



Steeple Claydon children's home

Parish Council Meeting

1st April 2025

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Background to the council's Children's Homes Programme

- Availability of placements for looked after children (in children's homes and with foster families) has drastically reduced across the country in recent years. There are not enough placements for all children who require care.
- Buckinghamshire Council has a statutory duty to place looked after children in high quality care, these issues are affecting outcomes for children.
- Because demand is significantly higher than supply, some private children's homes providers are profiteering from the suppliers' market – charging extremely high costs for placements.
- Buckinghamshire Council is facing significant budget pressures due to this issue, and must take action to manage these pressures while striving to provide sufficient care for children who need it.
- This home is one of a programme of 10 homes the Council is developing across the County.
- This pack aims to share information about the planned home with the Parish; prior to a 'door knocking' exercise with neighbouring households which marks the start of the consultation period (this will include the statutory consultation period for the planning application for 'change of use' to a children's home)

Our mission and approach

- All Buckinghamshire Council children's homes are designed to resemble “normal” family homes, offering comfort and routine while maintaining a focus on safety and wellbeing.
- Our staff teams are highly trained and qualified to address the needs of children in care, providing tailored support to help them thrive.
- Careful consideration is given to matching each young person with the most suitable home, considering their needs, the local area, and the ability of staff to make a meaningful difference in their lives.
- Our homes are highly regulated, with a registered Manager who is legally responsible. Our homes are subject to monthly independent inspections, as well as a full Ofsted inspection every year.
- The council has six homes in operation. All registered have ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ Ofsted ratings – we have an excellent track record of running high performing homes with excellent neighbourhood relations.
- We are proud of the positive relationships we have with residents and community organisations. We support local food banks, charities, and strive to become an asset to the local community.

Key Principles

- **Homely Environment:** Our homes are warm, welcoming, and run like any family home. Children are supported with daily routines, from cooking to cleaning, while being encouraged to develop life skills.
- **Structure and Rules:** Clear boundaries are established, ensuring our young people are safe, engaged, and respectful of the local community.
- **Community Integration:** Our children do not engage in disruptive behaviour in the neighbourhood, and we actively promote positive relationships with the local community.

The property



- Saxeton, West Street, Steeple Claydon, MK18 2NS
- 6 bedroom detached property
 - Garden
 - Gated entrance
 - Double garage and driveway, parking for 6 cars

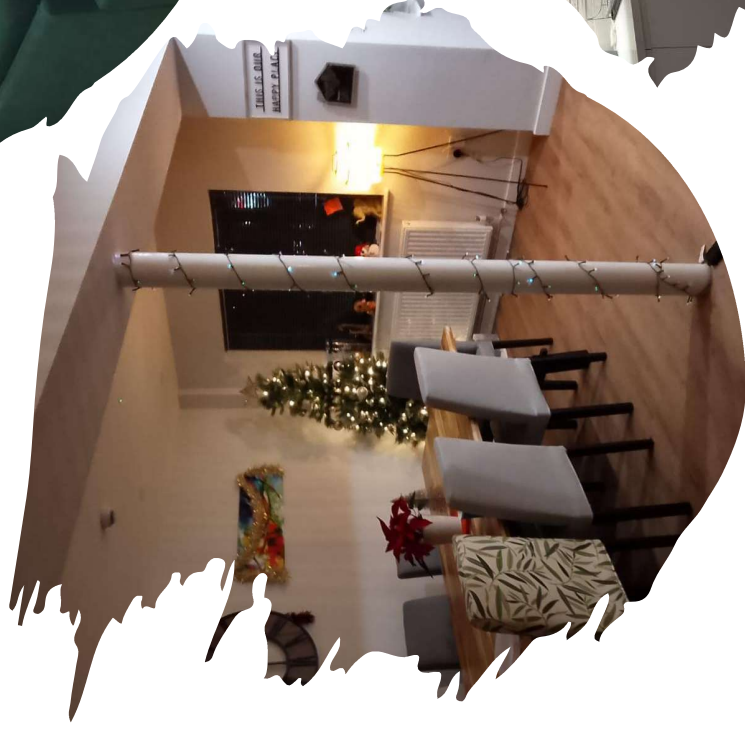


Milestones - estimated

ACTIVITY	ESTIMATED
Purchase	April 25
Planning (change of 'use class' from C3 residential to C2 children's home)	April 25 – Oct 25
Renovations	Nov 25 – June 26
Home Recruitment	Mar 26 – Dec 26
Ofsted Registration	June 26 – Dec 26
Open Event	Nov 26
First child placed	Dec 26

Case study of existing Council-run children's home

- 4-bed home in Amersham
- Open since August 2024
- Concerns in local community in early stages of development (parking, noise disturbance/ anti social behaviour)
- Now there are very good relationships with local residents, and positive outlook on the home – see resident testimony on following slide



What do local residents think/feel about the Amersham home?

"When we first heard about a children's home opening, I was worried, but I shouldn't have been. I get more noise from my other neighbour."

'Wonderful thing you are all doing' 'Its not like I imagined, you wouldn't even know its a childrens home'

"We were apprehensive about a children's home coming to our quiet street, but we needn't have worried. They've been great. We've had no issues

"I forget it's a children's home. I wanted to move when I heard I'd have a children's home near me, but it's nothing like I imagined. It's no different."

Frequently asked questions (1)

- **How many children will live at the home and how many staff?**
 - Up to 4 children placed at property
 - Children will be aged 8-17 (although placements for young people aged over 16 are less common as young people tend to transition to 'semi-independent' placements at this age to prepare them for living independently as young adults)
 - Staffing will comprise of approx. 14 (dependent on number and needs of children). Including a Home Manager, Assistant Manager and 12 residential care workers on a rota basis covering 24 hours per day/ 7 days per week.
 - Always at least 2 staff at the home supervising the children 24 hours per day
- **What will the child's needs be, how will they behave, and how will they be supported?**
 - See Appendix 1 for case studies of children currently living in Buckinghamshire homes
 - Most children in care have experienced neglect, trauma and/or exploitation
 - This is not a Secure Accommodation Home – children will not be subject to Secure Accommodation Orders
 - The child will be supported by their care workers, and will receive mental health support if required
 - They will have a care management plan which is overseen by the Home Manager
 - Appendix 1 presents some case studies helping to bring life to the type of children who could be placed in the home.
- **Will there be antisocial behaviour?**
 - We have never had a reported instance of antisocial behaviour relating to a Council-run children's home (our homes have cared for over 30 children)
 - Our homes are extremely well-managed by highly trained professionals – children do not 'wander the streets', they have clear care plans and careful risk assessments are made for each child
 - Careful consideration is given to matching each young person with the most suitable home, considering their needs and the local area

Frequently asked questions (2)

- **Would the children be better placed in/nearer a town?**
 - Semi-rural settings are helpful for some children who prefer a quieter environment
 - We have homes in a variety of locations including urban and semi-rural to enable us to meet needs of all children
 - Care workers will transport children/ young people (as you would expect parents to do in a 'normal family home'), or where appropriate young people can use local bus services to reach facilities
- **Will the children's home cause noise disturbance?**
 - We have no recorded complaints about noise disturbance from any of our Council-run homes
 - There will be a noise management plan submitted (as standard) with the planning application – including time restrictions on outside play. This is to provide reassurance to local residents that plans are in place to mitigate any disturbance or negative impact.
 - As previously referenced the Council is trying to build a warm, stable home that feels similar to living as a 'family' so the staff will ensure noise is limited to normal levels (as you would expect parents to do in a family home)
 - A Noise and Disturbance Management Plan is a standard requirement for any property being converted to C2 use class (children's home – which includes homes of any size, Belmont will be a smaller than average home for 1-2 children).

Frequently asked questions (3)

- **Will the home have an impact on parking in the local area?**
 - No, there is a double garage and driveway providing space for 6 vehicles which will be more than sufficient for staff and visitors
- **How will you engage with local residents?**
 - Following Parish Council presentation we are planning to knock on doors of nearest neighbours – Management staff from Children's Services who are able to answer any questions (a letter will also be shared with background information on the home)
 - Our next steps will be dependent on the outcome of this exercise – and may involve individual meetings if there are residents with concerns
 - The 'change of use' planning application will involve a statutory consultation period
- **Will the outside of the building fall into disrepair?**
 - The home will be refurbished to a high standard throughout
 - The property will be well maintained (the Council employs a caretaker to support maintenance across its portfolio of homes), including gardens being well kept for the child to enjoy

APPENDIX



Appendix 1 – case studies of children placed in Buckinghamshire Council homes

Young Person 1

Background:

- YP 1 entered our care after her foster placement broke down. She struggled with emotional regulation, identifying only anger as her default emotion and lacking an understanding of other feelings.

Support Provided:

- Our team employed therapeutic techniques to help YP 1 identify and understand emotions. We supported her in recognising physical sensations associated with different feelings, such as nervousness ("butterflies"), happiness (a warm feeling), and sadness.

Outcomes:

- YP 1 can now verbalise her emotions, helping her communicate effectively with others.
- She has developed emotional literacy, significantly improving her relationships and overall well-being.

Young Person 2

Background:

- YP 2 came to us following the death of his mother, with no suitable family members to care for him.

Support Provided:

- We encouraged YP 2's involvement in local community initiatives to build connections, purpose, and self-worth.

Outcomes:

- YP 2 is actively engaged in community events, including litter picking and tree planting.
- He has developed a strong sense of belonging and a positive identity within his local community.

Appendix 1 – case studies of children placed in Buckinghamshire Council homes (2)

Young Person 3

Background:

- YP 3 joined our care after his parents were unable to look after him due to the trauma of losing another child. He faced severe challenges with his health and behaviour, often reacting to difficult situations with anger.

Support Provided:

- Our team implemented strategies to help YP 3 manage his emotions and develop healthier responses to stress. This included teaching him how to express himself and offering alternative coping mechanisms, such as walking away or talking through problems.

Outcomes:

- YP 3 has made significant progress in managing his emotions.
- He now demonstrates improved behaviour, choosing to de-escalate situations rather than react with anger.

Appendix 2 – child success stories

We are proud of the achievements of the young people in our care:

- **Theatrical Talent:** One of our young people has secured a part in the production of Annie at the Waterside Theatre, a testament to their hard work and our support in nurturing their passions.
- **Academic Achievement:** Three of our young people have gone on to university, showcasing the long-term impact of our dedication to their development. The majority of our young people have all passed their GCSE's and are attending college or have apprenticeships
- **Successful Transitions:** All young people who have left our care are now in employment, contributing positively to society.