



Pembrokeshire Supported Lodgings Scheme

Information Pack for Potential Carers



Thank you for requesting information about our Supported Lodgings Scheme. We hope this information pack will provide answers to any questions you may have. If anything is unclear or if you have other questions please do not hesitate to contact us on 01437 774650 or email fostering@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

If having read the information, you are still interested in becoming a supported lodgings carer, please fill the enclosed application form in and send it back to us at:

Supported Lodgings Coordinator
Pembrokeshire County Council
Family Placement Team
Customer Service Centre
Argyle Street
PEMBROKE DOCK
SA72 6HL

What Is Supported Lodgings?

There is a variety of accommodation options available for a young person leaving care. Some may return home or live with friends or on their own but others move to supported accommodation.

Supported lodgings are approved individuals/families who wish to provide a stepping stone for young people who are 16+ and have been in the care of the local authority. It allows the young person to continue to develop their skills in a supportive, family environment.

Supported Lodgings Carers are a bit like landlords/landladies offering a room in their home. The Carers will supply a room, breakfast and evening meal and will work with the young person to help them develop skills like, cooking and budgeting.

What Are The Aims Of The Supported Lodgings Scheme?

- To recruit individuals or families who wish to accommodate young people leaving care and help them develop the life skills they need as independent young adults.
- To offer young people aged 16 to 21 year-olds who have been in care a bridge between care and independent living.
- To offer young people who are eligible to access the scheme a safe, secure environment so that they can continue to work/learn without being obliged to live independently before they are ready.
- The scheme would be accessible for those aged 16+ who are in the process of leaving care and have specific needs or require a higher level of support.
- The scheme is also used to facilitate the extension of some foster placements post 18 years of age.

What Kind Of Accommodation Is Required?

Accommodation is required in Pembrokeshire. The young person will need his or her own room with a bed and storage for clothing and other possessions. They will need access to kitchen and bathroom, and the living rooms, though these can be shared with other members of the household.

The young person should feel “at home” in the accommodation, and should be able to invite friends/family at reasonable times and by agreement with you. The lodgings carer must provide the young person with his or her own front door key.

It is not intended that the young person should become ‘part of the family’. Rather, the young person is to be encouraged towards independence.

How Long Will A Placement Last?

This can vary but most placements are expected to last from six months to two years. When a placement ends, you may like to take a break, or you may wish to become immediately available for a new placement.

What Kind Of Support Do Young People Require?

Support requirements will vary between young people. It is useful to keep in mind that the long-term aim of support is to enable the personal development of the young person and to prepare them for independent living. The supported lodgings carer will work with Children's Social Services in the best interests of the young person in line with his or her Pathway Plan.

Typical support needs to include (see also appendix 1)

- Advice with budgeting and benefits
- Advice and assistance with food shopping and cooking
- Instruction in the safe use of household appliances
- Assistance with arranging and keeping appointments
- Assistance with maintaining attendance at training, college or work
- Support in maintaining and building relationships with family/friends/neighbours
- Support in managing visitors
- Assistance with maintaining the security of the house
- Encouragement to comply with "house rules"
- Chatting and providing a "listening ear"
- Participation in occasional "review" meetings

Support does not need to be formally structured or timetabled, but it is important for the young person to know that support is there when needed. Support needs are likely to be highest in the early weeks, when the young person and carer are getting to know one another.

What Can You Expect From The Young Person?

- The young person should participate in planning and discussions about the placement so that a contract about house rules and agreed standards of behaviour can be negotiated before the young person moves in.
- The young person should respect “house rules” as agreed.
- The young person should treat the property and its contents with respect, and should have regard for the security of the property.
- The young person should take responsibility for his or her behaviour both inside and outside the carer’s home.
- If the young person experiences difficulties in the placement they should let the carer or support worker know.

What Can You Expect From Pembrokeeshire Children’s Services?

Before asking you to take a young person into your home, we will carry out an assessment during which you will have the opportunity to explore the kind of young person that would fit into your household (i.e. smoker, age, gender etc). We will also advise you of any areas of risk to your family at this stage. The choice whether to accommodate the young person is yours.

After the young person has moved in, he or she will have a Social Worker and/or a Personal Advisor from Children’s Services. This worker will make appointments to meet the young person regularly.

The Supported Lodgings Coordinator is your support and is there to answer any queries you may have. You will get to know the young person well and if you have concerns about them, you should discuss these with the Supported Lodgings Coordinator who will then liaise with the young person's social worker or personal advisor.

From time to time, there will be a "review" meeting where you, the young person, the Supported Lodgings Coordinator and the Social Worker/Personal Advisor can talk together about the way things are going, change "house rules", set new goals. In addition, adequate out of hours professional support is available and will be easily accessible, training will also be provided.

Financial Arrangements?

You will receive a sum of £200.00. Post 18 years part of this will come from the Housing Benefit received by the young person.

We cannot guarantee placements, so it may not be appropriate to rely on income from the provision of accommodation.

Insurance

The allowance you will receive includes the provision for you to upgrade your household insurance. It is important for you to inform your insurers what the scheme entails.

Benefits And Council Tax

If you are claiming Income-based state benefits such as Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, ESA, Housing Benefit, etc, some benefits may be affected by income received through this scheme. To clarify your individual circumstances you need to discuss with the Benefits Agency, the Citizens Advice Bureau or Foster Talk.

If your council tax is discounted for single occupancy, your discount will be unaffected unless a young person reaches the age of eighteen whilst staying with you. In this case you should inform your local council, as you may no longer qualify for the discount.

What Sort Of Person Makes A Good Supported Lodgings Carer?

Someone who:

- Can get on with young people and has some understanding of the problems they experience.
- Will be able to support a young person in their efforts to change
- Will be sympathetic and not make judgements about a young person
- Knows where their own boundaries lie, and can be clear and 'up-front' about types of behaviour they want / do not want in their home
- Is able to respect the confidentiality and privacy of any young person living in their home
- Will treat all young people equally and not discriminate against them on any grounds

The Recruitment And Approval Process

Anyone can come forward with an offer of supported lodgings. No one will be discriminated against on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation or age. However, you may not be considered if the following apply:

- If you have been convicted of an offence against a child
- If you have recently had a child removed from your care by order of any court
- If you have had a registration as a childminder, or other day care, cancelled due to misconduct
- If you have recently had your rights and duties with respect to any child investigated by a local authority

The Supported Lodgings Co-ordinator will visit you to:

- Assess the accommodation
- Complete assessment documentation
- Discuss with you what it would be like to have a young person living in your home

Additional visits will usually be made, all the members of the household will need to be visited and where appropriate assessment documentation completed for each of them.

Police checks will also be completed on all adults living in the household. You will be asked to provide three referees to provide references, the referees must know you well and are willing to say there is no known reason why you might not be suited to support a young person in your own home.

You will be asked to attend a medical to confirm there is no known medical reason why you should not participate in the scheme.

When assessment and security checks have been completed and references received, your name will be put forward for approval by the selection panel. We estimate that the entire recruitment process may take up to three months to be completed.

As soon as you are approved, young people can be placed with you.

Training, Support And Respite

Continuous and on-going support will be available from the Supported Lodgings Coordinator. During the assessment process, any training needs will be identified and a plan put in place. On-going and additional training will also be made available to you.

Recruitment Process For Supported Lodgings Carer

Telephone call to FPT by potential supported lodgings carer to discuss scheme or online registration of interest fostering@pembrokeshire.gov.uk

Initial information pack forwarded with application form

Initial application form returned to FPT

Those who have not returned forms will be telephoned to ascertain whether or not they are interested in proceeding

If Yes applicant is visited by Supported Lodgings Coordinator Who will discuss the scheme further

If No – No further contact

Home assessment (Health and safety checks)

Statutory checks completed. Disclosure & Barring service Health & Safety/Local authority / 3 references / Medicals

Home visits by a Supported Lodgings Coordinator to carry out your assessment

Assessment report shared with Applicant(s) including recommendations

Assessment report taken to approval panel

Approved

Monitoring introductory visits

Not approved

Appeals process

Annual Review (Training – Care training compulsory) Access to Foster Care Training

APPENDIX 1

Supported Lodgings

Example of practical skills and knowledge in preparation for Independent living

Education, Training and employment

- Applying for a course of education or training
- Applying for and being interviewed for a job
- The rights and responsibilities of being an employee
- How to write a cover letter along with a Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Knowing where to get the correct information about Education, training and Employment

Household skills development

- Shopping for food and preparing food
- Washing clothes, bedding and other housekeeping skills
- How to carry out basic household tasks such as fitting a bulb, putting together furniture, etc.
- Safety in the home (checking smoke alarms and making sure plugs and sockets are safe)
- Applying for housing and locating and maintaining it

Budgeting

- Understanding the concept of “the cost of living”
- Household budgeting, balancing expenditure and income, the regular payment of bills and the use of credit
- Knowing how to spend sensibly

Young person's health

- Health education, including hygiene
- Sex education, including contraception and preparation for parenthood
- Registering with a doctor and dentist
- Knowledge of emergency services such as Fire, Police and Ambulance
- Understanding mental health

Relationships and communication

- Finding and using community services and developing confidence in communicating with external agencies such as housing, benefits, health, etc.
- Learning how to manage difficult situations or relationships and being aware of the impact of negative behaviour
- To ensuring their views and opinions are heard and expressed appropriately
- Learn to be assertive when needed and act in a mature way
- Learn about negotiation and compromise