



the **MORAY** council

Throughcare & Aftercare Service

# SUPPORTED LODGINGS

Can you make a  
*difference?*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## **What is supported lodgings?**

Supported lodgings is shared accommodation where the landlord/lady (known as supported lodgings provider) offers a young person practical and emotional support with a view to increasing their confidence and readiness to move eventually into their own home.

From the age of 16 some young people decide that they want to leave the care of the Local Authority but yet are apprehensive about living alone as they may not have the skills or awareness to successfully live independently. Supported lodgings therefore offers the opportunity to leave care and experience elements of independence in a supportive and encouraging environment.

Supported lodgings is semi-independent accommodation, which provides a stepping stone between leaving care and living independently.

## **Who are the Young People?**

Young people aged 16 and above (21 at the eldest), who were previously in foster or residential care.

They may be leaving foster care, residential care or have been in homeless accommodation. These young people come from a range of backgrounds and therefore have varying practical and emotional support needs. It is recommended that the young people are in education, training or employment and are therefore occupied through the day but this may not always be the case.

## **Who can offer supported lodgings?**

Some experience of having teenagers would certainly be useful but most of all we need supported lodgings providers who can appreciate the difficulties, which these young people have encountered. As a result of their experiences, some young people can present quite challenging behaviour and therefore supported lodgings providers need to be able to offer commitment, patience and a sympathetic ear.

### ***We are looking for people who:***

- are aged 25 and over.
- live in locations throughout Moray .
- are married, single, working, not working.
- are from any ethnic, cultural or faith background, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- have a spare bedroom (big enough to accommodate a bed, wardrobe and bedside table).
- have spare time to dedicate support to a young person.
- have a genuine interest in helping young people.
- are able to provide a trusting relationship.
- have a reasonable expectation of a young person's capability and limitation.
- have a degree of flexibility and willingness to adapt to different situations.
- are able to recognise and review their own strengths and weaknesses.
- are able to undertake training opportunities.
- are willing to work in partnership with the Social Work Service.

You must be willing to open the rest of your house to the young person i.e. kitchen, bathroom, living room and laundry facilities and you must be available to offer the young person sufficient time and support.

### **What type of support will I be expected to offer?**

***Emotional, practical and the provision of meals where necessary.***

Prior to any placement, as a supported lodgings provider you will receive relevant information regarding the needs of the young person and the support that you will be required to provide. This will enable you to determine if this is an appropriate placement for you to offer. It is envisaged that more support will be needed during the early stage of each placement, decreasing once the young person becomes more confident and is managing more independently.

The provision of meals is necessary for young people who require a higher level of support. More independent young people will require access to cooking facilities to prepare their own meals, while receiving support with this initially from the Supported Lodgings Provider.

You will be required to offer the young person direct support and contact each week. This can vary from cooking a meal together, budgeting for their shopping, supervising and encouraging them to maintain their room, to having a chat over a cup of tea. The emotional support offered throughout the placement is vital to its success. The type and level of support required will be specified in the placement agreement.

The placement agreement is a statement committed to by all parties, which outlines everyone's responsibilities prior to the young person being placed. The overall aim is to help your young person develop the life skills necessary for taking responsibility for their own future accommodation.

You will be expected to maintain regular contact with the young person's social worker. You are also required to attend and participate in relevant meetings and training.

## **How long will a Young Person stay with me?**

Supported lodgings is a short-term accommodation arrangement, as its emphasis is to prepare a young person to move-on. Placements therefore tend to last a minimum of three to a maximum of approximately eighteen months. However, some young people may need longer, but this will be reviewed throughout the placement, at various times.

## **What support will I receive?**

You will be allocated a supported lodgings link worker, who will maintain regular contact with you (minimum 4 weekly visits). It is envisaged that contact with your supported lodgings link worker will vary according to the stage of the placement and the young person.

Any issues related to your role as a supported lodgings provider can be discussed with your supported lodgings link worker. In times of crisis a supported lodgings link worker should be available to discuss problems within 24 hours. In emergencies outwith normal working hours, you can contact the Social Work Out of Hours team.

You will undertake a 'Supported Lodgings Induction'. This is designed to provide you with relevant information, and to develop your confidence in offering placements.

You will have an annual appraisal with your supported lodgings link worker and you will be offered ongoing training opportunities, some of which you are expected to attend as part of your responsibilities.

As well as receiving support from you, the young person will continue to receive support from their social worker, who will help with difficulties and issues that may arise.

## **What am I required to do before I can offer a placement?**

Arrange to meet with a supported lodgings link worker to find out more about the project and to determine whether this is something that you and your household could offer. If you decide that you wish to proceed, a supported lodgings link worker will meet with you over a period of time with a view to them undertaking an assessment of your suitability. During this time, you may have the opportunity to meet with another supported lodgings provider and a young person who has previously been in a supported lodgings placement, to allow you to gather different perspectives on the requirements of the service.

To enable us to ensure that supported lodgings providers are appropriately assessed, recruited and familiarised with their role, it is necessary that those applying and other household members are prepared to share information about themselves. This familiarisation and assessment process can therefore take, at most, up to 6 months and will involve a number of visits to your home by the assessing supported lodgings link worker.

As this is a service for vulnerable young people, we are required to undertake Social Work and Disclosure checks for all adults over 16 years who live or are regular visitors to the property. Each situation would be considered on its merit and only convictions that are relevant to the task would prevent us accepting an application.

As part of the placement assessment, you will be required to provide references including one from your GP. You will also be required to undertake a 'Supported Lodgings Induction'. This, as well as the rest of the assessment process, is designed to enable you to decide whether or not this task is right for you. It will also help us decide whether you are best suited for the project.

At the end of the assessment process, a report is compiled by the assessing supported lodgings link worker, which will be made available to you for comment. All information provided within the report is treated in strictest confidence. The report and any comments provided by you will be submitted for final approval to a panel, made up of social work and housing personnel and you will attend this panel.

## **How do I get allocated a Young Person?**

Following approval, your supported lodgings link worker will meet with you to discuss any prospective young people. You will then meet with the young person's Throughcare/Aftercare social worker or case social worker for further information, prior to a placement commencing. At this stage, if you wish to continue with the placement, initial introductions will be arranged for you to meet with the young person, with their Throughcare/Aftercare worker. It is expected that the young person will join you and your family for a meal and subsequent overnight visits, as part of the introduction period. An introduction period can vary per young person but generally it is not expected to last more than 4 weeks.

If all parties are happy to proceed, an initial placement meeting is convened and a move in date is confirmed. A placement agreement will be drawn up, and this outlines roles and responsibilities for all involved. This is designed to focus on the supports the young person requires to gain, in order to progress to independent living.

## **What if a placement does not work out?**

Your supported lodgings link worker will be available to discuss and hopefully resolve any concerns. However, a process of verbal and written warnings will occur prior to any notice to quit being issued. In times of crisis outwith normal working hours, an Out of Hours Social Work Service is available to offer support and guidance. However, if you feel that you are unable to continue to offer a placement, the young person will be found alternative accommodation as soon as possible, and when necessary, be moved immediately.

## **Reviewing placements?**

Placements will be reviewed initially after 4 weeks and thereafter approximately every 6-8 weeks. You will be expected to attend and contribute to review meetings. This will be the forum to discuss and agree any changes to the placement arrangements.

You will receive regular contact from your supported lodgings link worker (supervision) and will meet prior to each review to determine any issues which need to be raised and addressed.

Each placement will also have an end of placement review, and supported lodging providers will also have an annual appraisal. All reviews are undertaken to ensure that the appropriate supports, training etc are being provided by the supported lodgings project.

## **How much of an income will I receive by offering a placement?**

Supported lodgings providers receive an allowance per week (paid direct into their bank account one week in arrears) when a young person is in the placement. The allowance covers rent of the accommodation and furnishings, food, insurance, support, administrative tasks and training requirements.



There are different rates of allowances dependent on the young person's support needs and circumstances, and full details can be obtained from the supported lodgings link worker.

You will receive payment pro-rata for any overnight stays or other costs incurred during the introduction period for each placement.

## **How will this income affect me if I am receiving benefits?**

The local Benefits Agency and Housing/Council Tax Benefit office have agreed to disregard any income received by providing supported lodgings. Consequently, applicants who are in receipt of these benefits will not have their benefit income affected. To ensure that this occurs, you will be required to submit a pre-approved letter to each of these agencies. A letter template for this purpose is available from the supported lodgings link worker.

## **Will having a young person affect my council tax?**

Young People under the age of 18 years are not liable for council tax. Supported Lodging providers who live alone and who accommodate young people over the age of 18 will lose their single person's discount. In these circumstances the Supported Lodgings Project will compensate you for this loss of exemption, for the period a young person is staying with you.

For supported lodgings providers who have other occupants over the age of 18, council tax will not be affected by the arrival of a young person over 18.

## **Will the Supported Lodgings Allowance be affected by Income Tax?**

**Yes.**

We will therefore provide you with information on how this will affect you. You will then need to confirm your own situation with the Inland Revenue.

## **What about insurance?**

If you already have household insurance you are required to contact your insurance provider to advise them that you will be having a young person stay with you. The supported lodgings project requires to have a copy of relevant insurance cover, which will be requested annually. Failure to advise your insurance provider could adversely affect any claim. We therefore suggest that you increase your cover for accidental damage and consequently your allowance reflects an element to cover this.

Car owners, who will offer transportation to young people, will also require to request 'business use' cover. This should not incur any cost and a copy of this insurance is also required annually.

## **Do I have to seek permission from anyone, prior to offering a placement?**

If you are a council or housing association tenant, you will be required to seek permission from your landlord prior to offering a placement.

If you are a private tenant, you will also need to check this out with your landlord/lady, prior to offering a placement.

If you are a homeowner and have a home loan, you will need to check whether you need the lender's permission. You should make it clear that you will be sharing the accommodation with a young person, rather than offering a tenancy.

We may not have answered all of your questions but we hope that this booklet gives you enough information to help you decide if offering Supported Lodgings is right for you.

If you would like further information, please call the number below where a Supported Lodgings Link Worker will be available to answer any questions that you may have.

On behalf of the young people who may use this service, we look forward to hearing from you.

# **You can make a difference!**

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