

Sunderland Supported Lodgings Scheme Information Pack



Sunderland Supported Lodgings Scheme – An Introduction

Sunderland Supported Lodgings Scheme has been up and running since 2003 offering a home environment to young people, who are not quite ready to successfully cope with their own tenancy and still need the security that living in a family environment can offer.

The scheme acts as a stepping-stone giving young people the space, time and hopefully the confidence to learn the skills necessary for more independent living.

Young people can be referred by staff from Children's Services. Other referral sources will be considered as each case is assessed on its merits.

The time a young person lives within Supported Lodgings can vary from between 6-12 months or up to 3 years. During this time the young person and Supported Lodgings Host will receive regular support from scheme workers, to ensure that the placement runs as smoothly as possible.

For more information about the Supported Lodgings Scheme please contact:

**Sunderland Supported Lodgings
Stanfield Centre, Sunderland, SR2 8SZ**

Mobile: 07500826729

Email: supportedlodgings@togetherforchildren.org.uk

Who Are the Young People?

The young people eligible for the scheme will be:

- Cared for or Care Experienced Young people 16-21 years old.
- Homeless, or living in accommodation where it is unsafe or unreasonable for them to remain.
- Single and with no dependent children.

The scheme is **not** designed to work with the following groups of young people:

- Those currently involved in criminal activity.
- Have significant mental health problems or learning difficulties.
- Are known to be violent or who exhibit other severe forms of challenging behaviour.
- Those involved in serious drug or alcohol misuse.

However, the scheme understands that some of the young people we work with may:

- As a consequence of difficult life experiences, be vulnerable and require emotional support to build resilience.
- Have some mental health issues or mild learning difficulties.
- Have committed some less serious offences in the past.
- Have minor issues related to drug or alcohol use.

What are we looking for in a Supported Lodgings Host?

When selecting hosts for our scheme, we will be looking for people who have, or show the potential for developing, the following characteristics:

- An appreciation of why young people become homeless and the huge impact this can have on a young person's life.
- An understanding of, affinity with, and respect for young people generally.
- A calm and relaxed attitude and down to earth approach to life that will help you cope with the reality of having a vulnerable young person living in your home.
- A friendly, outgoing and hospitable manner. We need people who are able to take a stranger into their home and make them feel welcome.
- Effective support networks of your own to give the personal back up, encouragement and help that the role may well demand.
- The kind of emotional resources that will allow you to give effective support and practical help, if and when a young person needs it.
- The ability to be able to set boundaries for a young person, to help the young person to live within those boundaries, and to take appropriate action when they do not.
- The ability to maintain a non-judgmental approach to supporting young people and able to offer consistent and reliable support.
- We welcome enquiries from people regardless of religion, race, class, gender and sexuality. Our hosts reflect a wide range of circumstances and life experiences.
- As you will appreciate, there are expectations and requirements regarding applicant's suitability – for example: in good health, criminal convictions and age. A full assessment will take place with you. If you have any questions about your circumstances, please contact us on the numbers listed above.

Your Questions Answered

Q. Do I have to be married or with a partner to provide supported lodgings?

A. No, you can provide Supported Lodgings whether you are single, married or an unmarried couple, divorced and/or remarried.

Q. Am I able to work?

A. You can provide Supported Lodgings if you are working, not working or a full-time person at home. If you are working, you need to consider if you have the time in your life to offer the support needed to help a young person develop independent living skills

Q. How old do I have to be?

A. 18+ We do not operate an upper age limit for applicants, although we do need to take into account health and circumstances if applicants were well into retirement age.

Q. What happens if I have pets?

A. We are unable to accept applications from people who have a dog breed identified as dangerous by current legislation. Applicants who own dogs will be expected to discuss any issues relating to the management and control of their pet. For all pets we will complete a pet assessment form.

Q. Can a young person share a bedroom?

A. No, the young person needs to have their own bedroom, which has a lockable door; this is to ensure that the young person has some privacy during their time living with you.

Q. Do I get paid for being a supported lodgings host?

A. Yes, you will receive a weekly payment made directly to you from the scheme, in addition to this payment; you will also receive a weekly payment from the young person themselves. These payments are only payable when a young person is living with you.

Q. Will the payments affect my benefits?

A. Supported Lodgings is classed as income from a boarder, with a Tax relief disregard threshold set each year by HMRC- please see Rent a room scheme. This information factsheet can be provided by the scheme staff.

It is important to discuss with scheme staff about any benefit income you have coming into the household so appropriate information can be given regarding any impact Supported Lodgings may have.

Q. Will I be an employee of Together for Children or Sunderland City Council?

A. No, you will be required to register as self employed for your role as a Supported Lodgings carer. If successful you will need to register as self employed and complete your tax return yearly.

Q. Will I receive training?

A. Yes, you will receive training which can be provided informally by scheme staff or through accessing training provided through the Big Initiative Online Training Portal. We will discuss your training needs as part of the assessment process.

We will also provide a Preparation for Independence handbook which can be used to help advise and support Independent Living Skills Development.

Q. What is involved in the assessment process?

A. When an application is made to the scheme arrangements will be made for scheme staff to come out to your home and discuss your application further. If at this point, you wish to proceed with the application, a home assessment will be undertaken, alongside the relevant health checks and police checks.

This process can take up to 6 months but is sometimes longer.

Support Offered

As a Supported Lodgings Host you will receive support from the scheme workers, who will be there to offer support to you and the young person. We welcome contact from any of our householders should you have any concerns, issues whilst supporting a young person or any general enquiries.

There is:

- Duty Service – this is available 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday
- Emergency Duty Service – this operates outside normal office hours and includes bank holidays and weekends
- Weekly visits from the scheme staff if required.
- Training to meet your needs through the supported lodgings scheme staff and also via the Big Initiative Online Training Portal and National Supported Lodgings Network.
- On going mentoring and support from the scheme staff.

Steps to Becoming a Supported Lodgings Host

Before you can offer Supported Lodgings, you will need to go through the assessment and approval process. This is designed to ensure that you can meet the support needs of a young homeless person and understand the requirements of the role.

Step 1

If after reading the information contained in this pack, please complete the application form included with this pack.

The application form is designed to give the service basic information about you and your circumstances. It also asks you to consider your life experience and your thoughts about the support you could offer a young person

Step 2

Once we have received your application form, arrangements will be made for a member of the scheme staff to come out and talk to you about your application. This initial meeting gives you the opportunity to ask further questions and for us to get to know you a little better

Step 3

If everyone is happy for the application to go ahead, a series of home visits will be arranged whereby the home assessment can begin. The home assessment allows us to build up a good picture about you, your family and life experiences.

As part of this process, we will undertake several checks, these include:

- Police check
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) - An enhanced check will be undertaken. DBS checks are needed because people with certain types of criminal record are not eligible to offer Supported Lodgings.
- Medical Report – A medical report will be requested from your GP.

- Personal References – you will be required to give two personal references, which should be people who know you well but are not family members.
- Employer References and Employment History

Referees will be visited as part of the assessment process.

- Assessment will include -The home layout- Where do you live? Relationships- including any previous relationships, Family Background, Education/Work, Health and Wellbeing, Equality and Diversity, Pet Assessment, social media and Internet understanding, building relationships with young people, Experience of supporting young people, Skills and knowledge to support developing independence, Scenario Questions, Develop a Living Together agreement, Missing Procedures, Training and Recommendations.
- Mandatory Training.

Step 4

Once all the information is gathered and all the checks have come back, a report is written ready for submission to a panel of officers independent of the scheme.

The officers will review the information in the report and will decide as to whether to accept you as a Supported Lodgings Host. You will be informed both verbally and in written format of the decision and any recommendations the panel has made.

If the panel decides to decline you as a Supported Lodgings Host, you will be given the reasons for this decision and informed of your rights to appeal.

Step 5

If you are approved (most people who go to panel are) you will be placed on a register of approved Supported Lodgings Hosts.

When it is identified that a young person requires a home, your details will be matched against the needs of the young person, if they match, a meeting will be arranged for you to meet with the young person.

If after this meeting both you and the young person feel that you would like to consider a move in, then a series of meetings will be arranged for you and the young person to get to know one another better.

At any point in the process either you or the young person can withdraw from the meetings.

We hope this has been helpful in providing basic facts on the recruitment process but if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Thank you

Supported Lodgings Scheme Together for Children- Sunderland

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