

Supported Lodgings Scheme

Information Pack for Potential Lodgings Providers

Thank you for requesting information about our Supported Lodgings Provider Scheme. We hope this information pack will provide answers to any questions you may have. If anything is unclear or if you have other questions please do not hesitate to contact us on 0121 788 4200 or email 16plus@solihull.gov.uk.

If having read the information, you are still interested in becoming a supported lodgings provider, please fill the enclosed application form in and send it back to us at:

Solihull Supported Lodgings Scheme
Education and Children Services
16+ Team
8 Craig Croft
Chelmsley Wood
Solihull
B37 7TR

WHAT IS SUPPORTED LODGINGS

There are a variety of accommodation options available for a young person leaving care. Some may return home or live with friends or on their own but others move to supported accommodation.

Supported lodgings are approved individuals/families who wish to provide a stepping stone for young people who are 16+ and have been on the care of the local authority. It allows the young person to continue to develop their skills in a different environment.

Supported lodgings providers are a bit like landlords/landladies offering a room in their home. The provider will supply a room, breakfast and evening meal and will work with the young person to help them develop skills like, cooking and budgeting.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE SUPPORTED LODGINGS PROVIDER SCHEME?

- To recruit individuals or families who wish to accommodate young people leaving care and help them develop the life skills they need as independent young adults;
- To offer young people aged 16 to 21 year-olds who have been in care a bridge between care and independent living;
- To offer young people who are eligible to access the scheme a safe, secure environment so that they can continue to work/learn without being obliged to live independently;
- The scheme would be accessible for those aged 16+ who are in the process of leaving care and have specific needs or require a higher level support.

WHAT KIND OF ACCOMMODATION IS REQUIRED?

Accommodation is required in Solihull, Birmingham and the surrounding area. The young person will need his or her own room with a bed and storage for clothing and

other possessions. They will need access to kitchen and bathroom, and the living rooms, though these can be shared with other members of the household. The young person should feel “at home” in the accommodation, and should be able to invite friends/family at reasonable times and by agreement with you. The lodgings provider must provide the young person with his or her own front door key.

It is not intended that the young person should become “part of the family”. Rather, the young person is to be encouraged towards independence.

HOW LONG WILL A PLACEMENT LAST?

This can vary but most placements are expected to last from six months to two years. When a placement ends, you may like to take a break, or you may wish to become immediately available for a new placement.

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO YOUNG PEOPLE REQUIRE?

Support requirements will vary between young people. It is useful to keep in mind that the long-term aim of support is to enable the personal development of the young person and to prepare them for independent living. The lodgings provider will work with Education and Children Services (16+ Team) in the best interests of the young person in line with his or her Pathway Plan.

Typical support needs include:

- Advice with budgeting and benefits
- Advice and assistance with food shopping and cooking
- Instruction in the safe use of household appliances
- Assistance with arranging and keeping appointments
- Assistance with maintaining attendance at training, college or work
- Support in maintaining and building relationships with family/friends/neighbours
- Support in managing visitors
- Assistance with maintaining the security of the house
- Encouragement to comply with “house rules”
- Chatting and providing a “listening ear”
- Participation in occasional “review” meetings

Support does not need to be formally structured or timetabled, but it is important for the young person to know that support is there when needed. Support needs are likely to be highest in the early weeks, when the young person and provider are getting to know one another.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE YOUNG PERSON?

- The young person should participate in planning and discussions about the placement so that a contract about house rules and agreed standards of behaviour can be negotiated before the young person moves in.

- The young person should respect “house rules” as agreed.
- The young person should treat the property and its contents with respect, and should have regard for the security of the property.
- The young person should take responsibility for his or her behaviour both inside and outside the provider’s home.
- If the young person experiences difficulties in the placement they should let the provider or support worker know.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM SOLIHULL’S EDUCATION AND CHILDREN SERVICES?

Before asking you to take a young person into your home, we will carry out an assessment during which you will have the opportunity to explore the kind of young person that would fit into your household (i.e. smoker, age, gender, etc.). We will also advise you of any areas of risk to your family at this stage. The choice whether to accommodate the young person is yours.

After the young person has moved in, he or she will have a support worker from the 16+ Team. This worker will make appointments to meet the young person regularly.

The Accommodation Officer or the Assistant Team Manager are your support and are there to answer any queries you may have. You will get to know the young person well and if you have concerns about them you should discuss these with the Accommodation Officer or the Assistant Team Manager who will then liaise with the young person’s support worker.

From time to time, there will be a “review” meeting where you, the young person, the Accommodation Officer and the support worker can talk together about the way things are going, change “house rules”, set new goals. In addition, adequate out-of-hours professional support is made available and will be easily accessible. Training will also be provided.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

You will receive a sum of money from the 16+ Team (Education and Children Services) either weekly or fortnightly paid directly into your bank or by cheque. This payment will reflect the cost of accommodating and supporting a particular young person.

We cannot guarantee placements, so it may not be appropriate to rely on income from the provision of accommodation.

INSURANCE

Part of the sum of money you will receive will be calculated to enable you to upgrade your household insurance. It is important for you to inform your insurers what the scheme entails.

BENEFITS AND COUNCIL TAX

If you are claiming state benefits many are not affected by income received through this scheme. If your council tax is discounted for single occupancy, your discount will be unaffected unless a young person reaches the age of eighteen whilst staying with you. In this case you should inform your local council, as you will no longer qualify for the discount.

To clarify your individual circumstances you need to discuss with the Benefits Agency or we may refer you to the Council's Money Advice Team for further advice.

WHAT SORT OF PERSON MAKES A GOOD SUPPORTED LODGINGS PROVIDER?

Someone who:

- Can get on with young people and has some understanding of the problems they experience.
- Will be able to support a young person in their efforts to change.
- Will be sympathetic and not make judgements about a young person.
- Knows where their own boundaries lie, and can be clear and "up-front" about types of behaviour they want / do not want in their home.
- Is able to respect the confidentiality and privacy of any young person living in their home.
- Will treat all young people equally and not discriminate against them on any grounds.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Anyone can come forward with an offer of supportive accommodation. No one will be discriminated against on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation or age. However you may not be considered if the following apply:

- If you have been convicted of an offence against a child
- If you have recently had a child removed from your care by order of any court
- If you have had a registration as a childminder, or other provider of day care, cancelled due to misconduct
- If you have recently had your rights and duties with respect to any child investigated by a local authority

A Social Worker will visit you to:

- Assess the accommodation
- Complete assessment documentation
- Discuss with you what it would be like to have a young person living in your home.

Additional visits will usually be made. All the members of the household will need to be visited and where appropriate assessment documentation completed for each of them.

Police checks will also be completed on all adults living in the household. You will be asked to provide two referees to provide references. The referees must know you well and are willing to say there is no known reason why you might not be suited to support a young person in your own home.

You will be asked to provide a letter from your doctor to confirm there is no known medical reason why you should not participate in the scheme.

When assessment and security checks have been completed and references received, your name will be put forward for approval by the selection panel. We estimate that the entire recruitment process may take up to 3 months to be completed.

As soon as you are approved, young people can be placed with you.

TRAINING, SUPPORT AND RESPITE

Continuous and on-going support will be available from the Accommodation Officer. During the assessment process any training needs will be identified and a plan put in place to meet these. On-going and additional training will also be made available to you.

Once a number of supported lodgings providers have been recruited to the scheme, the 16+ Team will organise and facilitate a day for all providers to meet and greet. It is anticipated that this group will want to meet occasionally to share experiences and perhaps for social purposes too. It is anticipated that the group will be self-organised and run with assistance on venue and additional expenses from the 16+ Team.

When you require a break and respite this will always be planned and made available. In an emergency or crisis, access to respite will be made available as soon as possible.

**Recruitment Process For
SUPPORTED LODGINGS PROVIDER**

