

What is Suitable Accommodation?

One of the most important parts of our adult lives is the decisions we make and the choices we have around where we live. When you are a young person in or leaving care it is critical that you feel Safe, Secure and protected in your home.

Children and Family Services work hard with young people to make sure that we can enable you to make the best choices for your future accommodation.

The government expects the local authority to tell them where all of our young people are living and want to know that you are living in 'Suitable Accommodation'.

So what does that mean?

The law describes this as:

- *Suitable for the child in light of his needs, including his health needs; This means: is it the right place for you?*
- *The authority has satisfied itself as to the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider; Are they safe and provide what a good landlord should for you?*
- *Complies with health and safety requirements related to rented accommodation; and Is it a safe and secure place for you to live?*
- *Taken into account the child's wishes and feelings; and education, training or employment needs. Takes account of your views and whether it is a place that will support you to get to college or work?*

How we will help you:-

Everyone is different and we want to make sure that we give you choices. It is not always easy. You may want to live in certain areas or with people we think may not be safe for you. If we feel that we will tell you and work with you to help you make the best choices.

Some of the options may be

- Enabling you to remain in the accommodation in which you lived whilst being looked after, e.g. by converting a foster placement to a post-18 arrangement or Staying Put;
- Supported lodgings, other than with your former carers;
- Foyers and other supported housing, combining accommodation with support and opportunities for education, training and employment;
- Trainer flats where you can 'practice' living more independently without compromising their future housing options;
- Specialist accommodation, for example self-contained accommodation with personal assistance support, or therapeutic placements for you with specific support needs such as disabilities and mental health difficulties; Independent accommodation in the social or private rented sectors, with flexible floating support as needed;
- Living with families.

So when you talk to your worker about the accommodation being 'suitable' we are going to ask if you feel safe and secure, do the significant people in your life feel you are safe and secure and if

at the point of asking we don't all agree, how are we going to make plans to ensure we are working towards the most suitable accommodation for you.
All of this will be written into your Pathway Plan so that you are fully aware of the options and the plans for you.

Angie Lymer-Cox

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