



Minding the minders

A Tadworth childminder who did not tell Ofsted about changes to the adults living in her house has been given an inadequate rating. Inspectors said the childminder had breached requirements resulting in “a significant impact on children’s safety and overall welfare”.

The childminder’s details are not given in the report published this month by Ofsted.

Inspectors said suitability checks had not been completed on all household members because the regulator had not been informed of the changes to adults living there and therefore children were not safeguarded.

The report said: “Leadership and management are inadequate. The childminder has not identified breaches of the statutory requirements that have a significant impact on children’s safety and personal development.”

The inspection, which was carried out in February, rated the childminder inadequate overall and in the areas of “personal development” and “leadership and management”.

But the rating for “quality of education” and “behaviour and attitudes” were both good.

At the time of the inspection, there were six children on the roll.

Inspectors said the childminder was able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and knew what steps to take to protect the children she cared for.

They said she refreshed her safeguarding knowledge regularly, had a secure understanding of wider safeguarding issues, and carried out regular risk assessments on her home.

The report said: “Children feel happy and are settled with the childminder, who takes the time to get to know them well.

“Children confidently move around the environment and show curiosity as they explore the resources and activities that have been set up for them.”

According to inspectors, the childminder focussed on supporting children’s emotional well-being, including looking at family photographs with the children to talk about what made them happy.

Inspectors said: “Parents are happy with the care and education that the childminder provides.

“They are complimentary about the care their children receive.”

At the previous inspection in 2015, the childminder met the standards required by inspectors.

Ofsted would not comment on individual inspections. The regulator reinspects inadequate providers within six months of the latest inspection.

Yet more on ULEZ....

By **Emily Coady Stemp** Local Democracy Reporter: London’s proposed Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) expansion would mean drivers trying to get to some popular landmarks in the capital’s border with Surrey would be liable for the £12.50 daily charge.

Transport for London’s (TfL) consultation on the extension of the area covered by the the ULEZ ended last month, and many Surrey councils have submitted their responses to the plans with hefty opposition.

The zone, which sees drivers of any vehicle not complying with minimum nitrogen dioxide emissions standards charged £12.50 per day to drive inside the area it covers, could be extended from August next year.

Elmbridge Borough Council called on TfL to delay the expansion to allow more analysis, while Tandridge District Council has asked that any scrappage scheme introduced for Londoners also be offered to Surrey residents.

The aim of the zone is to reduce nitrogen dioxide by around 30 per cent across London, and it currently covers all areas within the North and South Circular Roads.

The border shift would cover all London boroughs, adjacent to large parts of Surrey, and could impact on some family days out for drivers of certain cars.



Hampton Court Bridge to Bushy Park and Chessington World of Adventures affected

For example, drivers of cars which don't meet the emissions standards, and who drive over Hampton Court Bridge to Bushy Park will be eligible to pay the fee.

TfL's website says any money received from the ULEZ will be reinvested into transport such as cycleways, buses and the tube, and go towards improving London's air quality.

The planned extended zone would also go down the A243 as far as the junction with Fair Oak Lane and Rushett Lane, meaning Chessington World of Adventures would be included as well.

Hospital appointments could also see drivers charged, with St Helier and Royal Marsden hospitals both falling within the planned zone.

In **Epsom and Ewell**, eight out of the 13 wards in the borough will border the ULEZ and be directly affected by it.

A meeting of the borough council on July 28 agreed to respond to TfL asking for a longer consultation period, an extension of the scrappage scheme, and exempt routes allowing access to essential places and roads such as the A3, M25, A240 and the existing St Helier hospital in Sutton.

Councillor John Beckett, chair of environment and safe communities committee, said: "We support the move to reduce high levels of air pollution, which the ULEZ scheme aims to achieve.

"However, owing to the acute economic pressure households and business are facing at this time, the scheme needs to consider the economic, social and mental health needs of all communities affected by this scheme, not just London boroughs."

TfL page on proposed expansion: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone/proposed-ulez-expansion-for-2023>

Related articles:

More on Epsom and Ewell and Surrey and ULEZ

Council's last minute opposition to ULEZ extension.

Driving to Sutton or Kingston in an old car could cost you £12.50 next year!

Man wrongly labelled 'vexatious complainant' by Epsom and Ewell Council

A man was paid £500 after **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** wrongly labelled him a "vexatious complainant" in a planning dispute. The **local government ombudsman**, which looks into complaints against councils, found Epsom and Ewell Borough Council at fault over its handling of contact from a man known as Mr X.

The authority was told to pay him £500 for the distress he suffered, made up of £300 for distress and £200 for his time and trouble in contacting the council and the ombudsman.

The authority was also told to apologise to Mr X for its "failure to deal properly with the planning enforcement investigation and its decision to apply the unacceptable behaviour policy to him".

Mr X had been in contact with the council before an investigation was opened, in October 2020, into an alleged breach of planning control regarding his neighbour's driveway. This report was added to an already open planning enforcement investigation, with Mr X saying the council had failed to act on his reports that his neighbour carried out development on a front driveway without planning permission.

A spokesperson for the council said they were unable to comment on enquiries relating to an individual case. According to the ombudsman's report, the council claimed to have sent a report into Mr X's complaints to him in December 2020, though he claims he was not informed of the decision not to take enforcement action. The council did not provide evidence to support its claim it had sent the report to Mr X, as part of the ombudsman's investigation. It closed the enforcement investigation in February 2021, though the ombudsman noted that it appeared the council did act on the reports but did not provide evidence on its conclusions.

The report states: "Based on Mr X's statement that he did not receive the report and the council's failure to provide evidence that



the report was sent to him, I conclude, on the balance of probabilities, that the report was not sent to Mr X. This is significant because Mr X's further contacts with the council from January 2021 over the planning breaches were justified."

Mr X had sent emails and photographs about the issue to the head of development management and had contacted the enforcement officer dealing with the case. He was concerned about the building of a wall, drainage systems, lack of screening, a failure to screen off the building site and raising of the height of the garden in relation to his neighbour. He also said an enforcement officer made a visit to the site, but did not inform him of it in order to meet with him afterwards.

He made a complaint about the enforcement officer to the head of development management.

The head of development management stopped working for the council in January 2021, and did not respond to the complaint he received from Mr X before he did. He also had contact with the authority's chief legal officer, who he made a complaint about, saying the officer was "protecting his neighbour".

He said the officer had repeatedly ignored his correspondence and threatened to block his emails while making an allegation of defamation against him.

Mr X continued to contact council officers up to summer 2021, until he received an email in August to say the council would restrict contact with him under its unreasonable behaviour policy.

The letter said most of Mr X's correspondence did not fall within the definition of a complaint the council could deal with and that the context and nature of his correspondence threatened the welfare of council employees. It said Mr X would be restricted to a single point of contact and the restriction would remain in place for six months.

The ombudsman found: "The chief legal officer triggered the policy even though the council had not dealt with Mr X's reports of breaches of planning control properly and in line with relevant procedures and statutory guidelines."

The council's policy on "unreasonable behaviour" covers people who hinder council work on their, or other people's complaints, because of the nature or frequency of their contacts. It says unreasonable behaviour may include one or two isolated incidents or persistent behaviour over a longer period.

The ombudsman concluded: "There was fault by the council because it did not inform Mr X of the outcome of its planning enforcement investigation. It consequently improperly applied its policy on vexatious complainants. The council agreed to apologise to Mr X and make a payment to him to address the injustice he suffered in consequence of its fault."

A borough council spokesperson said: "We are unable to comment on enquiries relating to an individual case in the borough. "We can inform you that we work with the ombudsman regarding individual case work and its recommendations."

The full report of the ombudsman is [HERE](#)