

Planning Statement

Change of Use from Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) to Class C2 (Residential Institution)

Site Address: 1 Palmerstone Road, Earley, Reading, RG6 1HL

Applicant: Pola Well Care Ltd,
Quadrant House
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1. Introduction

This Planning Statement is submitted in support of a full planning application seeking permission for the change of use of 1 Palmerstone Road, Earley, from Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to Class C2 (residential institution) under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

The proposal seeks to enable Pola Well Care Services Ltd to operate the property as a residential home for up to four young people aged 10–17 with special, emotional trauma and learning disabilities.

The home will provide a stable, nurturing, and family-style environment where young people can receive 24-hour care and support while attending school or college locally.

2. Site and Surroundings

The application site comprises a two-storey, five-bedroom detached dwelling situated on the southern side of Palmerstone Road in Earley, Reading. The surrounding area is predominantly residential, characterised by similar detached and semi-detached properties forming a cohesive suburban setting.

The property benefits from a hardstanding forecourt providing off-street parking for multiple vehicles, as well as a private rear garden offering outdoor amenity space. The site is located in a sustainable and accessible location, close to local shops, schools, and community facilities, with good access to public transport links.

3. Planning History

A previous application (Ref: 240236) was submitted by Pola Well Care Services Ltd for a Certificate of Lawfulness (Proposed Use) for the use of the dwelling as a residential care home for up to four children.

The Local Planning Authority refused the application on 27 March 2024, concluding that the proposed use would not fall within Class C3, and that a full planning

application was required to consider a change to Class C2 (residential institution). This current application therefore seeks to regularise the proposed use through the proper planning route.

4. Existing Use and Property Description

The existing lawful use of the property is as a Class C3 dwellinghouse. It is currently used as a residential unit for three people over the age of 16, supported by one member of staff.

The property represents a single, self-contained unit of occupation designed for residential purposes, containing the normal facilities for cooking, eating, and sleeping associated with use as a dwellinghouse.

The accommodation comprises:

- Ground Floor: General living accommodation, including kitchen, dining, and lounge areas.
- First Floor: Five bedrooms and one bathroom.

The property has a forecourt providing off-street parking and a private rear garden typical of the surrounding residential pattern.

5. Proposed Development

It is proposed to change the use of the property from Class C3 (dwellinghouse) to Class C2 (residential institution) to enable its use as a supported living home for up to four young people aged 12–17 with special, emotional, and behavioural needs.

The home will be operated by Pola Well Care Services Ltd, providing a supportive environment where residents can develop life skills, attend education, and engage in community activities while receiving consistent care and supervision.

Operational Details:

- Residents: Up to four young people of mixed sex (ages 10–17).
- Staffing: Maximum of two carers on-site at any one time, providing 24-hour care on a 12-hour shift pattern (typically 8am–8pm and 8pm–8am).
- Handovers: Staff handovers will last between 5–30 minutes, typically twice daily.
- Overnight Supervision: One staff member will remain on-site overnight (sleep-in), not as their principal residence.
- Visits: Infrequent and managed visits from managers (weekly), social workers (monthly–6 weekly), and biannual LAC reviews.

- External Professionals: Visits by NHS or Local Authority staff generally take place at schools or community settings, not at the property.

Residents will live together as a single household, sharing meals, using communal spaces, and participating in daily routines under the guidance of staff. Care is personalised and designed to help residents live independently and integrate into the community.

No physical alterations to the property or changes to parking arrangements are proposed.

6. Planning Policy Context

The proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Wokingham Borough Local Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023):

The NPPF encourages the creation of inclusive and mixed communities and supports development that meets the diverse housing needs of different groups in society, including children and those requiring specialist accommodation.

Wokingham Borough Local Plan Policies:

- CP1 – Sustainable Development
- CP3 – General Principles for Development
- CP5 – Housing Mix, Density and Affordability
- CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- TB07 – Internal Space Standards
- TB09 – Residential Amenity

The proposal supports the Council's strategic objectives by providing much needed, community-based accommodation for children requiring residential care in a location that promotes inclusion and access to local amenities.

7. Assessment of Key Issues

Principle of Development:

The proposed residential home is appropriate within a residential area. It will operate in a domestic manner similar to a family home, with up to four residents and two carers present at any time. The proposal directly supports the identified local and national need for children's homes, particularly within Wokingham Borough.

Residential Amenity:

Given the limited number of residents and staff, the intensity of use will be comparable to that of a large family dwelling. The Applicant will conduct pre-admission assessments to ensure no resident is likely to cause anti-social or unneighbourly behaviour. Activities at the property will be consistent with residential living and not result in any loss of amenity.

Highways and Parking:

The existing parking area can accommodate several vehicles. The use will generate minimal traffic movements, primarily limited to staff shift changes and occasional professional visits.

Compared to a typical family household, the proposed use will not materially increase traffic or parking demand.

Character and Appearance:

No physical alterations are proposed. The property will retain its residential character and appearance, ensuring full compatibility with the surrounding built environment.

Community and Social Benefits:

The proposal contributes positively to local housing and social infrastructure by meeting a genuine local need for children's residential placements within the borough. By providing care in a community setting rather than isolated rural locations, the proposal helps young people maintain access to local support networks, schools, and services.

8. Conclusion

This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed change of use from Class C3 to Class C2 at 1 Palmerstone Road, Earley is fully compliant with both national and local planning policy.

The proposal:

- Maintains the residential character of the area.
- Does not harm the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.
- Has adequate parking and access.
- Provides essential community benefit by meeting an identified need for supported living accommodation for young people within Wokingham Borough.

It represents a sustainable, well-managed, and socially beneficial reuse of an existing dwelling in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF and the Wokingham Local Plan.

Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted.