



Department of
Health

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

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**MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SUPPORTED LODGINGS
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG ADULTS (AGED 16-21)
IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Version 2.0

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the minimum standards for Supported Lodgings. Supported Lodgings aim to provide young people and young adults (hereinafter referred to as young adults throughout the Standards) with safe, suitable and supportive places to live within a local familial type environment. Such an environment will offer tailored levels of housing and social care support to enable young adults to develop the practical, emotional and relationship skills needed for a successful transition to independence and adulthood.

As an alternative to mainstream care placements this type of accommodation is provided under Article 27 (2) (f) of the Children (NI) Order 1995 (the Children Order) to those aged 16 and 17. It can also provide an alternative model for young adults aged 18-21 who are at risk or in need of protection as defined in the adult safeguarding policy (published in 2015) *Adult Safeguarding – Prevention and Protection in Partnership*¹ where it is assessed their needs can best be met in a familial and domestic living environment that affords age and developmentally appropriate experiences of preparation for adult life.

In summary, this model is designed to:

- support planned transitions for looked after young adults from mainstream care placements and into adulthood where this is deemed to be in their best interests, which is primarily a Health and Social Care Trust responsibility until such young adults reach 18;
- provide supported living to care leavers who are leaving care just prior to 18 or who are post 18 and where, by virtue of being a care leaver, fall within one of the defined vulnerable groups that is eligible for supporting people funding. Responsibility for providing accommodation for young adults aged 18 plus rests primarily with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE);
- provide emergency placements to young adults aged 16-20 who present to NIHE or an HSC Trust as homeless, who are considered vulnerable and, where a placement in a generic hostel, would not be considered appropriate

¹ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/adult-safeguarding-policy.pdf>

based on their presenting need and vulnerability. Where the young person does not have a care background and the Trust is the placing authority in respect of a 16 or 17 year old, the young person will become looked after in line with Article 21 of the Children Order and the placement meets the definition of accommodated, that is, over 24 hours; and

- provide integrated housing support and social care support that aims to support young adults aged 16/17 upwards and into adulthood and until they are more ready to manage independent living/tenancies and thereby prevent homelessness in adult life.

Not all high need/high risk young adults can be placed in supported accommodation as it may not be suitable for their needs: some young adults need an individual bespoke package of accommodation, support and supervision. Additional needs for young adults with a disability will be incorporated into the wider assessment and should inform the overall intervention and support pathway.

Supported Lodgings can be delivered by an external provider based on joint commissioning arrangements between the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the relevant Health and Social Care Trust (HSC Trust) or delivered in-house by a Trust. In commissioning any services for supported lodgings the lead commissioner will seek assurances that the service provider will deliver services in a manner that is fully compliant with domestic and international Human Rights law. The lead commissioner for the service is responsible for establishing appropriate monitoring arrangements with the provider to ensure that the requirements and conditions of the agreed service delivery model, as specified within the contractual arrangements, are met.

These standards will set a benchmark to be used by current and future supported lodgings service providers to ensure the provision of high quality social care and housing support. They will also be used by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) as the basis of their review of the service during a two year pilot. The standards will be reviewed, and amended as necessary, on completion of the pilot.

2. Background

The development of a continuum of supported living options to assist young people's transition from mainstream care placements as they journey into adulthood is recognised as an essential element of the services available. Supported Lodgings are part of the continuum and offer an integrated care and housing support model that is in keeping with the needs of young people leaving care, as a step-down from a core care setting or young people presenting as homeless.

As the result of joint working between the NIHE and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland, it was recognised that the housing related support needs and social care needs of young adults, whether leaving care or homeless, are interlinked. The NIHE, HSCB and the HSC Trusts accepted that there were shared benefits in adopting an integrated approach to planning and providing a model of Supported Lodgings and worked together to develop a model for Northern Ireland. Under this model a young person is placed in a Supported Lodgings placement which is a host arrangement with a family with the involvement of the Supported Lodgings Service Provider, the referring agent and where applicable the agency with primary responsibility for the young person. This model provides a supportive domestic environment for some young adults, in the transition towards increasing independence, which is more suitable than alternative options such as hostels or independent tenancies.

3. Development of Standards

These standards have been developed in consultation with the HSCB, HSC Trusts, NIHE, RQIA, Council for the Homeless NI, Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) and Fostering Network.

The standards have been developed taking account of the Quality Assessment Framework administered by NIHE and The Supported Lodgings Good Practice Guide (Four Agency Supported Lodgings Project 2011), The Standards for Young Adults Supported Accommodation Projects in Northern Ireland 2012 and the National Minimum Fostering Standards (England and Wales) 2011.

4. Monitoring of Compliance with the Standards

Article 38 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (the HPSS Order 2003) confers powers on the Department of Health to prepare, publish and review statements of minimum standards.

Under Article 35 of the HPSS Order 2003, where RQIA is exercising its review and reporting function, it has the power to inspect and report on a Supported Lodgings Service as part of that review.

Each Supported Lodgings Service Provider must comply with these standards. They must also ensure they remain compliant with the requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework administered by NIHE.

5. Underpinning Values and Principles

The Standards are in keeping with the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, the Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Executive's Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People: Our Children, Our Pledge, which seeks to ensure that all children and young people in Northern Ireland are living in safety and with stability. The principles underpinning the standards include:

Dignity and Respect

The uniqueness and intrinsic value of individuals is acknowledged and each young person is treated with respect.

Independence

Young people have as much control as possible over decisions which affect their lives whilst being safeguarded against unacceptable risks.

Rights

Young people's rights are safeguarded and actively promoted within the context of the accommodation provided.

Equality and Diversity

All young people have equality of opportunity and are treated fairly regardless of their legal status, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race, cultural and religious identity. All services delivered by the provider are within a framework of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice in keeping with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and Article 14 of the Human Rights Act (NI) 1998.

Choice

Young people are offered the opportunity to select independently from a range of options based on information that is accessible, clear and accurate.

Fulfilment

Young people are enabled to lead full and purposeful lives in order that their ability and potential can be realised.

Safeguarding

Young people are safeguarded and have stability and feel free from exploitation, neglect and/or abuse.

Privacy

Young people have the right to privacy and should be free from unnecessary intrusion into their affairs. There is a balance between the considerations of the young person's safety and that of others.

Confidentiality

Young people understand that information about them will only be disclosed to others when it is in the best interests of the young person's welfare or for the protection of others. Everyone involved in the delivery of the Supported Lodgings service respects confidential matters.

Partnership

Young people are central to informing and shaping the services that are available to them and are fully engaged in decision making processes about their care, accommodation and housing support.

Standard 1: Provision of Information

The Supported Lodgings Service has an up to date statement of purpose and function. Young people and referral agencies have all the information they need to help them make decisions about using the service. Potential Hosts have the information they need to decide if providing a service is appropriate for them.

Criteria

1. A clear statement of core aims, purpose and function of the service is produced by the provider in partnership with commissioners, reviewed annually, updated as necessary and shared with RQIA.
2. A young person's introductory information guide is available (See **Annex D** for the minimum content of Young Person's Guide).
3. An Information Pack is available for Hosts and Referral Agencies (See **Annexes E and F** for content that should be included).

Evidence

- A written statement of purpose and function on the Supported Lodgings Service is available.
- The statement of purpose is reviewed annually and forwarded to RQIA to inform the inspection process.
- An up-to-date Young Person's Guide is available that covers the content set out in **Annex D** and is in an accessible, clear and easy to use format.
- An up-to-date Information Pack that covers the content set out in **Annexes E and F** is available for Hosts and referral agencies.

Standard 2: Service Referral, Assessment and Placement of Young People

The initial referral and assessment processes will be undertaken in an open and inclusive way with young people, referrers, Hosts and other agencies. The placement of a young person is based on an assessment of need and risk which will inform the viability of progressing a placement and subsequent placement match.

Criteria

1. Arrangements exist for the referral, assessment and placement of a young person in Supported Lodgings which reflect the principles and operational requirements set out in the regional good practice guidance between the NIHE and HSC Trusts entitled *Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of Vulnerable Young People 2015*, which ensure the full involvement of the young person being referred.
2. Information sharing arrangements exist between the Supported Lodgings Service, the referral agencies and the young person which stipulate the forthright sharing of clear and relevant information at point of referral and as part of the assessment process.
3. Young people understand and sign a consent form to enable appropriate information sharing between agencies, the young person and with Hosts which informs assessment, matching, safe planning and ongoing support.
4. Each young person has an assessment of needs and risk to determine the suitability of the young person for a Supported Lodgings placement.
5. Each young person has a Lead Worker who has responsibility for informing the assessment, supporting the young person's placement and advocating on their behalf.

Evidence

- Information for referral agencies includes how enquiries and applications are made, processed, and prioritised, and how decisions are communicated to referral agencies.
- An assessment framework exists and is appropriately applied.
- Case records of referral, assessment and matching reflect the young person's involvement in the process and the young person has access to copies of this documentation.
- Case records of planned visits and meetings involving young person and potential Host as part of the matching process and prior to placement arrangements are available.
- Each young person's file contains a written assessment of needs and risks and the steps taken to ensure a suitable placement match agreed with the young person.
- A written information sharing protocol is in place.
- There is a signed consent form for information sharing available on young person's file with evidence of annual review of this consent arrangement.
- Referral and assessment records demonstrate appropriate information sharing and assessment and clearly identify the young person's needs and risk factors and how the Supported Lodging placement is deemed suitable.
- Records of discussion between Service Provider and Hosts at point of placements demonstrate information sharing about needs and risk factors. The Lead Worker is identified on the young person's file.
- The young person's file contains records of contact with and support by the Lead Worker during the initial stages and throughout the placement.

Standard 3: Placement Agreement and Support Planning

All young people using the Supported Lodgings Service have a Placement Agreement and an individual Placement Support Plan appropriate to meeting assessed needs and to promoting the transition to adulthood.

Criteria

1. Each young person has a Placement Agreement which details the expectations of the placement and the respective roles and responsibilities of the young person and the Host.
2. The Placement Agreement incorporates arrangements for communication and contact between the Service Provider, Lead Worker, Host, the young person and any third party advocating on behalf of the young person. Amendments to the Placement Agreement will only be made in consultation with the young person.
3. For planned placements each young person has a Placement Support Plan which is agreed before a placement in Supported Lodgings.
4. A Placement Support Plan:
 - is formulated on the basis of an assessment of each young person's needs and presenting risks and is outcome focused;
 - clearly sets out actions to achieve outcomes;
 - takes account of and references any existing overarching plans in place for the young person; and
 - has full involvement of the young person in its development, is subject to regular review and subsequent amendments are made in consultation with the young person.
5. For unplanned or emergency placements an immediate Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan must be completed based on open sharing of all relevant information. The Risk Management Plan should specify the nature, immediacy and frequency of support to the Host and young person. A Placement Support Plan should be agreed within 5 working days where continuation of the placement is agreed.

6. The Host is engaged in the development of the Placement Support Plan and understands their role in contributing to its implementation and the outcomes being sought.
7. The Placement Support Plan contains agreed communication arrangements with the Service Provider, the Lead Worker and the Host for regular update on progress and to address and resolve any concerns about the young person's placement.
8. Appropriate and up to date records are held on file in line with Data Protection legislation.

Evidence

- A written Placement Agreement is on the young person's file and is signed by the young person, Host and Lead Worker and sets out communication arrangements.
- A written up to date Placement Support Plan is on the young person's file and is signed by the young person, Lead Worker and Host and sets out agreed communication arrangements.
- The young person has a copy of the signed Placement Agreement and Placement Support Plan.
- A record is held on the young person's file of implementation of the Placement Support Plan and discussion with the young person.
- A record of regular review of the young person's Placement Support Plan is held on file and reflects the involvement of the young person, Host, Lead Worker and Service Provider.
- The Placement Support Plan takes account of and appropriately references any other overarching plans relating to the young person that are in place.

- The young person's Placement Support Plan:
 - reflects sensible and realistic boundary setting and age and needs appropriate level of support;
 - clearly sets out the role, contribution and responsibilities of the Host, the Lead Worker and Service Provider in this aspect of the plan and this is agreed in consultation with the young person;
 - incorporates interventions that promote and address practical, social, physical and emotional needs; and
 - sets out how these will be met by the Host, the Lead Worker and other relevant agencies engaged with the young person.

Standard 4: Ending or leaving the Placement

There is robust planning in place to support a young person's move from a Supported Lodgings placement.

Criteria

1. Robust exit planning, in keeping with the young person's Support Plan, is in place to enable the young person to make a smooth transition to an alternative living arrangement. This may include referral to and engagement with post placement support where appropriate and agreed with the young person.
2. In the event of an unplanned move, contingency arrangements are agreed in advance between the Service Provider and the Lead Worker in consultation with the young person to ensure that appropriate supports are provided in a timely manner.
3. End of placement interviews are offered to both the young person and the Host to ascertain their views and inform service improvement.

Evidence

- Support plans and review meetings demonstrate timely and robust planning for the young person's move from Supported Lodgings and future accommodation arrangements.
- The last review of the young person's Support Plan held on the young person's file details the outcomes achieved, including views of the young person about their experiences in Supported Lodgings and their readiness to move on, recommendations for further support and how this will be delivered to the young person.
- Where a placement ends unexpectedly there is evidence of transparent decision making and contingency planning.
- Where a move is unplanned or against the young person's wishes, there is evidence that independent advice and/or advocacy support has been offered to the young person to inform recourse and options available.

- End of placement interviews have been undertaken and are recorded. The Service can demonstrate how information from these interviews is used to inform service development and improvement.
- There is documented evidence that data on planned or unplanned moves is collected and reviewed quarterly by the Service Provider and Service Commissioners and improvement actions identified where appropriate and implemented.

Standard 5: Safeguarding Young People

Arrangements are in place to safeguard young people and help them understand how to protect themselves from harm.

Criteria

1. The Service Provider has robust safeguarding policy and procedures in place that are consistent with the requirements of current legislation, and regional policy and procedures in respect of children, young people and adults at risk or in need of protection.
2. The Service Provider and Host understand the regional policy and procedures in respect of children, young people and adults at risk or in need of protection and the actions required in the event of a young person in supported lodgings being deemed at increased risk of abuse or having suffered abuse.
3. All young people, Service Provider staff and Hosts are informed, understand, and know how to report allegations of abuse.
There is a written protocol to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse made about a Host, a Host family member or a member of the Service Provider staff.
4. All allegations and incidents of abuse or concerning behaviour relating to the placement are taken seriously and acted upon and appropriately recorded.
5. Appropriate Access NI checks are carried out on all Service Provider staff, Hosts, members of Host families and non family who reside in the Host's accommodation (not including a young person who is already residing under a host arrangement), prior to placement of the young person and renewed every 3 years thereafter.
6. Any Service Provider staff or Hosts who harm a young person or place them at risk of harm are referred in line with Disclosure and Barring Service and Professional Regulatory requirements.
7. The young person is involved in discussion and decision making about his/her own safeguarding or protection including outside the placement or online.

8. There is a written protocol that sets out action to be taken when a young person is missing from the placement.

Evidence

- Children, young people and adult safeguarding policy and procedures are in place consistent with regional safeguarding policy and procedures and all suspected, alleged or actual incidents of abuse are dealt with in accordance with policy and procedures. Established procedures and protocols are followed in the event of an allegation of abuse made about a Host, a member of the Host's family, a Service Provider staff member or others.
- Hosts and Service Provider staff demonstrate: awareness of the risks of abuse and sexual exploitation for young people; attend training specific to child protection and child sexual exploitation; and know how to raise awareness of such risks. This is reflected in their induction and training records.
- The Young Person's guide includes information on safeguarding policy and procedures which is easily understood and accessible.
- A record is maintained on a young person's file of any allegation of abuse including details of any investigations, the outcome and any action taken.
- The Service Provider:
 - maintains a register of all untoward events and serious incidents including missing episodes;
 - demonstrates the effective management and outcome of any such incidents in line with agreed policy including referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or the relevant professional body if appropriate; and
 - adheres to HSC Trust and NIHE requirements for the formal notification of such incidents.

- Records indicate that appropriate Access NI checks have been completed as required.
- Records indicate that Hosts are notifying the Service Provider when a new person joins their household or an existing member of the household reaches the age for an Access NI check. This should include disclosure by Hosts to the Service Provider of any close associates or non-residing relative who may be unsuitable to have regular contact with children.
- Hosts and young people are aware of the service's expectations in terms of appropriate and acceptable personal behaviour by adults towards young people and appropriate and acceptable behaviour by young people themselves.
- Placement records show that young people have been informed of the importance of and ways to promote personal safety and protection.

Standard 6: Engagement, Participation and Involvement

The young person's rights, wishes, views and feelings are sought, understood, and taken into account in important decisions that affect their placement. The young person is encouraged to participate in reviewing, evaluating and improving the Supported Lodgings Service.

Criteria

1. A culture of participation exists which encourages young people's participation in contributing to service planning and improvement.
2. Young people are encouraged to participate in planning and decision making about their support and placement arrangements.
3. Arrangements are in place which provide opportunities for young people to make representations, challenge or make a complaint about any decisions made in relation to them, which they are unhappy about.

Evidence

- A Participation Strategy is in place and there is evidence of discussion and meetings with young people about service planning and improvement.
- There is evidence that Service Provider staff have been trained in meaningful engagement, participation and involvement with young people.
- Clear evidence exists of young people's views and wishes being taken into account in the development and review of their Placement Agreement and Placement Support Plan. Evidence should also indicate how their views have influenced the production of these plans.
- Records of meetings show evidence of young people's involvement in influencing service planning and improvement.
- Processes are in place for formal feedback to young people about the outcomes and impact of their involvement and participation.
- Records demonstrate how young people are supported to access independent advice, advocacy and representation.
- Records contain information on the management and outcome of any representation or complaint made by a young person.

Standard 7: Accommodation

The accommodation is safe, suitable, accessible, well maintained and provides for the young person's privacy as well as affording the opportunity to experience a family environment. The accommodation is compliant with Health and Safety Legislation and Fire Regulations.

Criteria

1. There is a range of accommodation in a variety of localities, including in urban and rural areas, which is accessible or facilitates young people's access to the services they require.
2. The accommodation meets relevant Health and Safety standards aligned to those expected in an ordinary domestic and family living arrangement and furnishings are compliant with fire safety regulations.
3. There is a reasonable standard of decor throughout the accommodation.
4. There is a separate bedroom for each young person that is adequately furnished, provides sufficient secure storage for personal belongings and there is a communal area for use by the young person.

Evidence

- Evidence that recruitment activity is targeted at geographical areas of greatest need.
- Feedback from the young person indicates that accommodation is accessible to transport, education, training and employment and where possible, proximity to family and friends and amenities.
- Records evidence home visits to undertake health and safety checks and suitability of bedroom and communal living area as part of the assessment and annual review of approval process of the Host. This may include the following:
 - completed health and safety check ;
 - a current gas safety certificate for any gas appliance;
 - smoke and carbon monoxide detectors fitted and evidenced by health and safety check; and
 - a pet assessment has taken place where appropriate.

Standard 8: Hosts

A range of suitable Hosts are in place who have the necessary knowledge, skills and training and who are supported to provide appropriate placements for young people.

Criteria

1. Recruitment practice is informed by identified needs, and recruitment activity is innovative and targeted to attract a suitable range of Hosts in the required areas.
2. Placement with a Host is based on a matching process with the aim of securing placement stability for the young person.
3. Clear and robust assessment, approval and monitoring processes are in place to recruit and maintain suitable Hosts. Annual review of approval arrangements are also in place to ensure continued suitability of Hosts and take account of any change of circumstances.
4. All Hosts participate in a comprehensive induction programme which includes awareness raising about all aspects of the Supported Lodgings Service and specific training on safeguarding vulnerable adults and children.
5. Ongoing training, which is also offered to family members, is provided to enhance their knowledge and skills based on an analysis of individual learning and development needs.
6. Arrangements are in place to provide ongoing support to Hosts through the appointment of a Named Worker to each Host by the Service Provider. Support arrangements also specify access to out-of-hours assistance.
7. A mechanism is in place for Hosts, including those who are not deemed suitable, to make representations or a complaint.
8. There is a written protocol to be followed in the event of an allegation being made about a Host. The young person and Host know how they will be supported in the event of an allegation being made.
9. Hosts receive advice on allowances payable for the provision of accommodation and support to the young person placed in their home in

accordance with established financial policy and procedures, including implications for their personal income including tax implications.

10. The Service Provider ensures that arrangements have been made by the Host for meeting any public legal liabilities as a result of a Supported Lodgings placement.

Evidence

- Evidence of a recruitment strategy, which takes account of equality and diversity, and a record of recruitment initiatives, their effectiveness and outcomes.
- There is an adequate supply of approved Hosts that facilitate a process of matching of Hosts with young people and which take account of equality and diversity issues and assessed need and risks.
- File records on each Host contains completed assessment, approval, Named Worker details, ongoing monitoring and annual review of approval documentation in line with written policy and procedures.
- Training profiles for each Host provide evidence of their participation in induction and uptake of other relevant training to include training specific to child protection and child sexual exploitation in line with identified learning and development needs.
- Records indicate that Hosts receive regular contact and support from the Service Provider through a Named Worker and that Hosts are aware of the procedures to be followed to access out of hours support.
- Written record of complaints is maintained detailing the nature of the complaint, timeliness of response, resolution and outcome.
- Where an allegation has been made about a Host, records show that the written protocol is adhered to.
- Financial records evidence payment by Service Provider to Hosts in a timely manner in line with the financial policy and procedures. Evidence on file that, in advance of any placement, each Host has home insurance in place that fully takes account of their role as a Supported Lodgings Host.

Standard 9: Staffing

Suitably qualified and skilled staff and managers are employed by the Service Provider to ensure that Hosts and their families are adequately supported in meeting the needs of young people.

Criteria

1. Robust recruitment, appointment and retention policy and procedures are in place.
2. All staff are properly managed, are clear about their role and responsibilities, and understand to whom they are accountable.
3. All staff undergo induction training relating to children and adults at risk or in need of protection. This includes safeguarding and protection, sexual exploitation and mental health awareness.
4. Staff training needs are regularly analysed and appropriate training planned and delivered where necessary.
5. There are written policies and procedures for staff appraisal and supervision.
6. The Service Manager is suitably qualified, experienced and has the level of competence and skill to carry out the job and to ensure that Named Worker responsibilities to Hosts are fulfilled.
7. The Service Provider operates within the relevant legal frameworks and has an appropriate range of employment and operational policies and procedures.

Evidence

- Evidence of compliance with staff recruitment, appointment and retention policies.
- Staff Job Descriptions and Personnel Specifications are available.
- An Induction Manual is in place and Staff induction records are maintained which demonstrate that induction training, including training on safeguarding policy and procedures, has taken place.
- A Personal Development Plan is in place for each staff member.

- A Staff Learning and Development Strategy is in place.
- Training plans and records of training attended indicate ongoing continuous development opportunities.
- Records showing that staff have an annual appraisal with their line manager to review their performance and to agree personal development and training plans.
- Records showing that there is regular supervision and follow-up with staff.
- Records showing that Hosts are provided with ongoing and consistent support from the Service Provider and through Named Worker arrangements.
- Minutes of staff meetings are recorded and retained.

Standard 10: Management and Governance Arrangements

Management arrangements and systems are in place that assures the Supported Lodgings service is delivered to a high standard and is underpinned by a clear accountability and governance framework.

Criteria:

1. The Service Provider has a coherent and integrated organisational and governance strategy in place for the delivery of the Supported Lodgings Service. There are clearly identified lines of professional and corporate accountability which assure the effective delivery of the service.
2. There are structures in place to support, review and action the Service Provider's governance arrangements which include corporate, financial, health and safety, workforce planning, social care, housing support and information management.
3. There are systems for identifying and escalating risks and management structures in place to effectively mitigate against and respond to risk.
4. The Service Provider has systems in place to monitor, audit and review the quality of the service and to assess its effectiveness in delivering improved outcomes for young people.
5. The Service Provider submits regular reports to its management board and to its commissioners on governance arrangements and on service activity and impact.
6. There is a certificate of insurance in respect of liability which may be incurred by the Supported Lodgings Service in the event of death, injury, public liability, damage or other loss.

Evidence:

- A suite (see Annex G) of up to date relevant policies and procedures which are reviewed annually are in place to govern service delivery and safeguard the welfare and rights of young people and vulnerable young adults.

- Staff and management training records evidence the delivery of induction and training on effective discharge of roles and responsibilities within the governance framework.
- Findings of service monitoring, audit and review on the quality of the service are acted upon and used to inform service improvements.
- There is evidence of annual evaluation of the quality of the service and of actions taken based on evaluation recommendations.
- Outcomes for young people leaving the service are monitored and analysed to evidence service impact and to inform service design and improvement.
- Evidence exists of learning and actions taken to prevent recurrence of incidents of concern or of a serious nature reported through governance arrangements.
- A certificate of insurance in respect of liability which may be incurred by the Supported Lodgings Service in the event of death, injury, public liability, damage or other loss is in place.

Legal Framework

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

This specifies under Article 27 (2) the living arrangements in which looked after children can be placed. These arrangements, such as residential care and foster care are governed by associated regulations and standards. Article 27 (2) (f) also allows for the provision within legislation of “other” arrangements that “seem appropriate to the authority and comply with any regulations made by the Department.” The placement of young people in Supported Lodgings is operated under this legislative provision.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002

This was implemented in September 2005. This Act introduced new and enhanced duties on Health and Social Care Trusts in relation to financial responsibilities for 16 and 17 year olds and furthermore held as one of its core objectives **that children falling within the entitlements of the Act should only leave care when they are ready and prepared to do so**. The Act therefore sought to stem any potential for young people to leave care prematurely or for Trusts to abdicate responsibilities, including financial responsibilities to these young people. Transition from care could well be assisted by the supported lodgings model of provision which affords the young person continuity and stability beyond aged 18.

The Act identified that certain children and young people aged 16 and 17 years old may cease to be looked after before reaching 18 years of age and consequently where they are unable to return to family, may require accommodation in the community. For these situations the Act specifies that for this category of “**relevant**” young people, the Trust must ensure placement in “suitable” accommodation unless the Trust is satisfied that their welfare does not require it. (See **Annex B** for definition of a “relevant” young person and for other categories of young people referred to in the Children (Leaving Care) Act (Northern Ireland) 2002).

Article 34C (10) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and regulation 10(2) of the Children (Leaving Care) Regulations (NI) 2005 define suitable accommodation as accommodation:

- (a) which so far as reasonably practicable is suitable for the young person in the light of his or her needs, including health needs and any needs arising from any disability;
- (b) in respect of which the responsible HSC Trust has satisfied itself as to the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider; and
- (c) in respect of which the responsible HSC Trust has so far as reasonably practicable taken into account the young person's:
 - i. wishes and feelings; and
 - ii. his or her educational, training or employment needs.

Following the Southwark Ruling in England² and the Treacy Judgement³ in Northern Ireland there is an increasing need for suitable and safe accommodation for young people aged 16 /17 who are not looked after, or previously looked after but present as homeless.

Some of these young people may require immediate access to suitable accommodation for the purpose of assessment and potentially for a longer period based on the outcome of the Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) assessment and determination of the legal status and pathway of the young person. Supported Lodgings may provide a suitable accommodation option in such circumstances.

² R(on the application of G) v London Borough of Southwark (2009) UKHL26. The full transcript can be downloaded from tinyurl.com/gvsouthwark.

³ [https://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Judicial%20Decisions/PublishedByYear/Documents/2012/\[2012\]%20NIQB%205/j_i_TRE8243Final.htm](https://www.courtsni.gov.uk/en-GB/Judicial%20Decisions/PublishedByYear/Documents/2012/[2012]%20NIQB%205/j_i_TRE8243Final.htm)

The Housing (NI) Order 1988

This sets out the NI Housing Executive's responsibilities towards people who are homeless or who are likely to become homeless.

The Regional Good Practice Guidance between the NIHE and HSC Trusts on Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of Vulnerable Young People, 2015 provides detail on the respective roles and responsibilities of housing and social work staff and how these should be fulfilled where a young person aged 16-21 is in housing need or presents as homeless.

Definitions of the 4 categories of young people referred to in the Children (Leaving Care) Act (NI) 2002

- **Eligible Child:** a young person aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after by an HSC Trust for a period of 13 weeks since the age of 14, and is still looked after.
- **Relevant Child:** a young person aged 16 or 17 who has left care and before leaving care was an eligible child.
- **Former Relevant Child:** a young person aged 18-21 (or beyond if, being helped with education or training) who, before turning 18 was either an eligible or relevant child, or both.
- **Person Qualifying for Advice and Assistance:** any young person (including those who do not fall into any of the 3 categories above) aged under 21 years (under 24 if in education or training) who leaves care after the age of 16.

Glossary of Terms

Host	An individual who has been approved to provide supported lodgings for a young person.
Host Information Pack	Pack containing all relevant information to inform potential Host's about the provision of supported lodgings to a young person.
Lead Commissioner	A Health and Social Care Trust and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive or a Health and Social Care Trust
Lead Worker	A member of staff who on behalf of a nominated agency that has primary responsibility for supporting the young person . This may be a Trust social worker, a personal adviser, a floating support worker etc.
Matching Policy	The process by which a young person is allocated a suitable placement within the home of an approved Host.
Named Worker	A member of staff primarily from the Agency Provider to provide support to the Host .
Participation Strategy	A process which encourages young people to participate in service planning and decision- making about their support and placement arrangements.
Placement Agreement	An agreement between the young person their Lead Worker and the Host which sets out what the young person can expect from the placement and the house rules during the placement.
Placement Support Plan	A plan setting out the support required by the young person and how this support will be delivered.

Referral Agencies	Organisations which refers the young person for consideration of a Supported Lodgings Placement.
Referrer Information Pack	Pack containing all relevant information about the referral of a young person to the Supported Lodgings Service.
Supported Lodgings	Supported lodgings is a service which can allow an individual to live in a family home, experiencing domestic life in a shared and supportive environment.
Supported Lodgings Service Provider	Organisation contracted to provide a supported lodgings service with a clear accountability and governance framework in place.
Young Person's Guide	Pack containing all relevant information to inform the young person about using the Supported Lodgings Service.

YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE

Minimum requirements:

- About Supported Lodgings
- Who can apply
- How to access the Service
- Various stages in the process once an application is received
- Decision making timeline
- How to appeal
- What happens if you are successful
- Matching placement process
- About the accommodation
- Process of meeting and greeting your Host(s)
- Provision of Information – roles/responsibilities/expectations
- Sharing of Information
- Financial Information
- Representation & Complaints process
- Young person's feedback
- Leaving the placement
- Safeguarding policies
- Glossary of Terms

INFORMATION PACK FOR HOSTS

Minimum requirements:

- About Supported Lodgings
- Who can apply
- How to access the service
- Process once application received
- Decision making timeline
- How to appeal
- What happens if you are successful?
- Disclosure and Barring – Access NI process
- Mandatory Training Programme and Schedule
- Provision of information – Medical/References
- Health & Safety Checklist
- Financial Information – including Tax, Insurance, Permissions
- Matching Placement
- Process of meeting and greeting young person
- Provision of Information – roles/responsibilities/expectations
- Supervision and Support
- Complaints process
- End of placement
- Safeguarding policies
- Glossary of Terms

INFORMATION PACK FOR REFERRAL AGENCIES

Minimum requirements:

- About Supported Lodgings
- Who can refer?
- Referral Process and proforma
- Process of assessment and decision making
- Decision making timeline
- Matching process
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Information sharing including safeguarding

POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

Agency / Service Provider

1. Roles, lines of accountability, governance and structures
2. Statement of Purpose and Service Profile
3. Guidance on process from referral of a young person to outcome
4. Guidance on process of host application to assessment to approval to review
5. Management and Support Arrangements to Hosts and Young People placed with Host
6. Staff Induction, Supervision and Appraisal
7. Learning and Development Strategy for Staff
8. Recording and Records Management
9. Guidance on Host Insurance and Public Liability
10. Host Information Guide
11. Service User Information Guide
12. Referrers Information Guide and Documentation
13. Guidance on Role and Responsibilities of Host
14. Guidance on Role and Responsibilities of Agency / Service provider
15. Recruitment Policy (staff and hosts)
16. Assessment, Approval and Review Procedures for Host
17. Equal Opportunities Policy
18. Information Sharing / Confidentiality Policy including young people's consent form
19. Complaints Procedures (young people and host)
20. Administration of Medication Policy
21. Induction, Training, Development and Support Policy for Hosts including out of hours
22. Scheme Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
23. Participation Policy and Strategy for Host / Young People in support planning and in service evaluation and improvement
24. Policy on Financial Allowances for Hosts including income tax implications for Hosts
25. Whistleblowing Procedures for Staff
26. Child Protection Policy
27. Adult Safeguarding Policy – Prevention and Protection in Partnership
28. Health and Safety Policy
29. Drug / Alcohol Policy
30. Self Audit and Assessment for Service Improvement
31. Scheme Referral Procedures
32. Matching procedures and Placement Agreement
33. Preparation for Adulthood Arrangements
34. Risk Assessment and Risk Management Policy to include emergency placements
35. Confidentiality and Information Sharing
36. Access to Advocacy Support
37. Management of Untoward / Serious Events
38. Management of Absences of Young People

39. Contact for Young People with Family /Friends
40. Exit / Discharge Procedures – planned and crisis
41. Support Planning for Young People including support plan documentation and support arrangements
42. Promotion of Health and Well Being of Young People
43. Promotion of Education, Training and Employment
44. Regional Good Practice Guidance on Meeting the Accommodation and Support Needs of 16-21 year olds
45. The Homelessness Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017 – Strategic Objective 4.

The Department will consider requests to produce this document in other languages or in alternative formats – Braille, audio, large print or as a PDF document. If you require the document in these or other formats please contact lookedafterchildren@health-ni.gov.uk