

SUPPORTED LODGINGS SCHEME STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

July 2023



This Statement of Purpose fulfils the requirements of Regulation 9 of the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023 (pursuant to the Care Standards Act 2000). To be presented for approval by the Leicestershire County Council Executive in September of each year.

WE ARE FAMILY

JOIN US

KEY AIMS, OBJECTIVES, STANDARDS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE SUPPORTED LODGINGS SCHEME

The main aims of the Leicestershire County Council Supported Lodgings Scheme are to:

- Ensure that young people have their own room in a comfortable, well maintained family home, and stable accommodation.
- Ensure that young people feel safe and secure where they are living, as well as in their wider environment.
- Listen to the voices of young people, respect them, and ensure access to advocacy for them, so that they can have influence over the service and the support they receive.
- The creation of an environment where young people can have confidence that the adults who support them understand them and their needs, are skilled, and effectively work together to ensure those needs are met.
- Enable young people to have high quality and well-matched support, which ensures their health and wellbeing is maintained and sustained.
- Ensure that young people can have strong, trusting, and meaningful relationships within their support network, and can rely on the adults around them.
- Enable young people to feel and be supported, as well as to learn and apply the skills they will need for independent adult living.
- Enable young people to feel positive about their future and opportunities, as the result of the support they receive.

The main service objectives are to:

- Ensure that vulnerable young people, who are not ready for a greater level of independence, have the opportunity live in a well-matched supported lodgings placement, where they will have the level of care and support which means their needs as an individual.
- Provide a safe and nurturing supported lodgings placement, with the aim of achieving positive outcomes for young people, for them to thrive and reach their potential, whatever that may look like for them.
- To ensure that supported lodgings hosts have the capacity to care for our young people therapeutically and in a way that is consistent with trauma informed practice.
- Support the relationships that young people have with others who are important to them, including their friends and family, and can spend time with them.
- Ensure young people are supported to access education, training, or employment, in order for them to develop aspirations for their future.
- Enable young people live to in a family home, with adults who are able to support them to develop the skills they will need, in order to move successfully to independence.

- Create sufficient supported lodgings placements to enable a choice of placements for young people, which they can remain in until they are at least 21, 25 if they are in full time education.
- Create sufficient supported lodgings plus placements to ensure that young people with a higher level of care and support needs can be placed with a supported lodgings host, if that is an appropriate care plan for an individual.

The Supported Lodgings Scheme works to core principles, developed with feedback from our young people:

Young people in the care of supported lodgings host have the right to expect that we will continue to provide them with that which a good parent would, this means that Leicestershire County Council will:

- Know our young people, their needs, talents, and aspirations, and promote their interests.
- Hold high aspirations for our young people, expecting the best for and from them.
- Take an interest in our young people, both their successes and challenges, celebrating the former and supporting them to identify solutions to the latter.
- To understand the lived experience of our young people as individuals, and to ensure they have access to the services that will enable them to mitigate any disadvantages.
- Listen to the views of young people, to ensure they can influence policy, plans and practice.
- Make sure that young people are consulted about their lives and plans, so that their views and wishes are known.
- Respect the identity of our young people, in all its aspects.
- Promote opportunities for young people to access education, training, or employment.
- Support young peoples' physical health and emotional wellbeing, including building resilience, and accessing any necessary support services.
- Support young people's transition to adulthood, both in the context of independent living skills, and promoting economic opportunities.
- Give young people a second chance, then a third and a fourth, in recognition of our young people's lived experience, as well as adolescence being overchallenging for any teenager.

The Supported Lodgings Scheme aims to achieve best practice in accordance with the Quality Standards (2023):

The Regulations prescribe four Quality Standards which must be met by all supported accommodation:

- **The leadership and management standard (regulation 4):**
The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires, and leads a culture in relation to the supported accommodation undertaking that puts children first and prioritises their wellbeing and development.
- **The protection standard (regulation 5):**
The protection standard is that children are enabled to feel safe and that their needs are met.
- **The accommodation standard (regulation 6):**
The accommodation standard is that children experience a comfortable and secure living environment.

- **The support standard (regulation 7):**

The support standard is that children receive individual and tailored support that meets their needs.

Collectively these four standards are the Quality Standards, and there are core themes, which constitute important features of the standards in practice. These are also aims which have been embedded within the culture and practice of Leicestershire County Council's Supported Lodgings Scheme, since its conception.

Placement sufficiency:

In the last financial year, Leicestershire County Council had 34 supported lodgings hosts. Overall utilisation of placements is generally in the region of 80%, which is conducive to there being some flexibility around vacancies, in order to secure a well-matched placement. The annual target for approval of supported lodgings hosts 2023 – 2024 is eight.

The Supported Lodgings Scheme is part of the overall Commissioning and Placements Strategy 2021-24 and our Fostering and Placements Service Recruitment and Retention Strategy. . It is a dynamic strategy, geared towards supporting the recruitment of new hosts who can meet the assessed needs of children and young people in care, and also the need to provide robust support all Leicestershire County Council carers. This is integrally linked with other key strategic plans and strategies for the Council:

- **Children and Family Departmental Plan 2020-2023**
- **Continuous Improvement Plan – The Road to Excellence 2021-2023**
- **Workforce Development Plan 2020-2023**
- **LCF Partnership Plan 2021-2023**
- **Voice Strategy 2020-2023**
- **CFS Equality and Diversity Guidance**
- **Ofsted Report 2019 (Inspection of children's social care services)**
- **We Care Race Equality Strategy 2021-24**
- **Children in Care – Our Promise Annual Report**

This report should be read alongside the Marketing Plan and Market Position Sufficiency Statement for 2021-24, which provides the basis for commissioning decisions, setting out our intentions for improving life changes of children and young people in care. The statement sets out the current position and our objectives for placements for children and young people.

STANDARDS OF CARE TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE AGENCY

The Supported Lodgings Scheme aims to provide safe, secure, and good quality care, for young people, in a family setting. This is now part of the regulatory framework, but it has also been an aim within Leicestershire County Council's service provision since the outset of the scheme. The scheme is committed to the recruitment, approval, training, management, and support of supported lodgings hosts, including child specific placements.

The service adheres to timely and quality recruitment and assessment, in the context of the journey for applicants from the 'front door' to approval. All Supported Lodgings Hosts are allocated a Supervising Social Worker, they have access to core training courses, as well as additional appropriate courses.

PROGRESS AND CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT

The performance and progress in recruitment and retention of supported lodgings hosts is monitored through agreed performance reports, and monthly meetings. The performance and progress in recruitment and retention of Supported Lodgings Hosts will be monitored monthly, through agreed performance reports. The information will be used by managers and teams to review how recruitment, retention and children's outcomes is progressing and to make changes informed by the evidence of their word and actions, to maintain a focus on achieving the targets set. The same performance information will form part of the reporting data set provided to the Departmental Management Team to inform strategic direction for sufficiency services and provisions will strive to reach our vision.

Leicestershire County Council is a trauma informed local authority, which informs supervision with supported lodgings hosts, alongside therapeutic parenting. Some hosts may need access to training, to support them to support the young people in their care, to understand their story and lived experience.

Leicestershire County Council has received some feedback from young people who live with supported lodgings hosts, via an independent team which carries out annual monitoring visits. In addition, young people do give feedback to supervising social workers and the current team manager has been working with comms to create an online survey which will be more accessible to young people.

A support group commenced in 2022. Supervising social workers continue to promote both the support group and other activities, whilst recognising that supported lodgings hosts can have other commitments in a way which differs to foster carers.

STATUS AND CONSTITUTION OF THE AGENCY

All supported accommodation providers are required to be registered with Ofsted by October 2023. Supported accommodation is defined as a provision which accommodates a child placed by a local authority under section 22C(6)(d) or 23B(8)(b) of the Children Act 1989. There are wide range of supported accommodation providers, which the regulations divide into four categories, category one being the highest level of independence.

Leicestershire County Council's Supported Lodgings Scheme falls under category four (regulation 2), whereby supported lodgings hosts provide supported accommodation, hosted by an individual or individuals, in a private residence which is their main residence. Young people will have a room in a family home, and the provision is coordinated by a Supported Lodgings Scheme (the Registered Provider) which recruits and supports a network of supported lodgings hosts. Registration will be at provider level rather than individual settings, which is the Local Authority.

Once registered, inspections undertaken by Ofsted will ensure that the regulatory standards are being met by the provider and will focus on the experiences and progress of young people in supported accommodation, and the effectiveness of the help they receive to achieve good outcomes. Inspection will be of services at the provider level, as well as a representative sample of supported lodgings hosts, to inform the overall rating. Inspections of supported accommodation will commence in April 2024, pilot

inspections are planned for autumn 2023, which Leicestershire County Council are planning to be part of.

The service and the Registered Manager will have a duty to have regard to statements of national minimum standards, published under Section 23 of the Care Standards Act 2000, should they be published by the Secretary of State.

The management structure of the Supported Lodgings Scheme:

The Supported Lodgings Scheme is part of Leicestershire County Council's Fostering Service, which is part of Children and Family Services.



The Registered Manager of the Supported Lodgings Scheme is:

Joss Longman, Service Manager

Children and Family Services, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8SA

Telephone: (0116) 232 3232

Email: Joss.Longman@leics.gov.uk

Qualifications: Dip/HE qualified (1994)

Experience: Joss started to work within children's services as a residential worker in 1986 and a residential training officer and progressed through to being a Team Manager in 1996. In 2012 Joss started working in the Fostering Service as a Team Manager for the kinship team. In 2015 Joss took the leadership of the Fostering Service as Service Manager.

The Organisational structure of the Supported Lodgings Scheme:

Team Manager

Helen Taylor

Senior Practitioner (1)

Darren Blackburn

Supervising Social Workers (2)

Annmarie Reid

Chloe Greaves

THE WORK OF THE SUPPORTED LODGINGS SCHEME

Recruitment; an applicant's journey through the service

An assessment of supported lodgings hosts is necessary for all applicants, whilst the process is not always exactly the same for everyone, the following list of stages provides the detail of what is expected.

First Point of Contact

The Local Authority has a dedicated recruitment team, to enable and enhance the overall recruitment and experience of prospective carers. The priority for this team is to set out a friendly, informative, and welcoming first point of contact with the prospective carer, which meets their needs and impacts on the customer decision to select Leicestershire County Council, rather than other agencies.

Information Events

The Local Authority offers regular information events for prospective carers, covering the various ways of providing a placement across the service. They are aimed at providing an overview of what being a carer entails and how to start that journey with Leicestershire County Council. Existing carers help with these events, so that they can talk about their experience of being a carer, as well as with Leicestershire County Council. All enquirers are able to attend an information evening, but they can also progress directly to an initial visit if they wish, which is what most of supported lodgings hosts do.

Initial Visit

Initial visits are completed to allow the service to make an early decision, in partnership with a prospective carer as to whether it is appropriate to progress to an assessment. Initial visits to prospective supported lodgings hosts are always carried out by one of the social workers in the team, they will cover:

- The prospective carer's understanding of the Supported Lodgings Scheme and becoming a host.
- What the prospective carer's motivation is, and what they hope to achieve. as well as their expectation of supported lodgings assessment process.
- The prospective carer's skills and attributes which will enhance their work as a supported lodgings host.

The initial visit is an initial assessment, and a written record will be passed to the Team Manager within two working days of the visit, who will make a decision about progressing with the assessment. Sometimes that will be in consultation with the Assistant Service Manager or Service Manager.

If it is agreed that the prospective carer(s) should proceed to an assessment, the Social Worker will arrange for the applicant(s) to complete all of the necessary paperwork in order to progress statutory checks.

Assessment

The full assessment will be completed within 3 months, by a social worker in the team, and that will contribute to matching a host with the right young person.

Panel and Approval

The Supported Lodgings Scheme has its own dedicated panel, which is run by the Team Manager, and two other workers, one of which will be independent from the team. Supported lodgings hosts are always invited to attend, and the panel will ask them questions, as well as having considered the assessment and the recommendation. The panel also have access to medical advice, if necessary. Approval will be confirmed by the Registered Manager, within 7 days of panel, and will be communicated to applicants.

SUPPORTING SUPPORTED LODGINGS HOSTS

The service consciously engages in activity that creates an environment, and relationships, which support our carers to support the young people they care for. This includes ensuring the training offer is relevant to the needs of young people, as well as maintaining low caseloads for supervising Social Workers, so that carers have a good level of support and advice.

Payments

Payments to carers are a significant element of the support and retention plan for carers. Leicestershire County Council has 2 levels of payments for supported lodgings hosts, which are correlated to the needs

of the young person in placement. As well as a mainstream Supported Lodgings Scheme, there is a Supported Lodgings Plus Scheme, which is paid at a higher rate to reflect the greater expectations of hosts who care for young people with a higher level of support needs.

Training

Supported lodgings hosts are required to undertake core training courses in their first year as an approved host, to ensure they are well supported to undertake the task. A strong training programme has been designed to match the learning and development needs of all Leicestershire's carers and hosts across the service, and it is relevant for both new and more experienced hosts.

The training programme is reviewed annually, alongside feedback from carers, and is an essential component of the retention package. We provide all carers with membership to the National Association of Therapeutic Parenting, to enable them to access specialist training in therapeutic parenting and trauma informed practice.

In addition, supported lodgings hosts can access Leicestershire County Council's online Training Hub, to book onto courses, and undertake online training.

Education, Training and Employment for Young People in Care

The Local Authority's Virtual School has a 16 + provision, which is aimed at supporting young people in care to achieve in a setting which best meets their needs, and to narrow the achievement gap. The Virtual school works as part of a team, to promote higher aspirations and a greater accountability from all those involved in education, training, and employment of young people in care, with the aim of promoting positive outcomes.

The Dedicated Placement Support Team

A new team was established in June 2016, which is available to provide support and advice to all Leicestershire County Council's carers, and the young people placed with them. The team consists of 7 support workers, supervised by a Team Manager. They work flexibly and holistically with families and young people, in order to promote placement stability.

NUMBERS OF CARERS

On 31.03.2023, Leicestershire County Council had 34 Supported Lodgings Hosts who were looking after 28 young people. Within that cohort are 5 households who have been recruited to specifically host Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. 79% of Leicestershire County Council's Supported Lodgings Hosts provide a full time placement, others are able to provide respite for other carers, which is of value in itself.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Leicestershire County Council's Supported Lodgings Scheme will treat all who use our service fairly, openly, and with respect, throughout the assessment and approval process.

Applicants wishing to be approved as Supported Lodgings Hosts will be considered irrespective of ethnicity, religion, belief, gender, sexual orientation, or disability providing the service considers they can safely meet the needs of young people and support them through to independence.

Every attempt will be made to find a placement which meets a young person's emotional and developmental needs taking into consideration their ethnicity, religion, language, culture, gender, and disability.

The Leicestershire Supported Lodgings Scheme recognises that no young person should have to wait indefinitely for the ideal placement.

OFSTED

Ofsted is the single, independent inspectorate of services for children and young people, which registers, regulates, and inspects supported accommodation.

Contact Information:

Phone: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or write to:

COMPLAINTS

Children and Family Services strive to ensure we offer a consistently good service, and most problems can be resolved by talking through the issue with your supervising social worker, or their manager. You can also make a complaint; the Directorate has a statutory complaints service, the detail of which is available to staff and details of which are also contained in the Supported Lodgings Scheme handbook.

There are three stages the complaints process:

- **Stage 1** **Informal or problem solving**
- **Stage 2** **Formal stage at which an independent investigating officer is appointed**
- **Stage 3** **A formal review by a panel of independent members, chaired by an independent individual**

Contact Information:

Phone: 0116 305 5875

Online complaint form: <https://leicestershire.secure-forms.co.uk/>

Address: Complaints Manager
 FREEPOST LE 1779
 County Hall
 Glenfield
 Leicester
 LE3 8XR

ALLEGATIONS

It is possible for Supported Lodgings Hosts to become the subject of allegations made by the young people they are looking after. Should this happen, any allegation will be investigated in line with the Leicestershire Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures with all allegations managed by the Local Authority Designated Officer. All allegations and other matters are monitored by the manager who ensures that these are retained for agencies to view as appropriate.

In addition to the support offered by their Supervising Social Worker, Supported Lodgings Hosts have access to Leicestershire Foster Carer Association which can offer practical and emotional support. We also provide paid consultation and advice from Foster Talk in the event of an allegation.

ADVOCACY AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The Children's Rights Service is available to young people who are currently in care, or who have been looked after by the Local Authority.

A Children's Rights Officer is not a social worker, and they are independent of the social work teams, their role is to ensure young people are understood, happy and safe.

Contact information:

Phone: 0116 305 6302

Mobile: 07789 081 528

Email childrensrights@leics.gov.uk

County Councillor

Mrs D. Taylor CC; the designated lead member for Children and Family Services and Deputy Leader of the Council

Contact information:

Phone: 0116 2350126

Mobile: 07903 419054

Email: Deborah.Taylor@leics.gov.uk



The Children and Young People's Commissioner is Dame Rachel de Souza. Her job is to help children and young people understand their rights and to make sure those rights are respected. The advice is impartial and free.

Contact Information:

Phone: 0800 528 0731

Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk