

APPLICANT STATEMENT

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF NO. 27 DURHAM GROVE, JARROW **TO A CHILDREN'S HOME TO ACCOMMODATE A** **MAXIMUM OF 2 CHILDREN AGED 7 TO 17 YEARS OLD**

This statement is submitted to support the application of the change of use of the above property from a Dwelling(C3) to a Children's home(C2) to accommodate a maximum of two children. Ofsted will regulate the use carrying out regular inspections.

The children will be looked after in accordance with (LAC) 'Looked After Children' regulations under sections 20 of The Children's Act. The application is located within an established residential area. This application is supported by South Tyneside local authority childrens comissioning team, providing high standards of care and accommodation for the local children in care, and in returning children to their local area, who are currently placed out of area. This application ensures the children of South Tyneside are put first, with the particular approach of providing care in a small sized residential home, whereby the needs of the children can be met by a highly experienced and qualified team with little to no impact on the surrounding community.

It is proposed that this property will provide the children who are less fortunate than most, with a family home where there are support workers present 24/7. The experienced staff will be on a rolling rota and will provide the care and support for children to enable them to develop and grow, whilst having the opportunity to live a normal family life. Staff will be supervised by an Ofsted Registered Manager with experience in providing care for children in Looked After Care.

There will be a maximum of two staff on duty at the property at any one time during the day and night. There will be no staff living at the property, but they will be on duty 24/7 on a rolling rota. Children will receive high levels of support and supervision with one-to-one staffing levels

The children who will be looked after at this property are children who the Local Authority have decided that the child cannot live with their parent(s). For various reasons it can be difficult for the child to be placed with a foster parent as the placement might have broken down, or the protection of children from abuse for their own safety or it may be that the child might have no family capable to look after them and no availability of placements with foster parents.

One bedroom and a study room has been provided for staff sleeping facilities on the sleep in duty, who will provide ongoing support as required. The children will be cared for in a safe and secure environment, allowing them to feel safe in their own home. They will be living as a single-family unit, like any other family within this location.

The staff will support the children consistently, providing them with the same opportunities that children who are not in looked after care get, so that they can live a normal life like any other children, enjoying what is left of their childhood.

Duties of the Support Workers are the same as duties of a parent who is living with a child. Such duties include responsibility for the children on a day-to-day basis including, helping them to develop independent life skills, taking them to and from school as well as taking them to social activities etc within the local area / county or any day trips, helping them with their homework, and any other educational requirements that the children may need.

Children will be supported to intergrate within the community, and positively contribute to the society they live in, raising money for charities of their choice, and donating food, toys and other items to others who are also in need.

Support workers will ensure that all health appointments are attended including the doctors, dentist and opticians. The children's safety, health and wellbeing are paramount. Meals will be prepared for the children, with the help of the children, depending on their age. Children will learn key life skills, contributing to weekly shops, cooking, cleaning and budgeting, so that they are better prepared to move on from the home into independent or semi-independent living, when the time is right.

With regards to the impact of the proposals on the residential amenities of neighbouring properties. It is considered that whilst the proposal relates to a change of use from C3 dwelling to a children's home C2, the property would remain operating as a house providing a home for two children, with staff assisting in providing them with a safe and secure environment, that is homely and nurturing.

An impact risk assessment is complete prior to any child moving into the home, analysing what the likely impact of a child moving into the home / area will be on them as an individual, and from them to others (including the community). Therefore any potential risks or concerns that are identified, will have strategies and measures outlined and implemented to reduce / mitigate risks, in order for the placement to be a positive and successful one - with little to no impact on the child or community.

The Local authority will regularly monitor the organisation through reviews of the progress of the children whilst in the home, ensuring progress is being made, and the Regulatory Body - Ofsted, inspects the home to ensure the care provided is at a satisfactory standard in line with the childrens homes regulations. The home will also be subject to review on a monthly basis whereby regulation 44 reports / visits are conducted which monitors the service provided, that the home is fit for purpose and that the children are effectively safeguarded and cared for within their own home. The local authority will complete its own annual audit of the home, ensuring that all staff are effectively trained and supervised, that all children are receiving the high standards of care that they deserve.

Staff will be available 24/7 to ensure that the health and safety needs of the children are met. The children will get limited visitors at the property. Contact with any close family members will be by prior arrangement at this property agreed and recorded in their support plan at the time of moving in. Social workers and other professionals will be visiting the children every 6 weeks to check on their living conditions and progression. All staff working with children will be highly trained and will be safely recruited as per children homes regulation 2015. Where the situation does not permit to meet at the home, the organisation will liase with the social worker either to meet at their offices or a supervised contact centre.

For these reasons, it considered that there would be no material change to the living conditions of occupiers within the neighbouring properties because of the change of use. The property has an abundance of parking spaces for a staff or a professionals approved by the organisation to park at any given time. Therefore will be no impact on residents near by. As such the development complies with current planning policies, and we consider that the proposed use of the above property as a home for a maximum of two children to look after, is an acceptable use within this residential area.

We trust therefore that this application will be supported and approved.