

Location Risk Assessment
September 2024

Windows
for Children



Pen Picture

The home is a modern 11-bedroom house set well back from the road, in a suburban area of Chatham. The road consists of residential properties and is nearly a mile long and has a substantial hill at one end. It is approximately 2 1/2 miles from the town centre and the train station. It is within easy reach of many schools, playing fields, leisure centres, shops and healthcare services.

The home is based in Medway, which is a unitary authority on the north coast of Kent. It benefits from an excellent rail service into London and easy access to two major motorways giving quick access to London and other placing authorities. The home is about 20 minutes from the Dartford Crossing giving access to counties north of London.

The house stands in a plot of one acre with a large driveway that can accommodate 16 cars. This means that the running of the home does not impact on the local neighbourhood traffic/parking. This also means that there is limited risk of a potential accident when young children are getting into and out of vehicles. The house does not look particularly large from the road and has no signage or indication that the property is used as a children's home. This is because we do not want our children to feel they are different to their friends at school.

The building is in excess of 4,000 square feet and provides ample accommodation for the children that are cared for. There are sufficient bedrooms for eight children to have individual rooms, plus a room for the sleeping in member of staff. There are gates either side of the property to ensure the children are safely contained in the very large rear garden. There are sheds that store bicycles and play equipment, a school facility and open areas for group games.

Windows for Children is an individual therapeutic children's home that cares for severely traumatised and emotionally damaged children with complex needs. The admission age range of between 5 and 10 years. Because the children are so young, they are never unsupervised either inside or outside the home. This is the major contributing factor to ensuring our children are kept safe at all times. The home employs waking night staff to monitor children are safe and their whereabouts are known at all times. The home has developed a sound and movement monitor for the first floor. This ensures that staff know where children are twenty-four hours a day. This system does not use cameras, and its use is approved by placing authorities and Ofsted. When children attend external schools and clubs, they are escorted into the site and picked up from the school or club. No child is allowed to wait outside the school or club premises, as this could potentially compromise a child's safety.

Risk Assessment

Windows location is considered ideal as the crime and instances of sexual exploitation are extremely low. Due to the age range of the children accommodated within the home, they are never unsupervised by the staff who are charged with their care.

The local crime map suggests that the area surrounding the home is considered to have a low risk factor. In addition to this due to the age range of the children that reside at the home, they would never be allowed out unsupervised. Therefore, the likelihood of being drawn into gang crime or anti-social behaviour is very low.

The home specialises in therapeutic interventions that help young children that have generally suffered from abuse and/or neglect. It is our firm belief that the neighbourhood is a safe and positive environment. This statement is justified by the numerous examples of children that have benefited and have had their lives positively improved and enhanced by the home and its local environment over a twenty-nine year history. Due to the fact that very few of our neighbours that live in Dargets Road even know what we are, or what we do; is a significant indicator that the existence of the home has a low impact on the local community.

There are no obvious factors that would represent unusual hazards to the children. The home is on a reasonably busy road, assessed at probably 4 vehicle movements per minute. This would be considered low in built up areas. The home is set back about 150 feet from the road and children would only use the road under close supervision from staff. This would happen normally as life skills training.

The large rear garden is boarded on two sides by woodland and enjoys the benefit of a chain link fence. The garden also borders two other privately owned properties, one boarder is maintained by a 6 foot hedge and the other by a 5 foot fence which was replaced in 2021.

CCTV camera are mounted on the front of the building facing away from the home and covering the car park. Recordings are saved for one month.

Accessibility

The home is situated in the conurbation of Medway and is well served by a full range of local services. Within a twenty-minute walk of the home there are, seven primary schools and two secondary schools, a leisure centre, a bowling alley, a supermarket, 5 parks, woodland areas, an optician, a dentist, a surgery as well as a host of local shops.

Within a twenty-minute drive of the home further amenities including an ice-rink, historic dock yard, a range of museums, a cinema, three shopping complexes, several train stations offering excellent connections to London and the South East, a range of clubs and evening activities, sport facilities including several swimming pools and tennis courts. The home runs two seven-seat vehicles which are used to access amenities beyond the immediate vicinity and to enable the children to have access to the broader benefits of living in the south east of England including, sandy beaches, historic castles and beautiful countryside.

Relationships with the Community

The home has been in situ for 29 years and over this time has developed and maintained excellent links with the community. We frequently have local emergency services visit the site to interact with the children to develop their understanding and trust of services. The Lions Club and Rotary Club support us through giving the children presents at Christmas and providing a Father Christmas who visits the home on Christmas Eve.

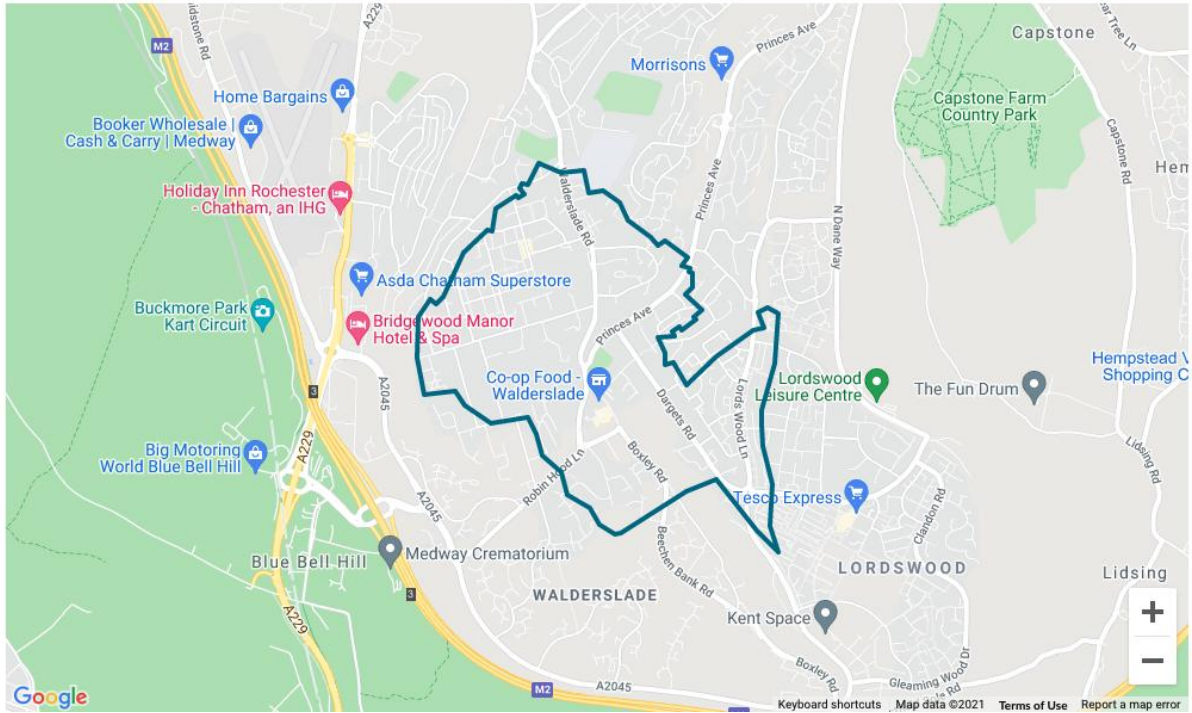
County Lines

Due to the age of our children, they are never unsupervised whilst in our care. This reduces the chances of our children being affected by Gangs/County Lines. However, we cannot be complacent. There are times when the children are at school and the possibility of them missing from the home, when a child could be at risk.

We need to be vigilant and look for indicators such as; changes in behaviours and habits as highlighted in our County Lines Policy and staff training. The home maintains an excellent relationship with the local police and PCSO service with frequent visits to the home encouraged.

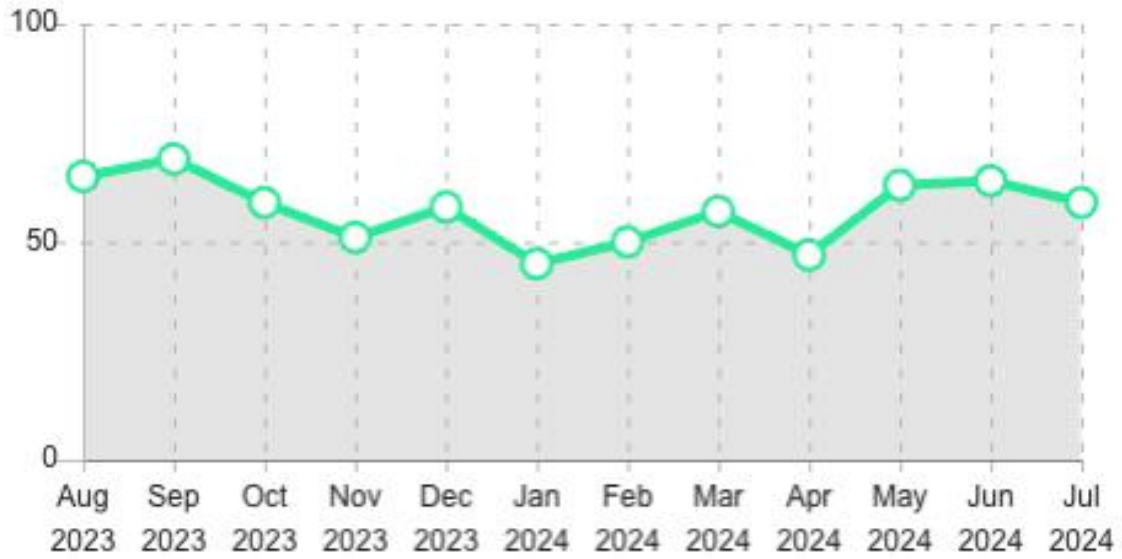
Highlighted risks

The home receives a monthly crime report from the Police outlining the type and frequency of crimes committed within the vicinity of the home. The figures provided are taken from <https://www.police.uk> and pertain to the area directly surrounding the home (map below).



Crime rates have remained relatively stable over the past 12 months.

Crime per Month



Although violence and sexualised behaviour represent statistically the highest risk in the area, the age and level of supervision of the children in our care reduce this risk significantly.

Should a child go missing, this fact, combined with the child's level of vulnerability should necessitate the immediate contacting of the police and the highest priority level assigned to bringing the child home.

Strategies

To mitigate the risk children are constantly supervised and do not leave the site without appropriate risk assessment, staffing levels and risk management planning.

Additionally, appropriate measures have been taken to ensure the site is secure including a perimeter fence and gates, double glazed lockable windows and doors, a security coded side door and awake staff on site always.

Off-site activities must be risk assessed by the most senior member of staff involved in the activity and the risk assessment signed off by a designated senior manager.

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Revised by: Matt Fenwick



Tel:01634 660500

URN: 2559013
