

**Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council**

**Directorate of Children Services**

**Target Leaving Care**

**Supported Lodgings Procedure**

**Version 3.3**

**INTERNAL USE ONLY**

**Document Control**

**Change Record**

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| **1.0** | **Definition of Support Lodgings** |
| 1.1 | The term ‘Supported lodgings’ refers to the provision of accommodation for Children In Our Care ( CIOC) aged 16 or 17 and care leavers aged between 16 and 21 (or 25 and in higher education). The scheme will provide housing and support to young people with a wide variety of needs. |
| 1.2 | Supported lodgings are provided by private individuals or family households who offer a room in their home and varying levels of support to the young person to develop their independent living skills. A support plan will be put in place that stipulates the type and level of support to be provided. |
| 1.3 | The provision will be coordinated, monitored and reviewed by the Accommodation Officer (Scheme Coordinator), who will recruit and support the network of supporting lodgings providers. |
| 1.4 | The scheme is suitable for young people who are willing to comply with house rules and expectations of living in a family home, engage with the support provided and work towards developing their independent living skills including engaging with education, training or employment and working towards economic stability into adulthood. |
| 1.5 | Supported lodgings will not be suitable for young people who display extreme challenging behaviors or who present as a significant risk to others. |
| **2.0** | **Aims** |
| 2.1 | The Supported Lodging initiative seeks to enable the young people to make as smooth a transition as possible from foster care or residential care to independent living by offering a 'stepping stone' of semi-supported living, promoting positive planning and preparation for independence in line with the Pathway Plan for each young person. |
| 2.2 | The aim is to support young people to gain the practical and emotional skills that they will require to achieve success when living independently. |
| 2.3 | The initiative is designed to help young people mature and develop by enabling them to experience being part of a supportive living environment. It is anticipated that they will benefit from a level of freedom and responsibility whilst still sharing a home with adults who are positive role models, providing guidance, advice and support in a consistent manner. |
| **3.0** | **Relevant Legislation Regulations and Government Guidance**   * Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 3: Planning Transitions to Adulthood for Care Leavers 2010 (Revised 2014). * The revised Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Revised 2013 and 2014). * Children and Families Act 2014. * Children Leaving Care Act 2000 * The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. |
| **4.0** | **Referral and Eligibility Criteria** |
| **4.1** | Young people who are 16 years and of statutory leaving school age, up to 21 years and eligible for leaving care services. In exceptional circumstances it could be used to provide a placement for a Child In Our Care if it was deemed to be in the best interest of the young person. |
| **4.2** | Referrals are made by the young person’s Social Worker or Personal Adviser and approved by the relevant Team Manager and IRO. |
| **4.3** | The referral form includes information that enables the Scheme Coordinator (the Accommodation Officer) to decide as to whether the referral is appropriate. This will be overseen by the Commissioning Team Manager. |
| **4.4** | The referral form will include the young person's details and provide the following information:   * Previous accommodation. * Previous/present housing difficulties. * Reason for referral. * Any other support services involved. * Identified support needs. * Risk assessment e.g. known history or current difficulty with violence/aggressive behavior, arson/fire related incidents, self-harm/suicide attempts, drug/alcohol misuse, self-neglect, sexual offences, criminal offences/convictions child protection issues etc. * Other support needs e.g. learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health difficulties, health issues. * Employment, education or training status. |
| **5.0** | **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children** |
| **5.1** | An unaccompanied asylum seeking child is a person who at the time of making the asylum application is, or appears to be, under the age of eighteen; is applying for asylum in their own right, and has no adult relative or guardian for support in this country. |
| **5.2** | If an unaccompanied asylum seeking child has received services under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, and their looked after status is recognised then the local authority will continue to have responsibilities for their welfare. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children aged 16 and over who become children in our care might benefit from a supported lodgings placement particular. |
| **6.0** | **Recruitment of Support Lodgings Providers** |
| **6.1** | The responsibility of recruiting supported lodgings providers will be with the Accommodation Officer will take place on a local level, (out of area will be considered if required for a specific young person) through specifically targeted marketing and advertising including use of various media and social networks, posters and leaflets. The Accommodation officer will work closely with the fostering service to take advantage of any campaigns for foster carers. |
| **6.2** | Recruitment will aim to attract the best possible response from all ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious groups. |
| **6.3** | Applicants must be a homeowner or living in rented accommodation under a tenancy agreement.  Applicants can be considered as a Provider if they are:   * A homeowner or living in rented accommodation (in line with their tenancy) * From any gender, sexuality, racial or cultural background * Single – male or female, with a minimum age of 21. (In addition, when matching a young person with a provider there will be a minimum 3-year difference in age between the Supported Lodgings Provider and the young person that they care for). * Single or in a relationship. * Couples – male or female, of the same or different sex, aged over 21 * In or out of paid work or retired * A person with disabilities or not   See Section 9 for further selection criteria.  Applicants cannot be approved with the Redcar and Cleveland Supported Lodgings Scheme if they are already registered with another agency (for example an independent fostering agency). |
| **7.0** | **Assessment and Approval of Supported Lodgings Providers** |
| **7.1** | The process begins with an initial application form, submitted to the Accommodation Officer to commence the assessment. |
| **7.2** | Written consent will need to be obtained from the candidate and other relevant members of the household in order for any checks which involve obtaining information from a third party to be carried out. Where these checks involve requesting ‘sensitive’ information e.g. about criminal offences – this consent must be explicit in order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. |
| **7.3** | An assessment of the applicant’s suitability to be a Supported Lodging Provider will be completed by the Accommodation Officer. This assessment will be based on the Coram BAAF Prospective Foster Carer Report (Form F) England, 2017. |
| **7.4** | Within the assessment relevant checks will be completed as follows:   * DBS (Disclosure Barring System) checks for all household members over the age of 18 years. * A minimum of two personal references; (one from an employer if the applicant is employed in a role involving children or vulnerable adults). * A Health and Safety Check of accommodation to assess the suitability. Any actions arising must be followed up prior to approval. This must be updated on an annual basis as part of the Supported Lodging Provider Review process. The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 set out factors that must be considered in determining whether accommodation is suitable for individual care leavers (Schedule 6). * Checks will be carried out with any other relevant agency such as other Local Authorities, NSPCC and others, as necessary; |
| **7.5** | If an applicant is an employee of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council an assessment of any Conflict of Interest must be included within the assessment report (as included at Appendix 1). |
| **8.0** | **Health Report (for providers of placements for 16+ Children In Our Care.** |
| **8.1** | A medical examination of the prospective supported lodgings provider should be arranged at an early stage in the assessment process. |
| **8.2** | The Accommodation Officer must:   * Arrange for the prospective supported lodgings provider to sign the consent and forward this to the applicant’s GP; * Advise the prospective supported lodgings provider to make an appointment with their GP for a medical examination. * Ensure that when it is returned to the Fostering Service by the GP, that the completed medical form is forwarded to the Fostering Agency Medical Adviser for comment. |
| **8.3** | The Medical Adviser will contact the GP for additional information if necessary and discuss any concerns with the SSW or Fostering Team Manager in the first instance. The Fostering Team Manager should reach a decision with the Service Manager, Children In Our Care on whether or not to proceed with the application. |
| **9.0** | **Preparation of Reports** |
| **9.1** | There is a list of matters that must be considered during the assessment. As well as the considerations around health, the assessment will also include:   * Age * Health * Personality * Religion * Employment * Experience of providing and ability to continue to provide support to young people. * Willingness and ability to work in partnership with all other relevant support agencies. * Ability to maintain confidentiality and keep records if required. * Understanding of the support needs of Children In Our Care Children and Care Leavers and be flexible in their approach. |
| **9.2** | A copy of the completed assessment report (not including the information supplied by personal referees) must be given to the applicant prior to submission for approval. |
| **9.3** | The assessment report will be submitted to the Team Manager, so that any areas where further work may be required, or issues can be identified and clarified. |
| **9.4** | The completed report and recommendation, together with the outcome of checks and references will then be submitted to the Fostering Panel, for approval. |
| **9.5** | The panel will make a recommendation of the terms of approval which will be submitted to the Agency Decision Maker for approval. Once this has been ratified the Supported Lodgings Provider will be notified in writing of their terms of approval. A formal Supported Lodgings Agreement will also be sent to the provider for signature. |
| **10.0** | **Training Plan for Supported Lodgings Providers** |
| **10.1** | All providers should undertake preparation training, if applicable, (i.e., some providers could already have relevant experience). This could be on a one-to-one basis or the supported lodgings providers could be be offered the opportunity to attend Skills to Foster training prior to or during the assessment process. Ongoing training can also be provided at the provider’s request or if identified as beneficial. |
| **10.2** | A training package will be devised for each provider, based on their individual requirements. Previous relevant training which the provider has attended, together with registration with any relevant professional bodies, such as HCPC should be considered when developing any training plan. |
| **10.3** | Providers will be encouraged to attend awareness raising and training in the following areas:   * Basic information on the organisation (policies and procedures) * Information on why the particular client group needs accommodation (e.g. why young people come into care) * Awareness around specific issues such as drugs, alcohol, CSE etc. * How to manage difficult behavior/critical incidents * Working together to support the young person (e.g. communication, confidentiality, reporting concerns) * Anti-discriminatory practice * Safety and security of the lodging provider and property * Importance of continuous evaluation and monitoring * Safeguarding and Child protection awareness |
| **11** | **Matching Process** |
| **11.1** | The most suitable arrangement will be sought for the young person to achieve a successful match between themselves and a provider in order to achieve positive outcomes. |
| **11.2** | For Children In Our Care aged 16 or 17, the assessment of the child’s needs to inform his or her pathway plan may conclude that for some children, these needs will be best met by a placement in ‘other arrangements’. Where a move to ‘other arrangements’ takes place as part of the transition and preparation for adulthood then this move should only take place following careful planning and scrutinised at the young person’s review meeting, chaired by the Independent Reviewing Officer. Detailed guidance on the requirements for these arrangements is set out under Regulation 28 of the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review. |
| **11.3** | Information gained from the referral form, knowledge and up to date information from the referrer and young person will be used to achieve the most appropriate match to an available Supported Lodgings Provider. This should also include the views of the young person. |
| **11.4** | A Placement Planning Meeting will be arranged between the young person, Supported Lodgings Provider, Personal Adviser or Social Worker and Accommodation Officer. This will be to share information, discuss the history, needs, and functioning of the young person and the experience, skills and living situation of the Provider. Where supported lodgings is considered to be a suitable accommodation option for under eighteen year olds, the matching process will be carried out as detailed above, but will also include consultation with the young person’s IRO, as outlined in Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review, Reg 12 (3)(c) para 3.139. |
| **12.0** | **Licence Agreement and Living Together Agreement** |
| **12.1** | There will be a License Agreement in place defining the operation, declaration, conditions, termination & legal status between the Supported Lodgings Provider and the Scheme. |
| **12.2** | If a Supported Lodgings Provider works for Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council, then they must sign the council’s Conflict of Interest Agreement. |
| **12.3** | On making a placement a license agreement will be drawn up between the lodger and the Scheme Provider. This will define the operation, declaration, conditions and termination and legal status. |
| **12.4** | Prior to the placement commencing a Living Together Agreement will be put into place. This will have been agreed to by the young person, Supported Lodgings Provider, Social Worker or Personal Adviser. Such agreements cover the ground rules of the household and areas of responsibility so that all parties are aware of what is expected of them during the placement. |
| **12.5** | The Living Together Agreement should define the rules for the following:   * Catering e.g. number of meals provided, use of kitchen, who cooks, meal times, food storage, shopping arrangements * Cleaning of the young person’s room and communal areas * Laundry e.g. use of equipment, times etc. * Visitors e.g. permission, visiting times, number of visitors at any one time, overnight visitors, behavior of visitors, young person’s responsibility of visitors * Smoking policy * Telephone re. incoming/outgoing calls, payment arrangements * Arrangements for staying out late/overnight. * Privacy e.g. Lodging Providers private space, use of certain rooms, playing music. * House keys * Responsibility and respect of personal property. |
| **12.6** | Information will be given to the Supported Lodgings Provider with regards to who to contact in case of an emergency, during office hours and out of hours. This will be provided in the Supported Lodgings Provider Information Pack. |
| **13.0** | **Monitoring of Placements and Support** |
| **13.1** | For a Children In Our Care aged 16 or 17 years of age, the IRO continues to be responsible for the monitoring and review of the child’s pathway plan via the CIOC review. This is to ensure that the aims of the placement are achieved, standards are kept, and positive outcomes are achieved for the young person. |
| **13.2** | Monitoring can take place through home visits, meetings, phone calls and reviews with other professionals involved. Written records will be kept of all contact and reviews. |
| **13.3** | All Supported Lodging providers will be supervised and supported by the Accommodation Officer. |
| **13.4** | On the placement commencement, the Accommodation Officer will discuss and agree the frequency of visits, usually 4-6 weeks initially. This frequency will be reviewed, depending on the young person’s individual needs. |
| **13.5** | All young people placed with a Supported Lodgings provider, regardless of their status as a Child in Our Care or a Care Leaver, will receive support from their Social Worker, Personal Adviser and any other relevant professional as defined in their pathway plan. |
| **13.6** | A supported lodgings support plan will be put in place on commencement of the placement based on the support needs of the young person in relation to developing their independent living skills. This will be monitored and reviewed through the support and supervision with the Supported Lodgings Provider every 4-6 weeks, or as agreed by all parties. |
| **13.7** | The young person will be involved in the support plan and support and supervision meetings with their Personal Adviser or Social worker, Supported Lodgings Provider, Accommodation Officer, and any other relevant agency. |
| **13.8** | There will be an annual review of the suitability of the provider and accommodation. The Scheme coordinator and Personal Adviser or Social Worker will meet with the Supported Lodgings Provider and the young person before every annual review to evaluate the placement. The format of discussion will include any change in circumstances, health and safety issues, the young person’s support plan and any other issues raised. The annual review will include the following:   * Consideration of the facilities and services provided will be followed as detailed in the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review, Reg 12 (3)(c) para 3.139. * Any changes to the household composition. * Relevant training attended and any training needs that have been identified. * Full checks including DBS will take place every 3 years. * If a provider is caring for a Child In Our Care aged 16 or 17 years then this review will be completed by the social worker with the Accommodation Officer. * If the provider is caring for a care leaver aged 16 – 21 years then this review will be completed by the personal advisor with the Accommodation Officer. |
| **14.0** | **End of Placement Evaluation** |
| **14.1** | The evaluation of placements is essential for continuous success of the  Supported Lodgings Scheme. Evaluation forms will be completed by the  Lodgings Provider and the young person at the end of each placement. |
| **14.2** | The evaluation form must include: -   * Length of placement * Type of ending i.e. planned, unplanned/emergency. * Whether the placement was satisfactory * What was achieved through the placement * Whether the support received was sufficient * Any possible improvements to the scheme * Any identified training needs * Young person’s move-on information i.e. independent living |
| **15.0** | **Finance** |
| **15.1** | The Supported Lodging Provider will be paid an allowance which will be administered but he Target Leaving Care Team’s Business & Finance Support Officer. |
| **15.2** | Where applicable, Housing Benefit will be reclaimed as an income to the Local Authority to offset the cost of the Supported Lodgings placement. |
| **15.3** | The young person may be responsible for paying a contribution towards their Supported Lodgings. This amount will be assessed and agreed on an individual basis, depending on the young person’s financial circumstances. |
| **15.4** | The Supported Lodgings provider will receive a set payment on a weekly basis at the same rate as Staying Put payments for foster carers. This will be recorded as a formal part of the placement agreement and will cover the following areas:   * Accommodation costs, including utility bills. * Food. * Leisure, transport and clothing allowance, (if applicable and depending on circumstances of the young person). * Advice, guidance and support provided by the provider to the young person. |
| **16.0** | **Confidentiality** |
| **16.1** | The Scheme complies with the authorities confidentiality policy that must be always adhered to by all individuals involved. |
| **16.2** | Supported lodging providers should be made aware of which information about the young person they can and cannot share with the rest of the household, close family, neighbours or any other third party. They should also maintain confidentiality in respect to previous young people they have supported. |
| **16.3** | The young people should be made aware at the referral stage that information about themselves will be shared between the Lodgings Provider and the Accommodation Officer. They must also maintain confidentiality regarding the provider and other members of the household/family. |
| **17.0** | **Complaints and Appeals** |
| **17.1** | The Supported Lodgings Scheme Coordinator will advise all providers and young people of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council’s Compliments & Complaints Procedure. |
| **17.2** | An applicant who has not been approved or whose approval has been terminated can appeal against the decision within 28 days of being notified. |
| **17.3** | Upon receiving notice of the appeal, the Agency Decision Maker will nominate a person who has not previously been involved, to undertake a review. |
| **17.4** | The review must include consideration of all the relevant documents and interviews with relevant parties. The person undertaking the review will, whenever possible, complete the review within 28 days and inform the applicant of any delay, reasons why and the expected timescale for completing the review. |
| **17.5** | On completion of the review, the applicant wherever possible, must be provided with a copy of all the reports which are to be considered by the person undertaking the review 21 days prior to a meeting. |
| **17.6** | If the applicant wishes to respond to the reports and submit any report themselves for the reviewing officer to consider, they must do so within 14 days. |
| **17.7** | The appropriate documentation, together with the report of the applicant and the findings and recommendations of the person undertaking the review, must be considered by the Assistant Director of Children’s Services. |
| **17.8** | If, after careful consideration, the Assistant Director’s recommendation is unchanged and subsequently the Agency Decision Maker endorses the recommendations, that decision will be final. |
| **18.0** | **Equal Opportunities** |
| **18.1** | All Supported Lodgings Providers must adhere to Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council’s Equal Opportunities Policy. |
| **18.2** | Any discrimination or oppressive behaviour should be challenged and addressed appropriately, e.g. Complaints procedure, awareness raising/training. |
| **19.0** | **Allegations Against Supported Lodgings Providers** |
| **19.1** | All allegations of a child protection nature against Supported Lodging Providers should be reported via the Child Protection procedures. |
| **19.2** | If the Supported Lodgings provider is an employee of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council or any other Council, then the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) must be informed of any allegation or complaint. |
| **19.3** | The Accommodation Officer must keep a professional stance in these circumstances and the Supported Lodgings Provider should be advised that anything they say will be reported to the investigating team. |
| **19.4** | On completion of the investigation the investigation team should inform the Accommodation Officer and Leaving Care Team Manager/ Commissioning Team Manager of the conclusions. |
| **19.5** | On monitoring the Supported Lodgings Provider following any allegation made against them, a review should take place to identify any issues for practice and support. |
| **19.6** | All information and documentation concerning an allegation should be recorded and placed on the Supported Lodging Provider’s file, regardless of the outcome of the investigation. |

**Appendix 1 – Conflict of Interest Form**

**Name:**

**Role: Supported Lodgings Provider**

In undertaking the Supported Lodgings Assessment, it has been important to carefully consider potential conflicts of interest.

………………….. works as a …………….. for Redcar and Cleveland Council. They work with ………………. and their role involves ………………..

When the Accommodation Offer undertook the Supported Lodgings assessment, potential conflicts of interest were discussed. Discussions also took place with the Team Manager and Service Manager at the time. It was agreed that the assessment should be progressed.

Throughout the assessment, discussions continued to take place with ……………….. about the issues that may arise in terms of conflicts of interest, it is the Local Authority’s view that ……………… is aware of the issues in relation to conflicts of interest and of ensuring confidentiality for our clients and service users.

* It would be the recommendation of the Local Authority that ……………….. alert their Manager of any potential placement where the child had previously been known to ……………… through their work within the …………….. service/team.
* ……………….. predominately works with ……………….. and would be supporting young people who are not managed within their service area or team. Therefore, any potential conflicts in this respect are reduced.
* ……………… is not in a post where they make direct decisions regarding children and young people, removing children from their birth families or involved in directly influencing a child’s care plan/pathway plan.
* Throughout the assessment period with ……………….. they have fully understood the potential conflict and the issues which may arise and cause possible harm to either themselves or a child/young person in placement. ………………. does not underestimate or minimise this.
* It is the view of the Local Authority that the care and support ……………… could offer to Young people in Supported Lodgings settings outweighs the possibility of a conflict of interest.
* ………………. is a ……………… i.e. single carer and, as such may be subject to an allegation by a young person in their care. ……………… understands that this could negatively impact on her capacity to work within their role. A safe caring policy was discussed and agreed at the point of assessment and will form part of the annual host review. The Safe Caring Policy in place sets out to address any of these concerns, and will be reviewed annually. ………………. also agrees to discuss with her manager any issues arising with a young person in placement, which could have the potential to escalate to an allegation.

The Local Authority has no doubt in asserting that ………………. would adhere to all guidance and would immediately alert their Manager should they perceive there to be any conflicts of interest that arise.

Supported Lodgings Host Signature:

Print Name:

Job title:

Accommodation Officer Signature:

Print Name:

Job title: