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Leicestershire Policy and Guidance Supported Lodgings Placements Scheme Applies to- All children

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1. Guidance

- 1.1. This document sets out the Leicestershire County Council's Supported Lodgings Scheme. It covers the recruitment and assessment of Supported Lodgings Providers as well as various issues affecting such carers.
- 1.2. The document also details the procedural requirements concerning young people who will use the Supported Lodgings Scheme. We hope you find the information useful and will be explained to you as we go through the process and you are appointed as a Supported Lodgings Provider.
- 1.3. An application form is attached which explains the process for a proposed supporting lodger provider and which would be discussed with the proposed provider by the Social Worker at the first visit.
- 1.4. We want you to feel confident about taking a young person in to your home and it is hoped this pack will help you do that and also provide you with all the necessary information you will need to become a Supported Lodgings Provider, this is often referred to as a SLP

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2. Introduction

2.1. This document sets out the procedural requirements for the Supported Lodgings Scheme. It covers the procedural requirements for the assessment of young people for the scheme, staff and team responsibilities and the requirements for support, and review of the supported lodgings placement. Young people who are looked after remain subject to the law and regulations governing visits, planning and reviews.

2.2. The policy also covers the Council's expectations of Supported Lodgings Providers, requirements for their supervision, support and review. It also details the financial support payable to them.

2.3. When a young person is placed as a Looked After Child they will still be subject of Care Planning Regulations – LAC reviews, PEP's and any other statutory responsibilities.

- 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: Care Planning and Case Review (revised 2013 and 2014)
- Children and Family Act 2014
- Fostering Regulations 2011 & 2013 assessing and approval update
- Care Leavers Regulations 2015

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3. Definition of Supported Lodgings

3.1 Supported Lodgings are a form of supported accommodation for vulnerable people who are not ready to live independently for a variety of reasons. It is expected that the scheme will provide places for care leavers aged 16 to 21 years. (See paragraph 7.1) Young people placed on this scheme will have their own room in a family home and be given support by the adult or adults in the home. It is a requirement that Supported

Lodgings Carers have the capacity to offer each young person a bedroom of their own that is furnished and maintained to a good standard. They will also be expected to offer support and guidance to the young person when required and to help him/her towards independence by assisting the young person in a variety of areas, for example to budget, cook and clean.

- 3.2 Supported Lodgings should be seen as part of the wide range of accommodation on offer to young people preparing to leave care. It should not be seen as the answer to every young person's housing needs.
- 3.3 In some ways the scheme is similar to fostering, but with important differences. It is intended to meet the needs of young adults rather than children, with the focus being more on living an independent life, but having some support available when needed. Young people placed will have been assessed as having reached a level of maturity to manage in a setting where they will be expected to mainly take responsibility for themselves and will not require the intensity of support provided in foster care or residential care.
- 3.4 It will suit those young people who do not wish to live in the available shared accommodation or who would welcome more personal support. To be considered for the scheme the young person will need to show an ability to live successfully in a family home and be able to make use of support to develop their independent living skills. The aim will be for the young person to reach a point where they are able to move on to less supported accommodation and to have developed the skills necessary for independent living, thereby ultimately moving on to their own tenancy. It is important that young people moving into Supported Lodgings both need support and are prepared to be supported (see **Section 7, Placement of Young People in Supported Lodgings Placements**). Clear expectations of both the Supported Lodgings Carer and the young person are essential.
- 3.5 Supported Lodgings Carers will be provided with on-going supervision and support all supported lodgings providers are expected to undertake core training within the first 18months of registration. The amount of support

necessary will be agreed with the worker and carer before the placement and will be adjusted by joint agreement in the light of experience.

Supervision and support will however comply with the requirements detailed in the policy on Supervisory visits to foster carers.

- 3.6 It is important that all those involved with the scheme know what is expected of them. A copy of this guidance will be made available to all Supported Lodgings Carers, Social Workers and young people involved with the scheme.

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4. Background and Legal Framework

- 4.1 The Children Act 1989 created opportunities for care leavers to access accommodation, support, advice, information and financial assistance from local authorities. While some local authority services were of a high standard, other leaving care services were poorly funded, resulting in unequal service provision across the country
- 4.2 The introduction of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, implemented in 2001, and related government initiatives sought to strengthen the Children Act and offered an opportunity for local authorities to review the services provided to young people in the process of transition to adulthood. The main government objectives were to:
- 4.2.1 Reduce the number of placement moves within the care system
 - 4.2.2 Increase placement choice
 - 4.2.3 Avoid early discharge from care
 - 4.2.4 Improve outcomes for care leavers.
- 4.3 The Act invited local authorities to take a broad look at their services for young people leaving care.
- 4.4 The guidance to the Children (Leaving Care) Care Act 2000 outlines the aims and objectives of the legislation. Those specifically relating to accommodation are to:

- 4.4.1 Provide stable placements, continuity of carers and the maintenance, whenever possible, of positive links when young people are 'looked after'
- 4.4.2 Prepare young people gradually to be ready to leave care, paying attention to practical self-care needs - health, budgeting, domestic skills - and personal and relationship dimensions.
- 4.4.3 Ensure there is a contingency provision to support care leavers in the event of a crisis, including arrangements for respite care.
- 4.4.4 Provide or enable ongoing personal support. This may include specialist Leaving Care Scheme support, support by carers and Social Workers and support by youth workers, befrienders, mentors or volunteers. This is underlined by the introduction of personal advisers under the 2000 Act. The suite of statutory regulations and guidance on care planning for looked after children and care leavers that came into force in April 2011.

The guidance sets out to streamline and bring together previous guidance into a coherent framework of support for looked after children and care leavers. The Planning Transitions to adulthood for care leavers guidance has an emphasis on housing and on local authorities to work with partners to provide a range of accommodation options for young people, including Supported Lodgings.

The guidance also includes duties to consider the suitability of accommodation for care leavers, which is also a duty in relation to looked after children in other arrangements, such as Supported Lodgings. Separate guidance has also been issued on the sufficiency duty - the duty of local authorities to provide sufficient accommodation for looked after children in their local authority areas.

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5. Supported Lodgings Carers

- 5.1 As Supported Lodgings Carers they will agree :
 - 5.1.1 To advise/befriend young people.
 - 5.1.2 To be enablers/motivators for the young person.

- 5.1.3 To assist each young person placed with Supported Lodgings Carers to be registered with a General Practitioner and that each person receives appropriate health care which may include dentists, opticians and if necessary mental health specialist.
- 5.1.4 To be perceptive and understanding - particularly to know when to let the young person get on with things and when to intervene.
- 5.1.5 To undertake some direct work on independent living skills (related to the young person's independent living skills assessment and Pathway Plans).
- 5.1.6 To provide a safe and consistent environment for the young person, providing them with advice and support as and when required.
- 5.1.7 To liaise with the young person's allocated worker and other agencies.
- 5.1.8 To take responsibility for decision making on a day-to-day basis on matters that affect the young person's lodgings
- 5.1.9 To contribute to the young person's Pathway Plan and preparation for independence by assisting the young person to develop life and social skills.
- 5.1.10 To provide a bedroom for the young person's sole use. To provide bathroom facilities and access to kitchen facilities for the storage of food and preparation of meals.
- 5.1.11 To contribute to the assessment of the needs of the young person to provide information for long term plans for the young person by attending R.O.A meetings.
- 5.1.12 To support the young person in their use of community resources.
- 5.1.13 To participate in planning meetings, case conferences, reviews and other meetings

5.1.14 To assist the young person, as necessary, in advocating for

5.1.15 themselves.

To listen to the young person's concerns and complaints and help him/her to express these in an appropriate manner

5.1.16 Not to speak with the media without prior consent of the Council

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6. Assessment and Approval of Supported Lodgings Carers

6.1 The Council will undertake a number of checks to satisfy itself that the prospective carer has the requisite qualities and skills to be approved as Supported Lodgings Carer.

The Council will undertake the following checks:

- 1) A fostering medical check via the G.P
- 2) Disclosure and Barring Checks (DBS) previously known as CRB checks
- 3) Police checks for any criminal record/s **.NB** any disclosure of criminal record will not automatically debar you from appointment unless the selection panel considers that the conviction renders you unsuitable as a Supported Lodgings Carer. However, failure to disclose any criminal convictions, even those “spent” under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 or a caution or bind over may disqualify you from being approved.
- 4) Statutory agency checks, and two personal and work references are required.

6.2 Once a completed application form has been received an initial visit will be arranged with a Social Worker to further discuss the proposals and to enable the proposed provider to make an informed decision about proceeding with an assessment which will require signing relevant consent forms. Checks will be undertaken by a Stage One Support Worker it will

then be passed over to a Supervising Social Worker from the Dedicated Placement Support Team who will undertake a Supported Lodgings Assessment which will be presented to the Supported Lodgings Interview.

- 6.3 Once a Supported Lodgings Carer has been assessed and approved, every Supported Lodging Carer will have a Supervising Social Worker from the Dedicated Placement Support Team who will offer monthly supervision and will encourage carers to engage with the training programme. The Dedicated Placement Support Team has a group of support workers who can also offer support to either the Supported Lodgings Provider or the young person, this can be achieved by either the Supervising Social Worker or the young person's social worker or personal adviser making a referral to the team.

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7. Conversion of Foster Placements to Staying Put

- 7.1 To operate an effective, child-led service where disruption and early discharge is kept to a minimum, conversion of a fostering placement to Staying Put should be considered as an option. Staying Put can provide stability and prevent young people moving on before they feel ready to do so.

8. Placement of Young People in Supported Lodgings Placements

- 8.1 All young people who are to be considered for a placement in Supported Lodgings will have been referred by their Social Worker from the Children in Care or Care Leavers Service. The young people referred will be eligible children, relevant children or former relevant children as defined by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. These young people will be aged sixteen years or above.

8.2 Assessment of a young person's suitability for a supported lodging placement:

- 8.2.1 For the placement to be success it is vital that the young person actively wants to live in Supported Lodgings and is prepared to make use of the support offered. A full assessment must be completed as to the young person's suitability and his or her pathway assessment and plan must take into account the level of care and support they need to identify the appropriate resource. The Pathway Plan will also identify how that young person will be assisted to move towards independence, which may involve progressing through different accommodations, where greater levels of independence and self-reliance can be experienced and tested. If a young person is under the age of 18 then they will be subject to LAC Reviews and discussion will be held with their IRO's.
- 8.2.2 Supported Lodgings will only be considered as an option where it is assessed that a young person has reached a level of maturity to cope in a setting where they will be expected to take some personal responsibility, that they are motivated to continue to work towards developing their skills to become more self-reliant and that they are prepared to take advantage of further education, training or employment opportunities.
- 8.2.3 Target groups for the Supported Lodgings scheme will include young people who:
- a. Are engaged in education courses and need space to study
 - b. Have mild / moderate learning disability or mental health issues or are otherwise vulnerable and might be at risk in shared accommodation
 - c. Have support needs but do not wish to live in a group living situation

- d. Are parents of a young child or are pregnant and whose child is not subject to any proceedings or child protection plans. Children born to young mothers in Supported Lodgings must not have a looked after status as these children will need to be looked after by a foster carer.
- e. Any Unaccompanied asylum seeker who has been age assessed to between 16 and 18.

8.2.4 If the Pathway Assessment and Plan and preparatory work identifies that Supported Lodgings may be appropriate and this is endorsed by the Care Leavers Team Manager, a referral will be made to the Family Placement Team by the child's social worker. To avoid duplication of paperwork this referral can be made by providing a copy of the Pathway Assessment and Plan, Care Plan and other relevant i.e. last LAC review information. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, referrals will only be accepted if there is full information on that young person and s/he has agreed it can be shared.

8.2.5 This referral will be discussed with Dedicated Support team manager or Supported Lodgings supervising social workers, an initial decision made as to the young person's suitability for the scheme. If it appears that the young person is suitable the support worker for the Supported Lodging carer will arrange to meet with the young person's case holding worker to consider the young person's strengths and needs, look at their preferences, then identify whether any available Supported Lodgings carer will be a suitable match.

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9. Matching Process

- 9.1 Careful matching of young people and Supported Lodgings carers is essential to the success of a placement. It is important that the Supported Lodgings carer is recognised as being part of the professional team there to help and assist the young person. In practice this means it is essential to fully involve the carer in the decision making process. The Carer will have full access to relevant information concerning the young person from their social or support worker before a placement begins. This should include the young person's Pathway Assessment and Pathway Plan. The young person will be asked to sign a consent form to enable this information to be released.
- 9.2 In circumstances where a young person has additional needs (for example as a result of a mild learning or physical disability) the young person's social worker and Supervising Social Worker for the Supported Lodgings Carer will consider the need to undertake a risk assessment as part of the matching process prior to the placement starting and consider any capacity issues.
- 9.3 When deciding the viability of a placement the following key areas will be considered:
- 9.3.1 The location of the Supported Lodgings Carer's home
 - 9.3.2 Whether there are any pets within the household
 - 9.3.3 The religious and cultural requirements of the young person and carer
 - 9.3.4 Whether the carer or young person smoke
 - 9.3.5 The occupation of the young person and carer e.g. working, college etc.
 - 9.3.6 The young person's level of needs e.g. emotional, practical etc.
- 9.4 If a potential suitable match is identified the supervising social worker for the Supported Lodgings carer will arrange a meeting between the relevant

parties (carer, young person's Social Worker and the young person to discuss the possible placement and identify areas where the young person may need support. The young person's Social Worker will be provided with a copy of the profile of the Supported Lodgings Carer to share with the young person. This will be an aid to undertake appropriate matching and will include:

9.4.1 Family details/photographs of family members

9.4.2 Type and location of accommodation

9.4.3 Racial, cultural and religious identity of Supported Lodgings Carers

9.4.4 A general pen picture, including hobbies and interests.

9.5 If the carer and young person are satisfied that they have sufficient information and wish to go ahead, an introductory meeting will be arranged. Unless there are exceptional circumstances several preliminary visits, possibly including an overnight stay, will be arranged before the placement begins. The final decision about staying will be arranged before the placement begins. The final decision about the placement resides with the carer, child's social worker and the young person. A placement will only be made if both are willing and feel able to work with each other. If everyone concerned is willing to go ahead a Placement Planning meeting between all relevant parties should be held prior to the placement starting.

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10. Placement Planning Meeting and Placement Agreement Plans

10.1 Placement plans should be drawn up before the young person moves into the placement considering their capacity, between the young person, supported lodgings carer, young person's Social Worker and the Supported Lodgings Carer's supervising social worker. These agreements will be reviewed six monthly by way of Placement Planning meetings between the same group of people. These reviews can take place in conjunction with the review of the young person's Pathway Plan

since many of the issues arising will be relevant to both (In the case of looked after children this review can be incorporated into his or her six monthly statutory child care reviews as will the review of their pathway plans

10.2 Issues to be covered in the Placements Agreement include:

- 10.2.1 The level of involvement of the young person within the family. Whilst this is mainly the young person's choice very minimal contact may indicate that Supported Lodgings is not the appropriate choice of placement. Active support from the carer is a prerequisite to the setting up of a placement
- 10.2.2 The level of support needed from the young person's allocated worker
- 10.2.3 Standards of behaviour
- 10.2.4 Use of telephone
- 10.2.5 Holidays. What arrangements will be put in place when the carer is on holiday?
- 10.2.6 Will the young person be cooking and shopping for him or herself? If the carer is providing the young person with food then they will need to contribute towards the cost of this from their personal allowance. Does the young person have any dietary requirements?
- 10.2.7 Smoking/alcohol/drugs guidelines
- 10.2.8 Friends visiting and staying over
- 10.2.9 Education, training and employment. How much support from the carer is the young person requiring in this area?
- 10.2.10 Racial, cultural and religious identity and background of both carer(s) and young person. Needs arising and how these will be addressed.

- 10.2.11 Health care and development
- 10.2.12 Contact between the young person and their family
- 10.2.13 Frequency of reviewing the agreement, (minimum, three monthly)
- 10.2.14 Level of involvement from the case holding worker and the /support worker
- 10.2.15 Placement Agreements should also identify any additional support that is required to meet the young person's needs and detail how this need is going to be met
- 10.2.16 Protocol regarding entering the young person's room without their permission
- 10.2.17 Leaving care grant availability
- 10.2.18 Other financial arrangements
- 10.2.19 Information sharing
- 10.2.20 Action to be taken in the event of the young person going missing from the placement.

9.2.21 Young people will be provided with Wi-Fi service however if this is abused or if they are deemed at risk then use of this can be restricted by the carer.

9.2.22 All end of placements should be planned with carers giving at least 28 days' notice, if a young person wishes to end their placement then an end of placement feedback form should be completed by the young person and their social worker,

A young person has the right to end their placement at any time. However post 18 there is no guarantee of another SLP

placement being sought and other accommodation options will be explored identified subject to their assessed needs.

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11. The Placement

- 11.1 Within the placement there need to be a clear divide between the support for the Supported Lodgings Carers and the support of the young person making use of the accommodation. The young person in Supported Lodgings will have an identified Social Worker/Personal Advisor who will be responsible for supporting the young person and arranging the review of their **Care Plan/Pathway Plan**. The Social Worker/PA will stay in contact with the young person throughout their time in Supported Lodgings accommodation, and support the young person as they prepare to move on. The Social Worker/PA will visit the young person within the first week of placement and all subsequent visits will comply with legal and regulatory requirements according to the child's age and legal status and the frequency of them will be agreed as part of the Placement Agreement and incorporated into the Pathway Plan and/or Care Plan
- 11.2 The Care Plan, or Pathway Plan, will identify the work that is being undertaken with the young person, including plans in relation to the placement in Supported Lodgings. The Placement Agreement will add specific details relating to the placement.
- 11.3 In addition to any agreements or work that will be identified within these individual plans Supported Lodgings Carers have a duty to ensure that the young person residing with them is safe. Supported Lodgings Carers are expected to contact the Social Worker as soon as reasonably practicable in any of the following circumstances:

- 11.3.1 If a young person ceases to live in the accommodation, or goes missing. Placement Agreements should include a section detailing what action the young person's social worker wishes the carer to take in the event of a young person not returning as arranged.
- 11.3.2 If the carer has any concerns about the young person, (this could include changes in behaviour, drug/alcohol misuse, risk taking, changes in their routines or people whom they associate with etc.)
- 11.3.3 If the young person's circumstances alter (e.g. gain employment, leave college, training etc)
- 11.4 In normal circumstances the Supported Lodgings carer will be expected to respect the young person's privacy and only enter the young person's room if they have been invited to do so. Exceptions include circumstances where the Supported Lodgings carer has reasonable cause to suspect that the young person is taking or dealing in drugs or is involved in other criminal activities or where there is clear evidence of risk to the young person or others. In these circumstances the carer should liaise with their supervising social worker or the young person's Social Worker (see section 11)

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12. Supervision and On-going Support of Supported Lodgings Carers

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of the Supported Lodgings carer's supervising social worker to supervise and support Supported Lodgings carer and to ensure the carer has the assistance they need to make the placement a success. This includes advising the carer on how to successfully support and motivate the young person, advise on any behavioural issues that might arise and ensure that standards within the home and the expected

level of care is maintained. The following support will be made available to Supported Lodgings Carers:

- 12.1.1 Monthly supervision sessions will take place. These sessions will focus primarily on ensuring that the carer uses their skills and knowledge to provide the young person with a high quality of care in order to meet their needs effectively.
- 12.1.2 Supported Lodgings carers will be asked to identify issues to be discussed beforehand. The carer and support worker will then look at how these may be tackled. Issues covered will include training and development, the person in placement, strengths and needs, advice and information on managing behaviour, record keeping, additional avenues of support etc.
- 12.1.3 A supervision record will be kept on a pro-forma detailing the main issues arising. Issues requiring action will be highlighted, detailing who is to do what and by when. The carer will be sent a copy of the supervision record and a copy will be kept on the Supported Lodgings carer's file. More intense support/frequent visits may be required at the early stages of a placement or during difficult times. POD meeting should be arranged by the Personal Advisor/Social Worker in which the supervising social worker and supported lodgings provider should be invited and attend.
- 12.1.4 The Supported Lodgings carer can access support and advice by telephone. Their supervising social worker will ensure that Supported Lodgings carers are aware of the times he/she is available, the telephone number to call and his/her location. If the matter is urgent and will not wait until the supervising social worker is next available, the carer can ask to speak to the young person's Social Worker in the first instance or the Team Manager or Service Manager during office hours. Outside office hours Supported Lodgings carers can access the Emergency Out

Hours Service. The foster carer support line is also available between the hours of 6pm and midnight for Supported Lodgings provider to access. Young people can call their Social worker or PA and first report out of hours for support and advice.

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13. Record Keeping

- 13.1 Accurate written observations about a young person and their behaviour can greatly assist both the Supported Lodgings Carer and other professionals in identifying trends in a young person's behaviour, help with early intervention and prevent problems from escalating.
- 13.2 Supported Lodgings Carers may be expected to provide written reports on the young person in placement, when accidents or Incidents of concern have happened. They are provided with a Diary to do so.
- 13.3 Whilst not being an exhaustive list Supported Lodgings Carers should keep records on the following:
 - 13.3.1 Any allegations against the carer or other person. Any such allegation should also be immediately reported by contacting the young person's Social Worker, Support Worker or a Manager from the Fostering Support or Children in Care/Care leaver team.
 - 13.3.2 Significant events such as starting college or a job
 - 13.3.3 Attendance at college/work
 - 13.3.4 When the young person is in placement, (significant time spent elsewhere may indicate that the placement is not being used in the manner intended).
 - 13.3.5 Contact with family and friends
 - 13.3.6 Suspected drug use or excessive alcohol use

- 13.3.7 Progress in meeting goals identified in the Placement Planning Meeting and review meetings.
- 13.3.8 Any behavioural difficulties within the placement.
- 13.3.9 Details of any accidents or injuries, however slight. Detail when, where and how the injury was sustained.
- 13.3.10 Attempt to keep notes short and to the point.

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14. Drug Use

- 14.1 The Supported Lodging Scheme will not knowingly place young people in Supported Lodgings that are believed to have serious drug and/or alcohol problems. However, Supported Lodgings carers may discover that the young person has started using drugs whilst living in Supported Lodgings or that they had used drugs previously, but not in a manner which greatly impacted on their lives or was noticeable to previous carers.
- 14.2 It is important that Supported Lodgings carers take action if they find out or suspect that the young person lodging with them is using controlled drugs. If the carer is concerned that drugs are being used on the premises they should always look into it further. If this confirms or supports the original suspicion the carer should take further action. The carer should remind the young person that they are breaking the terms of their placement agreement and ask them to stop. Supported Lodgings carers are within their rights to enter the young person's room if they suspect drug use is taking place. They are also within their rights to ask any friends of the young person to leave the premises. If the young person or their friends refuse to leave the premises or if the young person or their friends refuse to comply further steps must be taken. Including calling the police and the supervising social worker

- 14.3 In the first instance Supported Lodgings carers are recommended to contact the young person's Social Worker or their supervising social worker/support worker without delay. The young person's Social Worker will then arrange to meet the young person as soon as possible and look at the need to arrange additional help and support.

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15. Confidentiality within a Placement

- 15.1 Supported lodgings carers will receive information relating to a young person's life that is sensitive and confidential. This will include information from the young person, information shared by workers and written material. The following guidelines must be adhered to;
- 15.1.1 Information relating to that young person, or his or her family, should not be discussed with anyone other than professionals that are directly involved under any circumstances and the young person's wishes should be considered.
- 15.1.2 Confidential written information must be kept secure and not accessible to others. Access should only be given to those people who are professionally involved with the young person
- 15.2 Young people or their family members may wish to share information with the Supported Lodgings carer in confidence. It is important that all involved understand that there is certain information that, if shared, cannot be kept confidential and would need to be passed on to other workers. This would include:
- 15.2.1 Disclosures of abuse/child protection concerns relating to their family, or anybody else (friends, neighbours etc)
- 15.2.2 Involvement in any type of criminal activity
- 15.2.3 Information that has, or would, put the young person or other person at risk in some way (this includes substance misuse, talk

of self-injury, exploitation, plans to abscond, or inappropriate sexual relationships)

- 15.3 Where other information is shared, not related to harm, risk taking, or criminality, as above, the carer should use their discretion. In these circumstances the young person's agreement should be requested before information is shared.
- 15.4 There will, however, be an expectation that Supported Lodgings carers will share information relating to the young person's process with their support worker or the young person's Social Worker both in supervision sessions and review meetings. This will be detailed in the placement agreement.
- 15.5 In the course of their duties Supported Lodgings carers may be approached by the media. The carer should not, under any circumstances, speak to members of the media without prior written permission from a senior manager of Children's Services. Supported Lodging carers must always check a caller's identity. If in doubt the carer should refuse to answer questions and refer the caller to their support worker or his or her Manager.

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16. Guidance for Ending of Placements

- 16.1 It is hoped and anticipated that in the majority of cases placements will end in a way that is planned. The work that the Supported Lodging carer undertakes in helping a young person move towards becoming more self-reliant and the work that has been done through the Pathway Plan and Placement Agreement is expected to culminate in the young person reaching a stage where they are ready to move on. This could involve moving into his/her own accommodation, or into other provision.
- 16.2 There may be occasions when placements do not end at the planned time or in the planned manner. In these circumstances the Supported

Lodging carer, their support worker and the young person's Social Worker will work closely together.

- 16.3 In circumstances where a young person is not adhering to the tenancy agreement or placement agreement, a system of verbal and written warnings will be used. This is to protect the rights of both the young person and carer. There are three stages to this process:

16.3.1 In the first instance the young person will be given a verbal warning specifying the area(s) of concern. The fact that the warning was given will be recorded.

16.3.2 If there is no improvement the young person will be given a written warning. This will make it clear that if the warning is ignored the next stage will be to ask the young person to leave the placement.

16.3.3 As a last resort the young person will be sent a letter asking them to leave the placement. This will give a date by which the young person must leave; in all but exceptional circumstances the young person will be given a minimum of seven days' notice.

- 16.4 In emergencies the young person's social worker will endeavour to move a young person as quickly as possible where it is agreed that this would be desirable. In extreme situations this may be immediately. However, when an unexpected move is necessary, it is good practice to manage this in a way that is planned in order to avoid undue disruption to the young person and carer. The Placement Support Team will expect the supported lodging carer to give an early indication when events begin to happen which may lead to a placement ending prematurely. In these circumstances discussions will take place to attempt to resolve difficulties that have arisen. This may entail a consideration of whether additional resources are available. If the situation cannot be resolved planned alternative accommodation will be identified at the earliest opportunity

- 16.5 There are the same expectations of Supported Lodgings carers as with Foster Carers and where there are standards of care or Child Protection Issues these will be investigated Carers are expected to give 28 days' notice, young people can leave at any time.

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17. End of Placement Evaluation

- 17.1 The young person and Supported Lodging carer will be asked to complete an exit interview with their respective Social Workers. As part of this interview they will be requested to complete an evaluation form. Separate forms will be used for the Supported Lodging carer and young person. All parties involved will be asked to attend the end of placement review meeting which will be set up by the young person's Social Worker. The support worker will use the information gathered to identify issues which may then be followed through by making changes or improvements to the scheme e.g. training, procedures etc.

17.2 Packing up of the young person's property.

- 17.2.1 The young person will normally take responsibility for this. Where this is not an option the young person's Social Worker and the supervising social worker will reach an agreement with the young person and Supported Lodgings Carer over how this task will be undertaken.
- 17.2.2 Storage of possessions left behind
- 17.2.3 The Leaving Care Team will make arrangements for the storage or removal of possessions left behind by a young person when the tenancy has ended where necessary

17.3 Keys

17.3.1 Any keys that the young person has been given for the use of the Supported Lodgings accommodation should be returned to the Supported Lodgings carer once the tenancy has ended. The young person should replace any lost or stolen keys. If the keys are not returned and there is a clear safety risk to the supported lodging carer and/or their property the Fostering service will arrange for a change of locks.

17.4 Cancelling Housing Benefit payments

17.4.1 The cancellation of Housing Benefit at the end of a placement will be the responsibility of the young person assisted by their Social worker in liaison with the support worker.

17.5 Possible debt owed to Supported Lodgings Supported Lodgings Carers

17.5.1 Supported Lodgings carers should not lend money to the young person placed with them. The County Council can take no responsibility for debts accrued. If a young person is struggling with their finances they should be encouraged to contact their Social Worker who will consider the issues with the young person and can help financially if the need is genuine.

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18. Supported Lodgings Carer Contact with the Young Person after Placement

18.1 Supported Lodgings carers will be encouraged to maintain some level of contact with the young person after placements as it is likely that their relationship will have been significant in the young person's development and transition to independent living. At present no social media

friendships should be undertaken by the Supported Lodgings Provider and any contact with young people should be reported to the Social worker/PA for recording purpose.

- 18.2 Where contact will continue, details will be incorporated into the young person's Pathway Plan.

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19. Legal and financial implications for Supported Lodgings Carers

- 19.1 Supported Lodgings Carers will be paid on a monthly basis whilst providing accommodation and support to a young person. The Current allowance is £225.00 per week which includes all food. They will be paid in circumstances where the young person is on holiday. Placements will be paid per week pro rata.
- 19.2 In most circumstances, young people aged sixteen or seventeen will not be eligible for benefits payments. For this group of people, the allowance (rent, support and utilities components) will be paid directly to the Supported Lodgings Carer by the County Council.
- 19.3 Personal allowances for sixteen and seventeen year olds will be paid directly to the young person, except in circumstances where it has been agreed (through the placement agreement) that a proportion of the allowance will be paid directly to the carer to enable them to purchase food/cook meals for the young person.
- 19.4 Some young people aged eighteen or over will be entitled to benefit payments, as are some young people aged 16/17 who are disabled or have a child. Where the young person is eligible for Housing Benefit they will make a claim for the rent component of the allowance payable to the carer (as the landlord). Arrangements **must** be made for the rent to be paid directly to the Supported Lodging carer and not the young person. In these circumstances the Supported Lodgings carer will

continue to receive their support and utility allowance from the local authority.

19.5 Where the young person will be claiming Housing Benefit an application will be completed by the young person and lodged with the Housing Benefit department at the start of the placement or at the point they become eligible to claim, whichever is the sooner. Failure to do so may result in loss of benefit. The young person's Social Worker is responsible for supporting this process.

19.6 Young people over the age of eighteen or between sixteen and eighteen who are entitled to housing benefit will need proof of tenancy. A tenancy agreement must be signed by the young person and the Supported Lodgings carer. The following documentation must also be provided in original format (not photocopies) by the claimant (young person):

- Proof of ID
- Proof of National Insurance Number
- Proof of earnings (5 recent wage slips or 2 months' salary slips)
- Proof of capital (e.g. bank statements)
- Proof of benefit entitlement

19.7 This group of young people will claim Job Seekers Allowance or Income Support for their own personal income. In circumstances where a young person over 18 is engaged in full time education or training they may be entitled to top up allowances from the Leaving Care Services. This will be arranged through their Social Worker.

19.8 If the young person is in paid employment they will be asked to make a contribution towards the rent. In these circumstances the young person will be expected to pay the carer directly. The County Council will accept responsibility for non-payment in circumstances where a young

person refuses to pay, in order that the carer is not penalised financially. However, the young person must be encouraged to take responsibility for paying any contribution to their rent from their income and failure to do so could result in them breaching their tenancy agreement.

- 19.9 The supervising social worker will advise Supported Lodgings carers of young people's entitlement to benefits and will liaise with his or her Social Worker to ensure relevant benefits are claimed. Allowances available to young people are outlined in the Leaving Care policy.

19.10 Financial Considerations for Supported Lodgings Carers

19.10.1 Supported Lodgings Carers are advised to seek advice on any implications for themselves of providing Supported Lodging Placements, for example if they need permission from their mortgage lender or landlord or if there are any income tax implications or impact on any welfare benefits the Supported Lodgings carer is receiving.

19.11 Council Tax considerations for Supported Lodging Carers

19.11.1 There may be occasions where a placement made with a Supported Lodgings carer affects the householder's liability for Council Tax. For example if a young person over the age of 18 is placed with a carer who is a single person the carer may lose their entitlement to a single person's discount. This entitlement will not be affected if the young person is under the age of eighteen.

19.11.2 Where a placement of a young person does affect the Supported Lodgings carer's liability for payment of Council Tax the County Council will refund the difference on receipt of the relevant paperwork.

19.12 Insurance considerations for Supported Lodging Carers

19.12.1 Insurance cover is essential for all Supported Lodgings carers. Supported Lodgings carers should retain their own contents and house insurance. When the Carer signs their agreement with the County Council they are accepting responsibility for maintaining adequate and up to date insurance.

19.12.2 Supported Lodgings carers must always inform their insurance company that they are providing a Supported Lodgings placement and that the young person placed will be regarded as a member of their household whilst living there. Should they not do so there is a risk that the carer may find they are not adequately insured and that the company refused to meet a claim.

19.12.3 The County Council also a member of the Fostering Network. This membership entitles Supported Lodgings Carers to legal liability insurance, provided they are not eventually found guilty of a criminal act.

19.12.4 Cars are not covered by the County Council's arrangements. Supported Lodgings carers will need to secure cover for business use if they intend using their car for transporting the young person. Most insurance companies do not charge additional premiums for business use. However, for some Supported Lodgings carers, this may incur additional costs, for which they will be responsible.

19.12.5 The Supported Lodgings Scheme will carry out checks to ensure that adequate insurance cover is in place before a placement starts. The Dedicated Placement Support Team also carry out yearly monitoring visits to ensure DBS Car

Insurance house insurance, Gas Safety and other Health and Safety certificates are in place and up-to-date. A general health and safety assessment of the house and conditions is also undertaken.

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