# Residential Children's Home in Kirklees

Evidence of Need and Strategic Alignment

*Submitted by Team Care Homes Ltd*

## 1. Purpose of this statement

This statement is submitted by Team Care Homes Ltd in support of its planning application for a small residential children's home in the Kirklees area.

The statement considers the evidence and priorities set out in Kirklees Council's Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2023–2025. The strategy is the evidence base relied upon for this statement. The figures below are therefore presented as figures reported in that strategy, rather than as independently verified current statistics.

Team Care Homes Ltd proposes to provide a safe, stable and nurturing home for children who require residential care, with a particular focus on children with learning disabilities and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The intention is to help meet local need and, where appropriate, enable children to remain connected to their families, schools, services and communities.

## 2. Local authority duty and sufficiency

Section 22G of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to take steps to secure sufficient accommodation within their area for children in care whose circumstances require it. The Kirklees strategy recognises this responsibility and sets out the Council's approach to meeting the accommodation needs of children looked after (Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2023–2025, p. 2).

The strategy provides a basis for considering whether additional local residential provision could support the Council's sufficiency objectives, including access to suitable placements closer to children's existing support networks.

## 3. Demand for residential placements and local availability

The strategy reported that the number of children looked after had fallen in the preceding period, but forecast an increase from 604 in March 2022 to approximately 650 by March 2025. It linked the pressures on children and families to wider social and economic factors, including the cost of living and poverty (pp. 5–8). These are forecasts and figures reported in the 2023–2025 strategy and should be read in that historical context.

The strategy also reported that approximately 35% of the residential placements used by Kirklees were provided by the Council's own children's homes, with the remainder purchased from independent providers, often outside the borough (p. 12). It further reported that, at the time the strategy was written, around 30 private children's homes in Kirklees offered 99 places, of which six were being used by children from Kirklees (p. 13).

These figures indicate the challenge identified by the Council at the time: local availability and the suitability of placements for Kirklees children were important sufficiency issues. The existence of residential homes within the borough does not, by itself, mean that a suitable vacancy is available for a particular child or that a home can meet that child's needs.

## 4. Children's needs and the case for suitable small-home provision

The strategy reported that 82% of children in residential care in Kirklees had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), compared with 50% nationally, and that children placed in residential care had experienced an average of seven previous placements (p. 13). These figures underline the importance of placement suitability, stability and care that responds to children's individual needs.

Team Care Homes Ltd intends to provide a small, home-based environment for children whose assessed needs can be safely and appropriately met by the service. Its proposed focus on learning disabilities and SEND is relevant to the needs profile described in the strategy. Placements would need to be considered individually, with the child's care plan, communication, education, health, relationships and safeguarding needs taken into account.

The purpose of a small home is not simply to add bed capacity. It is to provide an environment where children can receive consistent support, develop trusted relationships and maintain important links with their local community, where this is in their interests.

## 5. Alignment with Kirklees priorities

The strategy identifies priorities that include increasing local residential capacity, developing smaller homes and enabling more children to live closer to home (pp. 13–18). It describes potential benefits such as maintaining links with family and community, reducing disruption associated with out-of-area placements, improving stability and making more effective use of resources.

Subject to planning permission, registration and the needs of individual children, the proposed Team Care Homes service is intended to contribute to these objectives by offering a small residential setting within Kirklees for children whose needs match the service's capabilities.

Local provision can help children maintain contact with family members and familiar professionals, attend suitable local education and access relevant health and support services. These benefits depend on each child's circumstances and on appropriate placement planning; they are not guaranteed solely by the location of a home.

## 6. Local connection and intended contribution

Team Care Homes Ltd recognises the importance of children retaining a sense of identity, belonging and connection to the people and places that matter to them. Where a local placement is suitable, it can reduce the distance between a child and their family, school, friends and professional network.

The proposed home is intended to work constructively with placing authorities and relevant professionals to support children's plans and promote stability. The service would only accept placements that can be appropriately supported within its registration, staffing, skills and operating arrangements.

Team Care Homes Ltd therefore considers that the proposed home has a clear strategic rationale in the context of the needs and priorities described in Kirklees Council's Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2023–2025. It would make a small but potentially meaningful contribution to local provision for children who need residential care, particularly where learning disability or SEND forms part of their assessed needs.

## 7. Source and qualification

Primary source: Kirklees Council, Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2023–2025, particularly pages 2, 5–8, 12–13 and 16–18, as cited in the supporting statement supplied for this application.

This statement does not claim that the strategy's historical figures are current in 2026. Before submission, Team Care Homes Ltd should confirm that the cited document remains the latest available published strategy and that the description of the proposed service matches the planning application, operating model and any relevant planning conditions.