



# SUPPORTED LODGINGS

Providing a  
bridge to  
independent  
living for young  
people



Hull

Supported Lodgings

## A message from the supported lodgings team at Hull City Council

Thank you for your interest. In our area there are lots of young people who, for a variety of reasons, cannot live with their immediate families and yet are not ready to live independent lives.

Supported Lodgings provide the people and places to help these teenagers and young adults move towards independence. These lodgings – in ordinary people's homes – create a stable environment where young people can develop their life skills and their confidence to cope with everyday life.



Most of these skills are the kind of things that we as adults take for granted. For all sorts of reasons, some young people have missed out and need guidance to acquire these life skills, and then need the confidence to use them.

There is a severe shortage of supported lodgings in our area, and yet we know from experience that for

vulnerable young people the scheme is the ideal bridge between being cared for and taking care of themselves. If you have an interest in young people, and a room in your house, then with our help, training and ongoing support, you could probably be the key person and the key place in someone's life.



This booklet gives you an outline of the Supported Lodgings scheme and how it works. We very much hope you will take part in the scheme and help us get our young people on the right road to becoming productive members of our community.

Daemon Cartwright and the supported lodgings team (signatures).

*"I know I'm not a child anymore, but I don't feel grown up enough to live on my own.."*

# SUPPORTED

## What are supported lodgings?

Supported lodgings provide a young person with a room in an ordinary home, and the support and guidance of an adult or adults living there. Support and guidance can cover a huge range of areas, from helping young people develop cooking skills, through to simply allowing them to experience the ups and downs of living in a family group. It can involve helping them use public transport on their own, helping them manage their own health, and more challenging areas such as making sure they keep to terms of probation or curfew.

There are no set rules as to what the accommodation should be like. As long as there is a spare bedroom for them to use, then the home can be large or small, old or new, rented or owned. (But if your home is privately rented, you may need to seek your landlord's permission, and if your home is being purchased under a mortgage, you may need to contact your mortgage lender.)

Providers of supported lodgings can be one person or more, a couple, or a family. You can be working or

unemployed, married or unmarried. You may be foster carers who want to extend your care for a young person already living with you, but who has reached the age of 18 or more.



Supported Lodging can be for a period until you, the young person and the Supported Lodgings team agree it's time to try independent living. It can be long term if it is felt that the young person needs continued support, or it can be very brief, for example in periods of respite care, which may be for a matter of a few days to give the young person or the regular carers a break. Providing respite care is a good way of finding out whether you want to provide Supported Lodgings regularly.

*"It was difficult at first, but as we got to know one another and there was a bit of give and take on both sides, it got easier."*

## What type of person will I get?

We take a great deal of care in matching your lodger with you, and we involve you in the selection process. You yourself have the final say in who shares your home. We will have taken time to get to know you and the kind of lodgings you can provide, and will take into account your needs and the needs of the young person. The greatest need in our area is for accommodation to suit young people from 15 – 17, usually coming out of foster care, but placements can be for people up to the age of 24 if the young person is in higher education.

There are many different reasons for young people needing supported lodgings. Some may have been living with their own families, but find it impossible to continue because of challenging circumstances. Others may be former foster children, or have been living in a children's home or other institution. Others have learning disabilities or mental health problems. Others are ex-offenders or are on remand and need accommodation and support for a few days in an ordinary home as a better option than a young offenders' institution.

### Case Notes: Gemma and Gail

**Supported Lodgings Provider:** Gail Hunter and family

**Supported Lodger:** Gemma Jones (age)

**Background:** Gail Hunter's older daughter had left home, and so there was a spare room in the family home. Gemma had spent several years in foster care and was apprehensive about how to cope living on her own when the time came.

**Gemma says:** "It is a good idea because there are a lot of people who need support. Being in supported accommodation gives you someone there all the time. I had found it difficult and lonely, and that is why I went into the Scheme. But after a few more months, I think I will be ready to live on my own."

**Gail says:** *Gemma has been living with us for a few months and there have been ups and downs, but it has been very rewarding. For the first couple of weeks, it was unsettling for her, but now she fits in with everything. I feel I am doing something really positive.* The Supported Lodgings Team says: "Young people can often end up with chaotic lifestyles, living in and out of hostels. Supported Lodgings providers like Gail Hunter give young people space to develop skills and confidence by providing a safe and supportive environment."

## Providing a bridge to independent living for young people

### What kind of environment and support will I need to provide?

Supported lodgings are in essence a combination of special people and special places. It's good for the young person to have their own space, in the form of a room where they can be by themselves and have their own things perhaps for the first time. It's also good for them to find out how to fit into a family or a group of people, to acknowledge, experience and respect other people's good and bad days as well as their own, and other people's need for their own space.

learn how they have a responsibility for the lives of others too. They will discover how their actions affect not only themselves, but have a knock-on effect on others they are living with.

Young people may also need help with acquiring practical skills. Using a bank account, household budgeting, learning to shop for food and cook it, cleaning and gardening, simple DIY, using a doctor's surgery, everyday healthcare, using public transport, organising leisure time – any or all the skills involved in everyday living.

Most of the qualities and skills we have described are usually acquired 'naturally' through growing up as part of a family in a normal family home.

But many of our young people simply have not gone through that process.



In supported lodgings young people can learn how to take responsibility for their own lives, and

*"I wasn't sure about having someone I didn't really know in my own home. She was very quiet at first, and didn't respond much – but you should see her now!"*

## What kind of training and support will I have?

After reading this far, you may be in two minds about going further. You may be thinking: "Yes I have room in my house, and yes I would like to help. But is it something I could handle?" Our answer is: forget the 'I' part of your thinking! Certainly you alone will be the provider of the lodgings, and you will be the first point of contact for the young person, but our training and support package means you have our team on your side working with you the whole time.

You have your own allocated Supported Accommodation Worker and among the benefits you receive are:

- financial allowance paid at the equivalent of mainstream foster care rates
- continuous training appropriate to you, the care you are providing and your individual lodger
- professional support from people who have wide experience in dealing with vulnerable young people
- a network of support groups of people in the same position as you
- 24-hour helpline



*"I think the training helps you be ready for anything and everything. It gives you the confidence – and you know you can call the Team if you feel you're getting out of your depth..."*

# LODGINGS

## What's involved in the process of becoming a provider of supported lodgings?

As you would expect, we have to be very sure that the accommodation environment is acceptable, and that providers are safe and confident in their ability to be part of the supported lodgings scheme.



From your initial enquiry to your approval can take several months and the process is very thorough – this safeguards not only your lodger, but you too. First of all a member of the Supported Lodgings team will

visit your home to discuss things with you. If you want to proceed, we leave with you the relevant forms and arrange to collect them when you have completed everything. With your permission, we need to carry out checks which include personal references, police, child protection register, social services and medical.

If the checks are clear, we invite you to attend training sessions which not only prepare you thoroughly but also give you an opportunity to explore the role fully and make an informed decision about whether you want to proceed. After a final interview, we will complete an assessment and present all relevant information to the Supported Lodgings Panel for a decision.

The panel will consist of the Principal Manager of the Young People's Support Service, the Supported Lodgings Scheme Manager, and a resource Manager from Children's Services.

The panel will have studied the assessment report (you have a copy too). You are invited to attend the panel meeting along with the Supported Accommodation Worker who has compiled the assessment. Your

application and assessment are considered and the panel makes a recommendation as to your suitability. Once you are approved, you will be allocated your own Supported Accommodation Worker who will talk to you about placing a young person with you.

Of course, as we said earlier, you will have ongoing training and support as you require, and you can be assured that we will do our utmost to make your placements a success for you and your lodger. There will

be good times and bad times, challenges and problems to be overcome. It's sometimes tough going, but the rewards are life-enriching, for you and the young people in your home. You will be providing a helping hand to young people at a crossroads in their lives, and often at make or break time. With your help, vulnerable young people can go on to become adults who contribute to their community and fulfil their own potential. And isn't that what we want for all our children and young people?

*"I'd never really had that kind of life before. It was funny sitting down to family meals and watching telly together. And last week I cooked the Sunday dinner!"*

## Answer these questions and see if you have the potential to be a Supported Lodgings provider.

- Do I have a spare room in my home?
- Do I have a supportive partner/family?
- Do I like having young people around?
- Can I relate to young people and their lives?
- Am I flexible and prepared to adapt to different people and circumstances?
- Do I listen and try to see other people's points of view?
- Am I a person who is willing to talk through problems?
- Can I communicate effectively with people from different backgrounds to my own?
- Am I willing to take advice from others?
- Am I happy to pass on skills and experience in a friendly way?
- Can I be fair and firm when I need to be?
- Am I prepared to ask for help when I need it?

If you've answered yes to several of these questions, then you have some of the requirements you'll need as a Supported Lodgings Provider. As long as you have the spare room, with training and support you can develop all these qualities and more besides!

**Please contact the Supported Lodgings team on 01482 331000 to take the first step.**

*"When I left my foster mum and dad, I messed around a bit, living here and there. I think being offered Supported Lodgings made a big difference. I could have gone either way really, been a right tearaway or settled down. I think Supported Lodgings really made me think about which way I wanted to live my life."*



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