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Introduction

Experience has shown that most Young People leaving care have found it difficult when they first start living independently.

Therefore to help overcome these initial difficulties Barnardo's Springboard provides semi-independent accommodation called Supported Lodgings. These Lodgings therefore help to bridge the gap between leaving care and living independently. A place in Supported Lodgings is an opportunity for you to experience elements of independence in a supportive and encouraging environment.

We have designed this leaflet to help provide you with a better idea of what Supported Lodgings can offer you.

If you have any questions on Supported Lodgings, please ask your Barnardo's Project Worker, Social Worker or Carer.

We want you to be involved at every stage in the process so that you can move into supported lodgings successfully.

What is Supported Lodgings?

Supported Lodgings is accommodation with support, offered by individuals or families with a spare room and who work in partnership with Barnardo's Springboard. The type of Supported Lodgings can vary from house to house. Some Young People become part of the family while others prefer to live more independently.

All Supported Lodgings Placements offer a secure and safe home environment with help and support that will enable you to prepare for independent living.

This type of accommodation can be available for a short or long period of time. Some Young People are happy to stay for a long period of time, others see Supported Lodgings as a short-term step towards a place of their own.

Who offers supported lodgings?

People who offer Supported Lodgings to Young People are individuals or families who have a spare room.

Supported Lodgings Providers are not employed by the Social Work Department, nor are they Social Workers or Residential Workers.

The most important point is that people providing Supported Lodgings are willing to offer you some support and help you move into your own place. This help will depend on your own needs and what the Supported Lodgings Provider is able to offer.

Supported Lodgings Providers have been especially selected and trained to provide you with the space and support that will enable you to develop your own independence skills.

Generally you will have access to most of the facilities in the house. You will also have the opportunity to purchase and prepare your own meals.

What are the financial arrangements?

As with any form of accommodation you will be expected to make a contribution towards your Board and Lodgings.

You pay a share towards the Lodgings Charge, and the rest is made up from the Social Work Department.

Your Barnardo's Project Worker or Social Worker will provide you with full details well in advance of your Supported Lodgings Placement.

It is important to remember that, as in any tenancy agreement, if you do not pay your share, you may be asked to leave the accommodation.

Placement Agreement

Before you move into Supported Lodgings you will be involved in drawing up a 'Placement Agreement'. This is an agreement drawn up by yourself and the Supported Lodgings Provider with the help of your Barnardo's Project Worker and/or social worker and the Supported Lodgings Link Worker.

The agreement is important because it sets down the general conditions you will need to agree to; in order to stay in Supported Lodgings. It is important that you are involved in these discussions because it is your chance to say what you want to get out of staying in Supported Lodgings.

Generally, the Placement Agreement will cover: -

- * Your financial contribution to the Board and Lodgings
- * What is expected of you
- * What your Supported Lodgings Provider is expected to offer.
- * The boundaries
- * What will happen if you break the Placement Agreement
- * Your contact arrangements with your Barnardo's Project Worker and/or Social Worker

A draft copy can be available on request. Please speak to your Barnardo's Project Worker and/or Social Worker.

Reviewing the Placement Agreement

Some of the Placement Agreement can be renegotiated after you have been in Supported Lodgings for a while. A placement meeting will be set up after you have been in Supported Lodgings for a period of time to look at how things are working and how you are progressing.

The placement meeting between you, your Supported Lodgings Provider, your Barnardo's Project Worker and/or Social Worker and the Supported Lodgings Link Worker will give you the chance to talk about your stay in Supported Lodgings and discuss whether or not there is anything you would like to change. It also gives your Supported Lodging Provider the same opportunity.

You should feel free to discuss all matters as they arise, however, the meeting is an opportunity for everyone to sit down and talk about some of the issues.

Remember; don't sit back and let 'adults' do the talking. You are an adult now, get involved!

Employment, Training & Further Education

Remember that you have to make a contribution towards your Board and Lodgings, therefore you will have to have an income to pay this. So, before going into Supported Lodgings you will have to think carefully about getting a job, joining a training scheme, carrying on at school, doing a course of further education etc. In all of these cases you will receive an income that will help you pay your Board and Lodgings charge. Your Barnardo's Project Worker and/or Social Worker will discuss the details with you before the move.

Most people who offer Supported Lodgings prefer you to be doing something during the day, so that you are not hanging around the house getting bored. In our experience Young People who are not in employment, training or further education become bored and disillusioned, and this often results in the breakdown of the Supported Lodgings Placement.

Please think carefully about these issues and discuss them with your Social Worker before you decide if Supported Lodgings is right for you.

Length of Stay in Supported Lodgings?

The length of your stay in Supported Lodgings can be as short or as long as necessary. With the help of your Social Worker you can discuss this matter with your Supported Lodgings Provider.

Young People who have used Supported Lodgings positively, have found themselves better able to cope with responsibilities and difficulties that they may encounter when they move on.

Remember Supported Lodgings is a stepping stone. It provides an opportunity for you to plan and prepare yourself for an eventual move into your own tenancy.

Not all of your questions may have been answered within this information booklet but we hope that it provides you with enough of an idea to decide whether or not this scheme could be right for you.

If you are still interested, or would like further information, please speak to your Social Worker who can arrange for you to meet with a Supported Lodgings Link Worker and maybe even a Young Person who has been in Supported Lodgings.

Barnardo's Springboard – Supported Lodgings Service

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