

Appeal Statement – 15 Caton Close, Longridge, PR3 3RH

We respectfully submit this appeal in response to the refusal of the full planning application for the proposed change of use of 15 Caton Close, Longridge (planning reference: 3/2025/0713). We firmly believe that the primary concern raised – regarding potential intensification of use and impact on neighbouring residential amenity due to staff shift changeovers – was fully and rationally addressed in our original submission through the detailed Planning Statement and Operational Management Plan.

Clarification of Staffing and Vehicle Movements

The application clearly outlined that the staffing model for the children's home involves two staff working on 48-hour shifts, meaning a single staff changeover every two days. This results in only two vehicles attending the site for a brief period during each changeover. This is equivalent to – or less than – the number of daily visits associated with a typical household receiving deliveries, tradespeople, carers, or family and friends.

Moreover, to mitigate any residual concerns, we are prepared to stagger staff handover times by 30 to 60 minutes, if required, to further reduce any overlap or perceived activity at the property. Importantly, shift handovers occur in the morning – a time when many neighbours are themselves departing for work or school runs – minimising any potential impact on residential amenity or parking demand.

Residential Character and Low-Impact Use

As our ethos and planning justification make clear, this is a solo-occupancy children's home intended to replicate the experience of living in a family household. It does not involve multiple occupants, high turnover of residents, or any institutional features. The operational style, staffing model, and traffic movements are entirely consistent with what might be expected of any standard dwelling.

Neighbour Consultation and Community Engagement

Although one neighbour raised a concern about lack of consultation, the Council's own records confirm formal neighbour consultation was carried out. In addition, since that time, we have proactively spoken directly to our immediate neighbour who, upon understanding the operational nature of the home, expressed reassurance and was far more at ease about the proposal.

Clarification on Planning vs LDC

The original application format followed that of a Certificate of Lawfulness due to advice at the time, and was later resubmitted as a full planning application upon the Council's advice. No physical works or alterations were undertaken to the site, and the only perceived 'works' are standard maintenance preparations. The application content was reused because the proposal remains exactly the same in both structure and operation.

Parking Considerations

The Local Highway Authority did not object to the application and found the parking provision to be sufficient. Their report clearly states that on-street parking demand is manageable, and that the dropped kerb improvements can be secured via condition. Refusal based on parking impact directly contradicts the professional highways advice received.

Noise and Disturbance

No 'waking night' staff are proposed. Only one staff member sleeps in, while the other is only available if needed overnight. This mimics parental care in a normal home setting. Furthermore,

staff do not socialise or entertain at the property. Visitor activity is minimal, structured, and limited to essential professionals like social workers—most of whom are directed to meet off-site.

Case Law and Appeal Precedents

- Appeal allowed: APP/J2373/W/22/3296927 – Blackpool Borough Council. Inspector concluded that shift changeovers for 1:1 staffing of a children’s home did not amount to a material intensification of use.
- Appeal allowed: APP/R0660/W/23/3313065 – Macclesfield, Cheshire East. Appeal upheld for a solo-occupancy home with daily staff changeover. Impact found to be no greater than that of a typical family dwelling.
- Appeal allowed: APP/M2325/W/22/3304511 – Fylde Borough Council. Inspector noted no harmful impact from staff parking and comings/goings at a solo care home due to low intensity and domestic scale.
- Planning permission granted: 2022/0947 (Wigan Council) – Conversion of C3 house to single child residential care home. Traffic and amenity concerns dismissed due to 48hr shift pattern.
- Planning permission granted: 21/00954/FUL (Chorley Council) – Change of use to children's home for up to 2 children. Approved with shift working model after demonstrating minimal external impact.

Conclusion

The refusal appears to hinge on a perceived intensification of use. However, we believe this concern was pre-emptively and thoroughly mitigated in our original documents and is not borne out by the proposed operational model. The traffic and amenity impact is demonstrably no greater than that of a typical household, and our offer to further mitigate through staggered transitions only strengthens this case.

Given national and regional policy support for small-scale children's residential provision and the absence of demonstrable harm to neighbouring properties, we respectfully request that the appeal be allowed and planning permission granted.