

Key Learning for Supported Lodging Providers

Introduction

From October 2023, all providers of supported accommodation or young people aged 16 and 17 who are in, or leaving, care will be required to adhere to mandatory national Quality Standards which will be overseen by Ofsted-led registration and inspection.

Supported accommodation is a form of accommodation outside of regulated children's homes, kinship care and foster care, which provides supported, semi-independent living for 16 and 17-year-olds who are ready to start living with more independence. Supported accommodation includes supported lodgings, a provision in which young people live in the home of a 'host' family.

Supported lodgings is a unique provision within the new regulation regime for supported accommodation. This resource explores the key learning for supported lodgings providers that the National Children's Bureau (NCB) has gathered through our role as the provider for the Sector Awareness and Provider Preparedness programme in relation to the new quality standards, registration, and regulation regime. This included a roundtable attended by supported lodgings providers, as well as sector intelligence gathered through our national and regional events.

The themes outlined in this resource represent the collated views of a range of supported lodgings providers across different regions, while the tips for registering supported lodgings address queries about how the new regulations will fit with supported lodgings.

Value of supported lodgings

- Supported lodgings is a valuable provision in the supported accommodation suite of care options for teenagers. It is unique, as the only family-based semi-independent provision.
- For some young people, the greater independence that supported lodgings offers is appropriate for them in their life stage.
- Supported lodgings also offers 'light-touch' family-based care and support to a young person and this can be appealing to potential hosts.

Language and regulation

- Because the new regulations apply to all forms of supported accommodation, the language is broad and uses the term 'staff' to refer to hosts of supported lodgings. Supported lodgings providers have needed to adapt this to suit their own provision.

- It is important to remember that Ofsted representatives (including inspectors) will respect how providers refer to the people who are part of their supported accommodation service and ensure that they use the same terminology in the registration and inspection process.

Tailoring to your provision

- Most supported lodging providers will have different approaches towards how they run their provision, and part of the complexity of submitting an application to register with Ofsted is ensuring that the approach of each provider aligns with the Regulations.
- Supported lodgings providers will need to make decisions about how they ensure their service meets the quality standards, while also tailoring this to meet the needs of the individual provision, young people, and the service overall.
- It can be challenging to balance the standards with the individual context of the family-based setting. It may mean that you need additional time during the initial registration stage to reflect and discuss the approach of your service. However, this is ultimately the best way to ensure you are meeting the needs of young people and hosts.

Tips for registering a supported lodgings service

Supporting young people

- The new regulations refer to specific areas of support which some supported lodgings provisions, as a family-based setting, may not have previously considered relevant. For example, ensuring access to 24/7 on-call support for young people.
- Young people living in supported lodgings are looked after children or care leavers and should therefore have access to 24/7 support through the local authority. For example, through an Emergency Duty Team (EDT) or their allocated social worker.
- Similarly, there is no requirement in the regulations to implement physical restraint training for staff or use restraint if not appropriate. If your supported lodgings provision has a 'no-restraint policy', this should be outlined in relevant policies e.g., Behaviour Management.

Regulatory requirements

- Specific areas of the regulation have posed challenge to supported lodgings providers, such as how to address workforce policies for hosts who are not employees or subject to

employment law. Supported lodgings providers may need to develop parallel policies that reflect their specific procedures with hosts while also meeting the regulatory requirements.

- Providers are also required to supply evidence that their provision is appropriately insured as part of the registration process. Supported lodgings providers should ensure that they consider this requirement in relation to the service's needs, as individual hosts may need to acquire their own public liability insurance in addition to organisation-wide insurance.

If you are a supported lodgings provider, our online Community of Practice offers an online space to come together to share ideas and support each other - email SAPP@NCB.org.uk to join.