

PLANNING REF : 260872
PROPERTY ADDRESS : 2 Pascal Crescent
: Reading
: RG29FP
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Karine Robinson
DATE SUBMITTED : 18/05/2026

COMMENTS:

I write to object to the above planning application. I live at 2 Pascal Crescent, immediately next door to the application site, and would be directly affected by the proposed change of use.

I wish to make clear at the outset that I do not object to the principle of appropriate accommodation for children who require care. My objection is to the suitability of this specific site for the proposed use, and to the absence of robust evidence demonstrating that the proposed C2 use can operate without harm to highway safety, parking conditions, neighbour amenity and the residential character of this part of Pascal Crescent.

The application describes the proposal as a change of use from a C3 dwellinghouse to a C2 residential institution for up to three children, with no external alterations. The application form also confirms that the proposal would provide only two on-site car parking spaces, with no increase in parking provision, while introducing 2 full-time and 2 part-time employees, equivalent to 3.0 full-time equivalent staff.

1. The application fails the Council's own parking standard for C2 residential care homes

The most serious and objective defect in the application is the parking shortfall.

Wokingham's adopted Managing Development Delivery document states that planning permission will only be granted where car parking meets the adopted standards and where proposals avoid unacceptable on-street parking impacts. The same adopted standards specify that Class C2 residential care homes should provide:

> 1 space per full-time equivalent staff member + 1 visitor space per 3 residents.

On the applicant's own figures, the proposed use would involve 3.0 FTE staff and up to 3 resident children. Applying the Council's standard gives a requirement of:

> 3 spaces for 3.0 FTE staff; plus
> 1 visitor space for 3 residents;
> total: 4 spaces.

The application provides only 2 spaces. That is a clear shortfall of 2 spaces, before accounting for staff shift overlap, managers, social workers, 0 funded visits, health professionals, tutors, maintenance

contractors, food deliveries, taxis, family/contact visits, or emergency/service vehicles.

The applicant has submitted no parking survey, transport statement, operational parking plan, staff travel plan, or evidence showing that the shortfall can be safely absorbed by Pascal Crescent or Cirrus Drive.

This is not a minor technical issue. Pascal Crescent already experiences severe parking stress, particularly at this end of the road. Vehicles are regularly parked in ways that create pinch points for refuse lorries, delivery vehicles and emergency vehicles. The proposed use would introduce a new pattern of regular staff and professional vehicle movements into an already constrained residential street.

The Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan specifically identifies parking pressure and historic under-provision of off-street parking as issues in the parish, and notes that on-street parking can create access problems for buses and service vehicles. It also expects parking surveys where parking demand cannot be accommodated on-site.

For these reasons, the application conflicts with Wokingham parking policy, the Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF requirement that development should provide safe and suitable access and not create unacceptable highway safety impacts.

2. The proposed use is not comparable to a normal dwelling or to the current residential occupation

The applicant repeatedly asserts that traffic generation will be "broadly similar" to that of a typical household. That assertion is not supported by evidence and is unrealistic.

The existing property is residential in character. Even where a property is occupied as an HMO, the residents live there as their home. By contrast, the proposed use is a staffed C2 residential institution. It would also be a place of work. The proposed first-floor plan includes three bedrooms and an office, while the application statement refers to staff sleeping or office space and operational use.

That distinction matters. A children's residential care home of this type would involve staff shift patterns, professional visits, management visits, deliveries and operational supervision. The application form confirms proposed employment of 3.0 FTE staff, which is itself evidence that the use is materially different from a normal residential household.

Recent appeal decisions have recognised this point. In a 2025 appeal concerning a proposed C3-to-C2 children's care home, the Inspector found that staff changeovers and visitor movements were not comparable to a normal dwelling and upheld refusal on highway safety grounds.

In a 2026 appeal concerning another children's care home, the Inspector found that staff changeovers, visitor movements and

associated noise could cause harm to neighbours' living conditions, and that Ofsted regulation did not remove the planning harm arising from the inherent comings and goings of the use.

The same concern applies here, especially because No. 1 and No. 2 are immediate neighbours and the application site is located in a constrained part of Pascal Crescent.

3. The application contains a flawed planning-policy assessment

The applicant's Design, Access and Planning Statement appears to assess the proposal against the Reading Borough Local Plan, despite the application being made to Wokingham Borough Council for a site in Shinfield/Wokingham. The statement also describes the site as being within the administrative area of Reading Borough Council.

That is a significant defect. Wokingham's own website confirms that the development plan is the starting point for determining planning applications, and Wokingham's adopted development plan includes the Core Strategy, Managing Development Delivery document and relevant neighbourhood plan documents.

The application therefore does not properly assess the proposal against the correct adopted local policy framework, including Wokingham's parking standards, noise policy and Shinfield Neighbourhood Plan. The Council should give limited weight to a planning statement that applies the wrong local plan and fails to address the actual site-specific policy requirements.

4. The existing lawful use and planning baseline require clarification

The application describes the existing use as Use Class C3. However, the existing plans show a six-bedroom layout with multiple bathrooms/en-suites, and the property is currently operating as an HMO.

This matters because the planning effects of the proposal must be assessed against the true lawful existing use, not a simplified or inaccurate baseline. Government guidance distinguishes between C3 dwellinghouses, C4 small HMOs and larger HMOs, and also confirms that small residential care homes can fall within Class C2 where staff and residents are unlikely to live together as a single household.

The Council should therefore require the applicant to clarify the lawful existing use of the property before determining the application. If the property is already in HMO use, the Council should consider the consequences of replacing established residential accommodation with a staffed institutional use, including the difference in occupancy pattern, management, vehicle movements and neighbour impacts.

5. Harm to residential amenity from noise, disturbance and intensity of use

I am particularly concerned about the effect on the living conditions of immediately adjoining residents, including my

household at No. 2.

The proposal would introduce a materially different pattern of activity from the current residential use. Likely sources of disturbance include:

- > early-morning, evening or night-time staff shift changes; > staff vehicles arriving, leaving and manoeuvring;
- > car doors, conversations and activity outside the property;
- > social worker, management, professional and inspection visits;
- > deliveries and servicing;
- > increased use of the garden and external areas;
- > additional refuse, recycling and collection activity.

The submitted statement simply asserts that there will be no unacceptable noise, disturbance or loss of amenity, but it provides no noise assessment, no management plan, no staff rota, no visitor forecast, no delivery plan and no assessment of the relationship with the adjoining property at No. 2.

Wokingham Policy CC06 requires proposals to address noise impacts and protect noise-sensitive receptors. National planning guidance also makes clear that noise effects depend on matters such as time of day, frequency, pattern of occurrence and cumulative impact, not simply the number of people on site.

The applicant has not demonstrated that the proposed C2 use can operate without unacceptable disturbance to adjoining occupiers.

6. The site is not shown to be suitable for the specific requirements of the proposed care use

Wokingham Policy TB09 states that proposals for small group homes for vulnerable children and young people must be considered on a site-by-site basis, having regard to their specific requirements, including location.

The applicant relies heavily on the general social benefit of providing children's care accommodation. I do not dispute that such accommodation is needed. However, general need does not mean that every residential property is suitable.

The application has not provided a site-specific assessment explaining why this constrained property, at this constrained end of Pascal Crescent, with only two parking spaces and existing parking stress, is suitable for the operational requirements of a staffed residential institution.

The submitted documents focus on the absence of external alterations, but visual appearance is not the only planning issue. Character and amenity are also affected by intensity of use, vehicle movements, operational activity, servicing and the day-to-day pattern of occupation.

7. Cumulative impact and precedent

I understand that "precedent" is not usually a stand-alone reason

for refusal. However, cumulative impact is a legitimate planning concern.

Pascal Crescent and the surrounding estate already experience pressure from HMOs, high parking demand, limited off-street capacity, visitor parking and constrained access. Approving a staffed C2 institution in a standard family-house footprint, without requiring the applicant to meet the adopted parking standard or provide a robust transport and amenity assessment, would risk encouraging further similar intensification of residential properties in an area already experiencing parking and servicing stress.

That cumulative impact would further erode the residential character and functioning of the estate.

8. Conclusion

For the reasons above, I respectfully request that Wokingham Borough Council refuse planning permission.

The application has not demonstrated that the proposed C2 use can operate safely and acceptably at 1 Pascal Crescent. In particular, it:

- > provides only two parking spaces where the Council's C2 standard indicates a requirement for four;
- > fails to provide a parking survey, transport statement or operational parking plan;
- > fails to address existing parking stress and service/emergency vehicle access issues in Pascal Crescent;
- > incorrectly assesses the application against Reading Borough planning policy rather than Wokingham's adopted development plan;
- > fails to clarify the true existing lawful use and planning baseline;
- > fails to assess noise and disturbance to adjoining occupiers;
- > fails to demonstrate site-specific suitability under Wokingham policy for small group homes for vulnerable children.

For the reasons set out above, I respectfully request that planning permission is refused.

The defects in this application are not minor matters that can properly be resolved by condition or by a short post-submission clarification. They go to the fundamental suitability of the site for the proposed C2 use.

The applicant has applied for a 24-hour staffed residential institution on a constrained residential plot with only two on-site parking spaces, despite the application itself confirming 3.0 full-time equivalent staff and a proposed use that would necessarily involve staff shifts, professional visits, servicing, deliveries and operational comings and goings.

The application has not demonstrated that the use can operate without unacceptable parking pressure, highway-safety risk, noise, disturbance or harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents, particularly the immediately adjoining occupiers at No. 2 Pascal Crescent.

The Council should determine the application on the basis of the evidence submitted. On that evidence, the proposal has not been shown to be acceptable and should be refused.

If the applicant seeks to rely on materially new information, a revised operating model, a transport assessment, parking survey, management plan or other new evidence after the consultation period, I respectfully request that the Council treats that material as significant new information and re-consults neighbouring residents before making any decision.