



Supported Lodgings & Staying Put Scheme

Information Pack for Potential Host (s)

Thank you for requesting information about our Supported Lodgings 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 717 1473 or email atchousingofficer@solihull.gov.uk

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

**Accommodation Officer
Children's Services and Skills
Chelmund's Place
858 Chester Road
Chelmsley Wood
Solihull
B37 7WG**

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 in the care of the local authority. It allows the young person to continue to develop their skills in a supportive, family environment.

Supported lodgings Host(s) are a bit like landlords/landladies offering a room in their home. The Host 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 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 25 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 before they are ready
- 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.
- The scheme is also used to facilitate the extension of some foster placements post 18 (Staying Put 18+).

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 Host 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 supported lodgings Host/ Staying Put carer will work with Children’s Social Services in the best interests of the young person in line with his or her Pathway Plan.

Typical support needs include (**see also appendix 2**)

- 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 Host 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 Host’s home.
- If the young person experiences difficulties in the placement they should let the Host or support worker know.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM SOLIHULL CHILDREN’S 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 Social Worker or a Personal Adviser from Children’s Services. This worker will make appointments to meet the young person regularly.

The Accommodation Officer is your support and is 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 who will then liaise with the young person’s social worker or personal adviser.

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 **£215.00 per week** when you have a young person staying with you. Part of this will come from the Housing Benefit or Universal Credit received by the young person. 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 & INCOME TAX

The allowance you will receive includes the provision for you to upgrade your household insurance. It is important for you to inform your insurers what the scheme entails.

Supported Lodgings Hosts/ Staying put carers need to register with HMRC as self-employed and may have to pay tax on income received through this scheme.

You need to phone your local Inland Revenue Office to explain what the scheme entails or check HMRC website to clarify your tax position.

BENEFITS AND COUNCIL TAX

If you are claiming Income-based state benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, ESA, Housing Benefit, etc., some may be affected by income received through this scheme. To clarify your individual circumstances you need to discuss with the Benefits Agency, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Solihull Money Advice Team or check the DWP website for further advice.

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 may no longer qualify for the discount.

WHAT SORT OF PERSON MAKES A GOOD SUPPORTED LODGINGS HOST?

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 & APPROVAL PROCESS

Anyone can come forward with an offer of supported lodgings. 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 Host 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 worker from Solihull Children's Services 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.

FOSTER PLACEMENT CONVERSION INTO SUPPORTED LODGINGS/ STAYING PUT

There is also the option of converting foster placements into Supported Lodgings once the young person reaches 18 years of age under our 'Staying Put' policy. A referral to the Accommodation Officer should be made at least 6 months prior to the young person's 18th birthday.

The conversion of external foster hosts into supported lodgings should be discussed with the External Placements Management Team (EPMT) who will then liaise with the external fostering agency. Approval process will be as above.

Financial arrangements and the implications for hosts regarding their fostering career will be discussed, and be agreed by all parties prior to conversion.

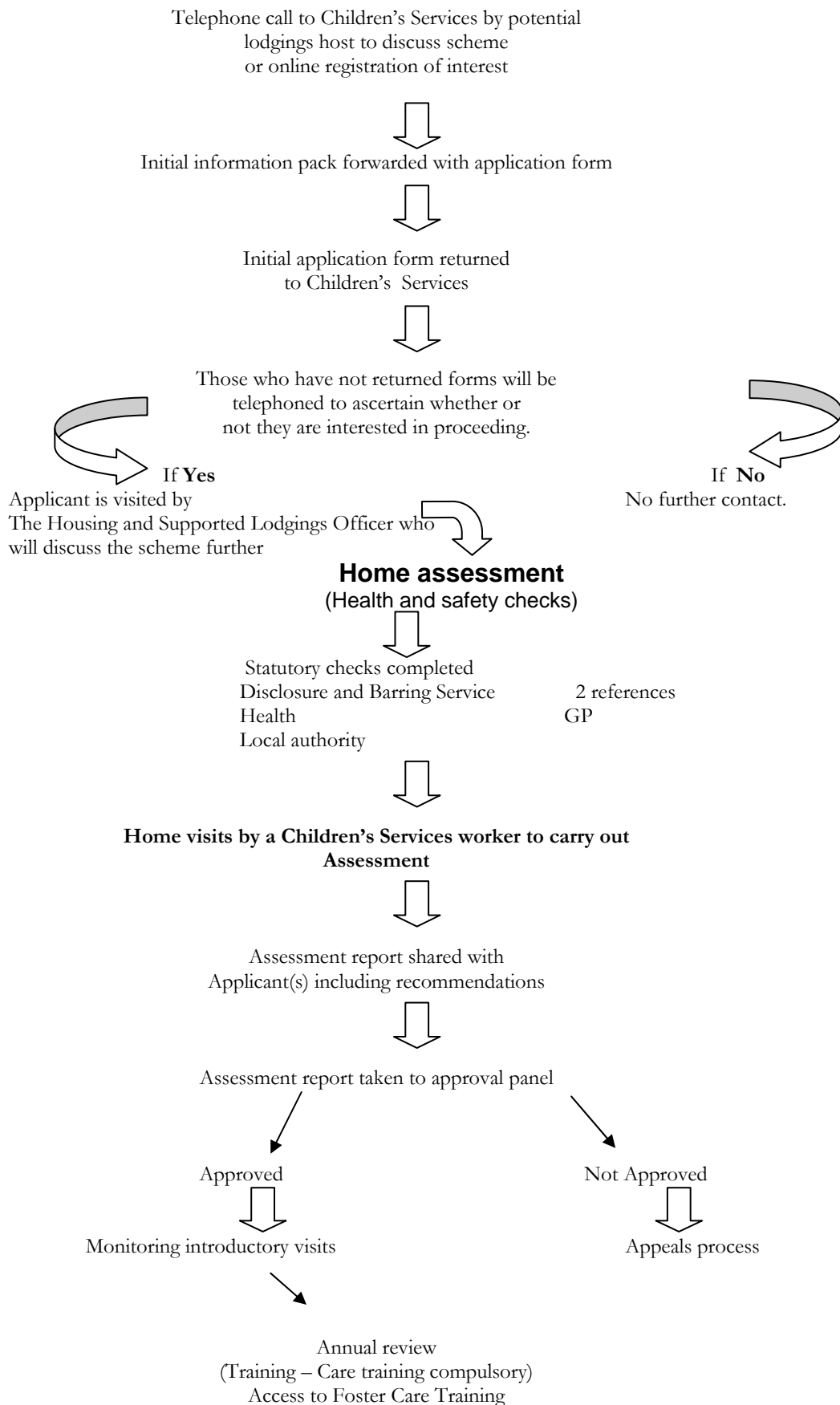
The young person's worker needs to complete a Supported Lodgings Assessment Form identifying how the host will carry on supporting the young person to develop their independent living skills. This will be presented to the panel for approval.

Foster hosts can remain dual status, and written agreements will clarify roles and responsibilities in relation to fostering and supported lodgings.

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.

Recruitment Process For SUPPORTED LODGINGS HOST



APPENDIX 1

FINANCIAL INFORMATION FOR SUPPORTED LODGINGS HOSTS

The total payment to each host will be £215.25 per week

Broken down into:

- £100.00 per week towards rent
 - £90.25 per week for supporting the young person
 - £25.00 per week towards food and bills (heating, lighting, etc.)
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- £190.25 of the £215.25 will be paid directly to the supported lodgings Host(s) by Solihull MBC for all young people under the age of 18 in supported lodgings who are entitled to a service from Solihull Children's Services.
 - The remainder (£25.00) will be paid directly to the host by the young person out of their personal allowance or benefits;
 - Young people aged 18+ will be supported by their Personal Adviser and/or the Accommodation Officer to claim housing benefit in order to meet part of the costs of their placement.
 - Young people who are working and earning more than the rate of Income Support/ JSA (currently £57.90) will be expected to contribute more towards the cost of their supported lodgings arrangement (in addition to the standard £25.00). The exact amount to be paid will depend on their weekly income and will be worked out with their PA/Social Worker and the Accommodation Officer.

At the start of any placements, a placement agreement meeting will set out all the financial arrangements. The host and the young person in placement will be expected to agree to sign for money given/received.

Housing Benefit for Young People aged 18+

All Young people aged 18+ are expected to claim Housing Benefit to meet their rents costs. Children's Services will top it up to make up the difference between housing benefit and the £190.25 supported lodgings rate.

It sometimes takes several weeks for housing benefits to kick in. During this time social services will pay the host the full amount of £190.35 as a loan that will need to be paid back to Children's Services when Housing Benefit is paid.

Young Parent and Baby Placement

Where a young parent is over 18 they will be expected to claim benefits to support their baby.

Monies for Young People in Placement

Any Young Person placed with you will have their own money and you will not be expected to pay for their clothes, toiletries, leisure activities, credit to mobile phones or other day to day expenses that are not covered by the Supported Lodgings Payments.

Hosts Claiming Means-Tested Benefits

If you already claim means-tested benefits such as Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Council Tax, Housing Benefits, Tax Credits, etc. the weekly payment through the Supported Lodgings Scheme may impact on your benefits. You will need to check your situation with the Benefits Agency, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Solihull Community Housing Money Advice Team or via the DWP website.

Insurance, Mortgage Company and Landlords

Payments you receive for providing supported lodgings are intended to include provision for you to upgrade your household insurance. It is important for you to inform your insurers what the scheme entails. You are also required to inform your mortgage provider if you do not own the property outright or your landlord/Council/Housing Association if you are a tenant.

Income Tax

Supported Lodgings Hosts need to register with HMRC as self-employed and may have to pay tax on income received through this scheme.

You need to phone your local Inland Revenue office or check HMRC website to clarify your position.

Supported Lodgings Payments

The level of payments will be reviewed annually in March in line with fostering payments.

APPENDIX 2:
Supported Lodgings/ Staying Put
Example of Practical skills and Knowledge in preparation for
Independent Living

Education, Training and employment

- Applying for a course of education or training
- Applying for and being interviewed for a job
- The rights and responsibilities of being an employee
- How to write a cover letter along with a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Knowing where to get the correct information about Education, training and Employment

Household Skills Development

- Shopping for food and preparing food
- Washing clothes, bedding and other housekeeping skills
- How to carry out basic household tasks such as fitting a bulb, putting together furniture, etc.
- Safety in the home (checking smoke alarms and making sure plugs and sockets are safe)
- Applying for housing and locating and maintaining it

Budgeting:

- Understanding the concept of “the cost of living”
- Household budgeting, balancing expenditure and income, the regular payment of bills and the use of credit
- Knowing how to spend sensibly

Young Person’s Health:

- Health education, including hygiene
- Sex education, including contraception and preparation for parenthood
- Registering with a doctor and dentist
- Knowledge of emergency services such as Fire, Police and Ambulance.
- Understanding mental health

Relationships & Communication:

- Finding and using community services and developing confidence in communicating with external agencies such as housing, benefits, health, etc.
- Learning how to manage difficult situations or relationships and being aware of the impact of negative behaviour
- To ensuring their views & opinions are heard and expressed appropriately
- Learn to be assertive when needed and act in a mature way
- Learn about negotiation and compromise