conflict with:

Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP21 (Highways and Access) - requires that all development in Kirklees must provide safe, suitable access for all users, support sustainable transport, and avoid causing severe residual impacts on the highway network.

3. Existing Highway Safety Issues

Church Lane is nominally a 30mph road, but in practice it is fast-moving and heavily used. Overtaking at speed is common, and numerous complaints have been made to West Yorkshire Police, resulting in increased patrols and deployment of the camera van. The road is also used extensively by driving instructors, meaning learner drivers regularly perform manoeuvres in the area.

The current parking issues already make it difficult and dangerous for vehicles entering or exiting The Coppice due to severely reduced visibility. Introducing a C2 use, with increased vehicle movements from staff, visitors, and professionals, will exacerbate an already unsafe situation.

The proposed C2 use would significantly increase vehicle movements, contrary to:

- NPPF Paragraph 111, which states that development should be refused if it would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety
- Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP21, which requires developments not to materially worsen existing safety issues

4. Inadequate Staffing Information and Operational Concerns

The application proposes housing up to four complex needs young people aged 7–18, each requiring 1:1 supervision. However, the staffing information provided is inconsistent and insufficient. The claim that only three full-time equivalent staff plus one manager will be employed does not align with the stated level of care required for a 24-hour operation.

The lack of detail raises serious concerns about the viability of the proposed care model, the ability to safeguard the young people, and the potential impact on the surrounding community should incidents occur.

It is also notable that the company stated on the application was recently, and no evidence has been provided to demonstrate experience or capability in running a care facility of this nature.

In addition to the points raised above, I believe serious consideration must be given to whether this property is suitable for a C2 use, particularly in relation to the physical layout and external areas, when assessed from an emergency fire-escape perspective.

After reviewing the proposed plans and carrying out a visual inspection of the property, it is evident that there are no apparent escape routes from the rear of the building as the side elevation only provides around 750mm of clearance between the existing garage and the boundary line, which is not adequate as an emergency escape route.

Furthermore, the property would require fire-escape compliant windows for all bedrooms. Several of these windows would fall outside the proposed secure fencing and gated areas,

creating significant safety concerns and presenting potential escape risks for vulnerable residents should they wish to leave of their own accord.

5. Insufficient Parking Provision

The application claims an additional parking space has been created, yet the garage which could have provided parking has been converted into a room. In reality, the property still only offers two on-site spaces.

This is wholly inadequate for:

- multiple staff working shifts
- Increased vehicles during shift changes
- visiting family members
- social workers and therapists
- cleaners and maintenance staff
- emergency services

Overspill parking will inevitably occur on Church Lane and The Coppice, worsening congestion, obstructing sight lines, and increasing the risk of accidents.

This is contrary to:

- Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP22 (Parking), which requires adequate parking provision to avoid overspill onto surrounding streets

6. Impact on Traffic Flow and Local Infrastructure

The property sits directly opposite a bus stop and only several metres from the junction with The Coppice. Church Lane also becomes a commonly used diversion route during incidents on the M62, which already results in significant congestion and heavy traffic flows. Any increase in on-street parking or obstruction caused by inadequate on-site parking provision would therefore exacerbate an already pressured route, create further safety risks and reduce the road's ability to operate effectively during these events.

There is also a risk that vehicles will use the entrance to The Coppice as a turning point, particularly late at night, disturbing residents and further compromising safety.

Additional vehicle movements associated with a C2 use would intensify these issues, contrary to:

- NPPF Paragraph 111, which states that development should be refused if it would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety
- Kirklees Local Plan Policy LP21, which requires developments not to materially worsen existing safety issues

7. Over-Intensification and Incompatibility with the Area

The applicant states the use will be "similar to a typical family dwelling," but this is demonstrably inaccurate. A 24-hour staffed institutional setting with complex needs

children, shift changes, late-night arrivals, and potential behavioural incidents is fundamentally different from a single household.

Church Lane is a mature residential area with no other C2 uses nearby. The proposed change represents an over-intensification of the property and is out of keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.

8. Safeguarding and Community Impact

The application states that each young person must be supervised at all times, including when leaving the property. This raises questions about the level of risk involved and the potential for absconding - an issue well-documented in similar settings.

The property is located on a busy road and near open, potentially hazardous areas of land namely a farm and scrub land.

Safeguarding concerns apply not only to the children but also to local residents and members of the public and it is unclear whether or not safeguarding risks have been formally evaluated.

9. Green Belt Location, Overdevelopment and Lack of Suitable Outdoor Space

The property is located within a green belt area. I ask that the planning officer considers whether this proposal constitutes overdevelopment of the original footprint. The remaining outdoor space would be extremely limited if the development proceeds, raising serious concerns about whether it is suitable for the young people who may live there.

The plans also indicate controlled gate access for entry and exit. This will further reduce usable outdoor space, in addition to the area already lost to parking.

If 24-hour supervision is required, it follows that the entire grounds would need to be secured to prevent unauthorised exits. This raises important questions:

- What form would this security take?
- Would it appear imposing or institutional?
- Would it feel restrictive or distressing for the children?
- How would this impact on the privacy of the neighbouring properties?

Outdoor space is vital for the wellbeing of young people, particularly those who have experienced trauma or mental health challenges. As the property has a small constrained, heavily controlled outdoor environment which is unlikely to support their emotional or psychological needs.

10. Alteration of the Property's Character

Significant changes have already been made to the property, including removal of bay windows, metal balustrades, pillars, and the bricking-up of the garage. These alterations have changed the appearance of the house considerably.

Conclusion

I firmly believe that this location is unsuitable for such a facility. Granting planning permission would conflict with existing council policies, create significant road safety risks, raise safeguarding concerns, and negatively affect the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of the local community.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the planning authority to refuse the application for change of use.

I trust that my concerns will be fully noted and given due consideration before any final decision is reached.”

Yours sincerely,

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