



Northumberland
County Council

Northumberland Supported Tenancies Room Search Policy

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines the approach the service takes to room searches when a young person is in placement.

2.0 Privacy

2.1 The service recognises each child's right to privacy as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and will uphold this principle consistent with the duty to promote the welfare of each child and protect them from harm.

2.2 Health and safety may on occasions override the need to check a young person's bedroom without permission from the young person

2.3 When entering a young person's bedroom, staff must knock or ask whether they can enter and wait for a response. If there is no response and

staff have concerns about the young person's wellbeing staff may enter, mindful of the possibility that the young person may be asleep and/or in a state of undress.

3.0 Guidance

3.1 If the response is from a young person is negative, staff must respect this except when:

- They have reason to believe the young person may be suffering or likely to suffer from harm and they need to enter to prevent this. Examples include two young people being in a room together where there are safeguarding issues or the fire alarm is sounding.
- They have reason to believe that the young person is in possession of drugs or stolen property.

3.2 When entering a room staff need to be aware of their own and the young person's safety and therefore should avoid wherever possible entering the room of a young person of the opposite gender or being in a bedroom with a young person with the door shut.

3.3 Staff have the authority to search a young person's bedroom or possessions when they have reason to believe the young person may be concealing any of the following:

- Drugs or apparatus for abusing drugs
- Stolen property
- Offensive weapons
- Items which may affect the health and safety of the placement, other young people and neighbours

3.4 This search will normally be carried out with the permission of and in the presence of the young person following sufficient notice being given. However, if staff believe that gaining permission or the presence of the young person carries the risk of harm to young people or staff, then the search may be carried out without the permission or presence of the young person.

3.5 Gloves should always be worn when carrying out a room search.

3.6 In the event of drugs, drug's paraphernalia, stolen goods or weapons being found; the police should be contacted via 101. Depending on what is found, the police will advise about how to proceed.

3.7 Unless they have a warrant, Police only have the right to search a young

person's room with the consent of the staff. The grounds for such a search are as above, and the principle of the young person being present also applies.

4.0 The Role of the Registered Manager

4.1 The Accommodation Team manager will keep a record of each room search, detailing the time and date, reason for the search, what was found, who carried out the search and who else was present. Reason should be explicit i.e detail the cause for concern.

4.2 The Accommodation Team manager will ensure that baths, showers and toilets are adequately maintained, in particular the locking arrangements. Although the design of the locks ensures that staff can enter in case of emergency, this must only be done when staff have reason to believe that the young person inside is at risk from harm