

Our Ref: 18323/6

Arun District Council
Planning Services
Civic Centre
Littlehampton
BN17 5LF

25 March 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

VERNON HOUSE, 10 MALTRAVERS DRIVE, LITTLEHAMPTON, BN17 5EY

**APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF LAWFULNESS FOR PROPOSED USE AS SUPPORTED LIVING
ACCOMMODATION FOR ADULTS WITH COMPLEX CARE NEEDS (USE CLASS C2)**

PLANNING PORTAL REF – PP-14796984

On behalf of our client, Liaise Group Limited, (the applicant) we are pleased to submit an application for a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed use of Vernon House, Maltravers Drive, Littlehampton as supported living accommodation for adults with complex care needs (Use Class C2).

1. Scope of Supporting Information

All supporting documents have been submitted via the Planning Portal, and these comprise the following:

- Application Form
- Planning Application fee of £298 plus administrative fee of £85
- Supporting Planning Statement (this letter)
- Site Location Plan
- Liaise Operational Management Plan (for background purposes)

2. Site Context

The application site comprises the existing building and land at Vernon House, Maltravers Drive, Littlehampton as identified in red in Figure 1 over page.

As set out further in Section 3 of this letter, the site has historically been occupied as a residential care home and more recently as a family assessment centre (both uses falling within Use Class C2).

The building is a large two storey structure which has been extended to the rear. The property is currently configured to provide 6 family bedrooms with en suite facilities at ground floor level along with managers office and wc, dining room, kitchen, staff wc, boiler room, buggy store, quiet lounge, laundry, assessment bathroom and lounge. The first floor contains a CCTV room, 2 staff rooms, kitchen, shower room, admin office, social workers office and bathroom.

The site contains car parking adjacent to the road frontage, from which access is taken, and contains a garden space to the rear. The building is currently vacant.

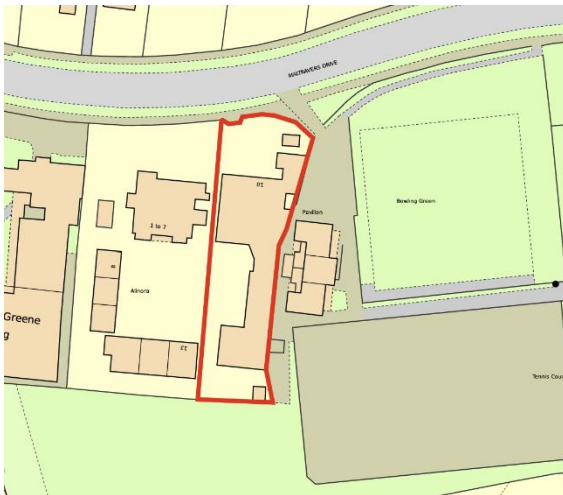


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Planning History

The planning history of the site is summarised in the table below:

LU/261/69	Residential home for blind persons	Approved September 1969
LU/384/69	Extensions and alterations	Approved January 1970
LU/284/97	Alterations to front elevation, 2 new windows, ramp access to recessed front door.	Approved February 1998
LU/183/12/PL	Conversion of store to office space	Approved September 2012
LU/57/13/PL	Rear extension and internal alterations to form new living accommodation	Approved May 2013
LU/59/20/PL	Kitchen extension	Approved May 2020
LU/21/22/CLP	Lawful development certificate for the Proposed Use as a residential family assessment centre (Use Class C2).	Issued 15 March 2022

The application site has historically been used as a residential care home. Planning permission was granted in 1969 under application LU/261/69 for the use of the property as a 'residential home for blind persons'. The planning permission does not restrict either the specific use within Class C2 or the nature of the residents. We understand that from the early 2000s until approximately 2022, the property provided residential care accommodation for adults with learning disabilities. More recent planning applications relating to the site regularly refer to the continued use of the premises as a residential care home.

More recently, a lawful development certificate for the proposed use of the building as a residential family assessment centre (also falling within Use Class C2) was issued in March 2022 (LPA Ref: LU/21/22/CLP). The Council agreed that as the use falls within the same use class, it would not be development and is therefore lawful, not requiring the submission of a planning application.

The Proposed Use

This application seeks a certificate of lawfulness for the proposed use of the site as supported living accommodation for adults with complex care needs (Use Class C2).

The scheme would be owned and operated by Liaise who provides specialist and bespoke support for people with complex needs and specialist conditions including profound multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), down syndrome, autism, epilepsy and sensory impairments. They currently operate 49 supported living homes across England, including in Cambridgeshire, Hampshire, West Sussex, Kent, Greater London, Essex, Hart, Buckinghamshire and Norfolk. They support approximately 280 individuals and employ over 1,100 staff members across care, operational and management roles.

A key focus for Liaise is the provision of an expanding portfolio of supported living accommodation to meet local needs. The proposed scheme at Vernon House would allow people to live as independently as possible in their own homes, with the reassurance that extra physical and emotional support is always available. In summary, the scheme will provide residential accommodation with integrated care in a managed environment.

The scheme will include self-contained accommodation for residents along with communal living areas, a shared garden and staff facilities. The site at Vernon House is particularly well-suited for the proposed supporting living use. It lies within an established residential area, which allows residents to establish meaningful connections with their local communities, and it is accessible to local services and amenities in Littlehampton.

The key operational characteristics of the proposed supported living scheme is summarised below.

Nature of accommodation	Supported living accommodation for adults with learning disabilities and complex support needs within ordinary residential environments.
Resident tenure	Residents hold individual tenancies and occupy their homes as their permanent residence.
Local need	Liaise will work closely with the West Sussex Adult Social Care team to ensure that accommodation responds appropriately to identified local needs.
Size	It is anticipated that Vernon House would be occupied by 6 residents.
Care and support model	Structured person-centred care with tailored support in a managed environment and based on individual needs (care regulated by the CQC).

Staffing	Support workers present as required by individual care plans. It is envisaged that 1:1 care and support will be provided with overnight staff where necessary. For Vernon House that means that approximately 6 staff would be on site during any shift.
Management	The home will be overseen by a Registered Manager with 24-hour on-call management support.
Community integration	Residents encouraged to participate in everyday community activities.
Traffic generation	This will be comparable to a typical residential dwelling, and residents will not own cars. The location of the site provides opportunities for staff to travel by sustainable modes of transport.
Neighbour liaison	Any complaints will be handled through formal procedures and local management oversight to ensure that homes operate responsibly within residential neighbourhoods.

Further details are provided in the Operational Management Plan that accompanies this submission.

No external alterations or changes to the appearance of the building are proposed or for which planning permission would be required.

3. Planning Assessment

Given the planning history outlined above, the site has an existing lawful planning use for all uses falling within Class C2 of The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order (1987) (as amended). The 1969 permission does not restrict use of the site solely to a residential school for the blind or, indeed, have any restriction on how the site can be used within Class C2.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 states that planning permission is only needed if the ‘work’ being carried out meets the statutory definition of ‘development’, as set out in Section 55 of the Act. ‘Development’ includes a material change of use of land and buildings. Section 55(2)(f) of the Act confirms that a change in the primary use of land or buildings where the before and after use falls within the same use class, shall not be taken as involving development of the land. In summary, permission is not therefore required to move between two uses where they both fall within the same use class, as long as it does not involve any breach of planning condition.

Use Class C2 is defined by The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 as being residential institutions: “*use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within class C3 (dwelling houses)).*” By means of comparison, Use Class C3 includes Class C3(a): single households and Class C3(b): accommodation for up to 6 residents living together as a single household with care.

The decisive issue in this case is therefore whether residents within the proposed development would form a single household as a matter of fact and degree. For the reasons set out below, that is clearly not the case.

In more detail, the scheme will provide supported living accommodation for adults with learning disabilities and complex care needs, where residents require the provision of personal care as a primary component of their accommodation. Residents live separate lifestyles with individualised care regimes and with 1:1 shift-based carers. While residents will hold individual tenancies, the level and nature of care provision, together with the coordinated management of the property and 24-hour on-site staffing, distinguish the proposal from a typical dwelling (Class C3). The primary and defining function of the development is the provision of care, without which the accommodation could not operate. Residents would not be capable of occupying the accommodation without the provision of care, which is integral to the use of the site. Moreover, all staff work on a shift basis and as established by case law, cannot be counted as part of household. This further confirms that the use does not operate as a single household in any ordinary sense.

The combination of individual tenancies, 1:1 care provision, shift-based staffing, and the inability of residents to function as a single household clearly distinguishes the proposal from any form of Class C3 use as a matter of fact and degree.

Given the operational characteristics outlined above, the proposed development instead lies squarely within the definition of a residential institution and is a Class C2 use as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order, as amended. Moreover, there are no restrictions limiting use solely to a residential home. Therefore, the proposed use does not constitute 'development' and does not require planning permission.

It is also relevant to note that the proposed use would not result in any material intensification or change in the character of the use of the site when compared to its lawful use. The site has historically operated as a residential care facility within Class C2, including most recently as a family assessment centre for 6 families. The proposed occupation by up to 6 individual residents supported by staff on a shift basis represents a level of activity that is less intensive than those established lawful uses. There would be no external alterations, and activity associated with the use, including comings and goings, would remain consistent with the established lawful use. Accordingly, the proposal would not give rise to a material change in the nature or intensity of the use and does not constitute development.

Case law and planning appeal decisions are consistent on the points raised above. By means of example we reference below an appeal decision dated February 2025 in which the appellant sought to argue that the proposed supported living accommodation would fall within Use Class C3b (Ref: APP/M1520/X/24/3339303). The Inspector dismissed the appeal and concluded that:

"It seems to me that the needs of the adult residents would be such that they themselves would be very unlikely to be able to run a home and form a single household. They would need care, support and supervision to do so and to make sure that the household operates as it should. Based on those providing the care not residing at the property, they could not be regarded as living together with the adult tenants as a single household. Consequently, with support staff coming and going on shifts, as a matter of fact and degree the use cannot be considered to fall within Class C3(b). In my view, the use would fall into Class C2 of the UCO as a use for the provision of residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than a use within class C3 (dwelling houses))."

Unlike the appeal case cited, where the lawful use was Class C3, the application site benefits from an established lawful Class C2 use. The appeal decision is therefore directly relevant in confirming the

correct classification of supported living, whilst the fallback position in this case is materially stronger.

We would be pleased to provide the Council with further appeal decisions and analysis if required.

The approach of seeking clarity on this matter through a certificate of lawfulness is also entirely consistent with that taken by the Council in the determination of application LU/21/22/CLP for use of the premises as a family assessment centre. The delegated report prepared in respect of that application concluded that:

“The proposed use as a residential family assessment centre complies with relevant sections 2(f) in that a residential care home and a residential assessment centre fall under the same use class (C2) and is not considered to be development and is therefore lawful and does not require the submission of a planning application.”

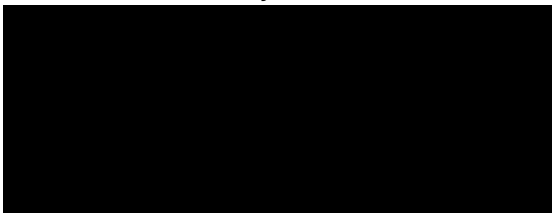
4. Summary

The proposed use falls within Class C2 as it comprises the provision of residential accommodation with care for adults with complex needs. Residents would not form a single household, given the nature of their conditions, individual tenancies, and the provision of 1:1 care by non-resident staff operating on a shift basis. The primary function of the development is the delivery of care rather than conventional residential living. As such, the proposal remains within the lawful C2 use of the site. Accordingly, no material change of use would occur.

In summary, the proposal clearly falls within Class C2 and does not constitute development under Section 55(2)(f). The Council is therefore respectfully requested to issue a Certificate of Lawfulness confirming that the proposed use is lawful.

Should you have any queries in respect of this submission please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Adrian Kearley
Director