

From: planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk <planninginfo@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 November 2025 21:53:02 UTC+00:00
To: "Caroline Grist" <caroline.grist@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Mid Sussex DC - Online Register - Comments for Planning Application
DM/25/2550

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 25/11/2025 9:53 PM.

Application Summary

Address: Hillsborough House 118 High Street Hurstpierpoint West Sussex

Proposal: Change of Use from 6 no self contained flats, 4x1bed, 2x 2 bed (Class C3) to Children's Residential Home (Class C2) for a maximum of seven children between the ages of 8 and 18, with up to 5 carers working during the day and up to 3 carers at night.

Case Officer: Caroline Grist

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Address: the pest house bedlam street Hurstpierpoint

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Applicant

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: Response to Objections and Context on Children's Residential Homes

Addressing Objections from South Avenue Residents and Hurst Society
This section responds to the objections submitted by residents at 2, 3, and 7 South Avenue, Hurstpierpoint and Hurst Society regarding the proposed change of use for Hillsborough House.

Existing Children's Residential Homes

There are already multiple seven-bed residential children's homes in operation, including Lansdowne, Cumbria View, Oakwood View, Westlea House, St. Elizabeths Centre, and The Spires.

Previous Use of Hillsborough House

Castles Solicitors operated at Hillsborough House, 118 High Street, from 1978 to 2018. When I was working in this building there were 14 people employed. Staff members and visiting clients regularly used the rear car park, resulting in a significant number of traffic movements-far greater than what is anticipated under the proposed change of use for the property.

Access to Public Spaces

It is important to note that public spaces are intended for the enjoyment of all members of the community, not solely for residents of South Avenue.

Concerns About Residents and Behavior

Some objectors speculated that the facility could house ex-prisoners or attract children likely to cause disturbances, potentially affecting nearby public spaces and local families. However, these concerns are hypothetical and reflect personal opinions rather than any valid planning reason.

Accuracy of Objection Claims

Contrary to claims made in one objection, as of June 2024, West Sussex County Council operated 6 children's residential homes, not 32. Furthermore, the proposed change of use for Hillsborough House does not present any planning implications with respect to policies DP26 and DP34.

Impact on Local Housing

It has been suggested that the loss of the six flats at Hillsborough House would negatively affect local inhabitants. However, it should be noted that all but one of the current tenants are from outside the village, making this claim inaccurate.

National Context: Children in Care and Residential Homes

Trends in Children in Care

The number of children in care in England has increased steadily over the years. In 2008, there were approximately 59,000 children in care. By 2015, this figure had risen to 69,500, and last year it reached 83,630. This increase has been linked to austerity-driven reductions in early intervention services, which have resulted in more families experiencing crisis and subsequently more children requiring care.

Foster Care and Residential Placements

Most children in the care system are placed in foster care-56,390 as of the latest figures. However, recruitment challenges have led

to a crisis in foster carer numbers, with a 10% decline between 2021 and 2024. In contrast, the number of children in residential homes has doubled since 2011, with 16,150 children currently in such settings. The shortage of foster placements often leaves residential care as the only available option. An Ofsted analysis in 2022 found that over a third of children in residential homes had originally been planned for foster care placements.

Market Factors and Geographic Distribution

There are notable consequences when the free market is involved in children's social care. Private providers tend to establish homes in lower-cost areas to maximize profit. The dramatic rise in property prices in the UK—an increase of 315% since 2000—has contributed to this trend. As a result, a quarter of children's homes are now located in the northwest of England, while only 6% are in London, 7% in the southwest, and 8% in the east. Last year, 67% of children in residential care were placed outside their local authority, and half were more than 20 miles from their family homes.

Outcomes and Government Policy

Research indicates that children placed far from home are more likely to experience poorer outcomes in health and education and are at greater risk of sexual or criminal exploitation. The government's current strategy emphasizes reducing the number of children entering care, reflecting a tacit acknowledgment of the harm caused by years of cuts to early help and preventative services. These austerity measures have been partly blamed for a 25% increase in the number of children entering care between 2010 and 2021.

Kind regards