

Planning Statement DC/10/0915

Park House Lodge, North Street, Horsham, RH12 1RJ, West Sussex

Morning Stars Care LTD

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Morning Stars Care LTD in support of a proposal to establish a step-down residential care home in Horsham, West Sussex. The facility will provide short-to-medium term accommodation and structured support for individuals leaving hospital who require assistance to develop the independent living skills necessary to transition successfully into community-based accommodation.

The proposed service will support adults with mental health conditions and learning disabilities who are clinically ready to leave hospital but require additional support to regain confidence, rebuild daily living skills and reduce long-term reliance on formal care services.

The development will therefore play a critical role in the hospital discharge pathway, supporting recovery, promoting independence and enabling residents to move toward lower-support or independent living arrangements in the near future.

Strategic Need for Step-Down Care

Across England there is increasing recognition that step-down residential care services are an essential component of the health and social care system.

Many patients remain in hospital longer than medically necessary due to the absence of appropriate community placements capable of supporting their transition back into independent living. This creates pressure across the entire healthcare system, particularly within acute mental health facilities.

Step-down residential care homes provide a structured rehabilitation environment where individuals can develop practical life skills including:

- Cooking and meal preparation
- Personal care and wellbeing management
- Budgeting and financial management
- Medication management
- Household responsibilities
- Community integration and social participation

The objective of this model of care is to enable residents to progress into more independent accommodation, reducing their long-term reliance on residential care services.

Local Need within Horsham and West Sussex

Morning Stars Care LTD has engaged with West Sussex County Council regarding the need for additional step-down accommodation across the county.

These discussions confirmed that there is:

- Increasing pressure on acute mental health hospital beds
- A shortage of community-based step-down placements
- Delays in hospital discharge due to limited transitional accommodation

The development of a step-down residential care home within Horsham would directly support the local care pathway, allowing patients who are medically stable to leave hospital environments while continuing to receive structured rehabilitation and support.

This approach is consistent with the commissioning priorities of the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board, which aims to expand community-based care services and reduce reliance on inpatient hospital provision.

Supporting the NHS “Discharge to Assess” Model

The proposed development supports the national Discharge to Assess framework.

This policy encourages patients to leave hospital as soon as they are medically stable, with ongoing care and assessment taking place within community settings rather than within acute hospital environments.

Step-down residential services such as the proposed facility are essential to delivering this model by providing a safe and supported environment where individuals can continue their recovery outside hospital settings.

The development will therefore contribute to:

- Faster and safer hospital discharge
- Reduced bed occupancy pressures within hospitals
- Improved recovery outcomes for patients

Supporting Local Authority Financial Sustainability

Local authorities across England are experiencing significant financial pressures within adult social care budgets due to:

- Rising demand for services
- Increasing complexity of care needs
- The high cost of long-term residential placements

Long-term residential placements can cost local authorities £1,000–£2,000 per week or more, depending on care needs.

Step-down services are designed specifically to reduce long-term care dependency by helping individuals develop the skills required to live more independently.

By enabling individuals to progress to supported living or independent accommodation, step-down residential care can significantly reduce long-term social care expenditure.

The proposed development will therefore support financial sustainability within the Adult Social Care system, helping local authorities manage increasing demand while improving outcomes for service users.

Planning Policy Context

The proposal aligns with the National Planning Policy Framework, which encourages planning decisions that support healthy communities and provide the social infrastructure necessary to meet local needs.

The development is also consistent with policies contained within the Horsham District Planning Framework.

Key relevant policies include:

HDPF Policy 1 – Sustainable Development

This policy supports development that meets the social and community needs of the district while contributing to sustainable communities. The provision of specialist care accommodation directly contributes to this objective.

HDPF Policy 3 and Policy 4 – Development Hierarchy

These policies identify Horsham as the primary settlement for growth, where development that supports community infrastructure and services is considered appropriate.

HDPF Policy 42 – Inclusive Communities

This policy supports development that promotes inclusive communities and addresses the needs of vulnerable residents, including those requiring care and support services.

HDPF Policy 43 – Community Facilities

Policy 43 supports the provision of community facilities and services that improve the wellbeing of residents, including healthcare and social care infrastructure.

The proposed step-down residential care home therefore aligns strongly with these policies by providing an essential community facility that meets a clearly identified local need.

Planning Use Class Justification (Class C2)

The proposed development falls within Use Class C2 – Residential Institutions.

Class C2 includes residential accommodation and care for people in need of care due to:

- Illness
- Disability
- Mental health conditions
- Learning disabilities

Residents within the proposed development will receive on-site care and supervision, and the primary function of the building will be the provision of residential care services rather than standard housing.

The proposal therefore appropriately falls within the C2 planning use classification.

Benefits of the Proposed Development

The proposed step-down residential care home will deliver significant benefits to the local area:

Healthcare Benefits

- Supports safe hospital discharge
- Reduces pressure on acute mental health hospitals
- Improves recovery outcomes for patients

Social Benefits

- Helps individuals develop independent living skills
- Promotes social integration and wellbeing
- Enables residents to move toward independent accommodation

Public Sector Benefits

- Supports NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board commissioning priorities
- Reduces long-term adult social care costs
- Supports the financial sustainability of local authority services

Site Suitability Justification

The proposed location within Horsham represents a highly appropriate and sustainable location for a step-down residential care home due to its accessibility, integration within the community, and proximity to essential services.

Access to Healthcare Services

A key requirement for step-down residential care is proximity to health services and professional support networks. Horsham benefits from access to a range of healthcare facilities, including:

- Langley Green Hospital
- Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust community mental health services

These services provide important clinical support for residents who are transitioning from hospital care and may require ongoing monitoring, outpatient appointments, or multidisciplinary support.

Locating the facility within Horsham ensures that residents can maintain continuity of care and access essential health services quickly and efficiently.

Accessibility and Sustainable Transport

The site benefits from strong transport connectivity within the town and surrounding areas, including access to:

- Horsham railway station
- Local bus routes serving the wider Horsham district
- Walkable access to local amenities and community services

This accessibility is particularly important for:

- Staff commuting to the site
- Visiting healthcare professionals
- Residents engaging with the community and developing independent living skills.

The site therefore aligns with sustainable development principles by enabling residents to access services without reliance on private vehicles.

Integration within an Established Community

The location sits within an established residential area of Horsham, allowing residents to gradually reintegrate into normal community life following hospital discharge.

Step-down services are most effective when located within ordinary residential neighbourhoods, as this helps residents:

- Rebuild confidence in community environments
- Develop independent living skills in real-world settings
- Access everyday amenities such as shops, parks and leisure facilities.

The proposed location therefore supports the rehabilitative aims of the service model, enabling residents to transition successfully toward independent living.

Alignment with Local Planning Policy

Locating the development within Horsham also aligns with the settlement hierarchy identified in the Horsham District Planning Framework, which recognises Horsham as a primary settlement where community infrastructure and services should be located.

The proposal therefore represents an appropriate and sustainable location for the delivery of specialist care accommodation.

Community Impact and Neighbour Considerations

Morning Stars Care LTD recognises the importance of ensuring that the proposed development integrates positively with the surrounding community.

The proposed step-down residential care home is expected to have minimal impact on neighbouring properties and the wider area.

Residential Character

The nature of the proposed use is similar in character to a large family dwelling, with residents living together in a supported environment.

Key characteristics include:

- A small number of residents
- Normal domestic living arrangements
- 24-hour staff supervision
- Structured daily routines

As such, the development will function in a manner consistent with the surrounding residential environment.

Traffic and Parking

Step-down residential care homes typically generate low levels of traffic, particularly compared with many other forms of development.

Vehicle movements will primarily consist of:

- Staff shift changes
- Occasional visits from healthcare professionals
- Family visits

These movements are expected to occur at staggered times and will not create significant additional traffic within the local area.

The services has designated parking spaces for the service vehicle as well as for customer family visiting them.

Positive Community Contribution

The development will contribute positively to the community by:

- Supporting vulnerable individuals to rebuild their lives after hospital treatment
- Providing local employment opportunities within the care sector
- Strengthening the local health and social care infrastructure

Step-down services also help prevent individuals from being placed in out-of-area care settings, enabling residents to remain closer to family, friends and local support networks.

Responsible Management

Morning Stars Care LTD will operate the facility under robust regulatory oversight by the Care Quality Commission.

This ensures that the service meets strict standards relating to:

- Safeguarding
- Care quality
- Staffing levels
- Operational management

The organisation is committed to maintaining a well-managed service that integrates respectfully with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Summary

The proposed step-down residential care home in Horsham represents a well-located, sustainable and socially beneficial development.

The site is suitable due to:

- Proximity to healthcare services
- Access to public transport and local amenities
- Integration within an established residential community
- Alignment with the Horsham District Planning Framework

The development will have minimal impact on neighbouring properties while delivering substantial benefits to the local health and social care system by supporting hospital discharge, promoting independence and reducing long-term care dependency.

12. Existing Use and Proposed Amendment to Previous Planning Permission

The property has an established planning use as a residential care home operating within Use Class C2 (Residential Institutions). The premises were previously operated by a care provider delivering residential care services for individuals with physical disabilities and learning difficulties.

The building is already configured and suitable for residential care provision, including:

- Individual resident bedrooms
- Communal living and dining areas
- Staff supervision facilities
- Accessible accommodation suitable for individuals requiring care and support.

As such, the proposed development does not involve a change of use from residential to care accommodation, but rather represents the continuation of an existing C2 residential care use.

Morning Stars Care LTD proposes to operate the premises as a step-down residential care home supporting individuals leaving hospital, with the aim of helping residents develop the independent living skills required to move into lower-support accommodation in the future.

Amendment to Planning Condition / Clause 12

Morning Stars Care LTD is seeking a minor amendment to Clause 12 of the previous planning permission associated with the site.

The previous permission restricted the use of the property to residents with physical disabilities and learning difficulties.

Morning Stars Care LTD is requesting that this clause be amended to also allow the accommodation of individuals with:

- Learning disabilities
- Mental health conditions

This amendment reflects the evolving needs within the health and social care system and aligns with current commissioning priorities for step-down care provision.

The proposed amendment would therefore allow the facility to support individuals who are:

- Leaving hospital following treatment for mental health conditions
- Requiring structured residential support before transitioning to more independent accommodation.

Importantly, the proposed amendment does not alter the scale, physical form, or operational characteristics of the building.

Residents will continue to live within a small, supervised residential environment, supported by trained staff providing 24-hour care.

Planning and Operational Impact

The proposed amendment to Clause 12 will not result in any material changes to:

- The external appearance of the building
- The number of residents accommodated
- Traffic generation or parking requirements
- The overall residential character of the development.

The use of the property will remain within Use Class C2 – Residential Institutions, and the operational nature of the care home will remain consistent with the previous planning permission.

The amendment simply ensures that the facility can respond to current local care needs, particularly the increasing demand for step-down accommodation for individuals leaving hospital settings.

Policy and Community Benefits

Allowing the proposed amendment will enable Morning Stars Care LTD to:

- Support hospital discharge pathways
- Assist individuals in developing independent living skills
- Reduce long-term reliance on residential care services
- Support local authority adult social care budgets
- Reduce pressure on local NHS hospital services

The proposal therefore represents a logical and policy-compliant evolution of the existing care use, ensuring that the facility can meet current health and social care demands within the Horsham area.