



**RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

**SUPPORTED CARERS SCHEME**

**INFORMATION FOR SUPPORTED CARERS**

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## What are Supported Carer placements for young people?

The supported carer scheme is one of a range of accommodation and support options for young people in Renfrewshire.

Young people who need supported carer placements are aged between 16 and 21 years and will include those who have been living away from home in a children's unit, residential school, with foster carers or in another resource.

Young people may not want a new 'family' but may not be ready to live independently. Supported carer placements are used as a 'stepping stone' to independence through helping the young person to develop the necessary skills to move on to independent living e.g. cooking, budgeting and social skills.

Young people can be in supported care for a variable period of time, depending on a number of circumstances including their readiness to move on.

The objective is that the young person will be as independent as possible by the time they move on to other accommodation. The aim is for young people receiving support from the Throughcare and Aftercare team to move on before the age of 21 as this is when their Throughcare support generally ends (unless they are in full-time education, in which case they may receive support until they are 24).

Supported carer placements can vary from living in a room in a home, with access to support, to being part of a caring family or household. This range provides a wide variety of placements to meet the differing and individual needs of young people.

## Who can be a Supported Carer?

The only requirement is that a person or family has a spare room and the time to take an interest in a young person.

This can include families with children, couples, lone parents or single households.

The most important attribute for a supported carer is a concern for the well-being of young people.



## What is involved in becoming a Supported Carer?

Becoming a supported carer involves taking part in an assessment, which will include various police, social work, medical and reference checks.

The purpose of this assessment is to provide information in order to ensure that the prospective carer is aware of the requirements of the role of supported carer, and also to ensure that the placement would be safe for a young person.

## How is an assessment carried out?

When someone expresses an interest in becoming a supported carer, they are given the opportunity to have an informal discussion on the role before they make the decision to continue with the assessment.

The assessment includes:

- A medical enquiry from the family GP to establish that there are no medical risks to them or the young person
- An Enhanced Disclosure Scotland check on all adults in the household to ensure that there are no serious convictions. These disclosures will be regularly updated.
- Social Work checks on all adults in the household
- Two personal references (at least one referee is contacted directly to discuss the reference)
- Visits from a qualified Social Worker to discuss areas such as lifestyle, family background, values and attitudes, experience with young people and support and training.
- The assessment normally takes between 3 and 6 months.

A report is completed which is then presented to a panel comprising senior Renfrewshire Council employees and a representative from an external agency. This group decides on the suitability of the applicant for the role of supported carer and may make recommendations regarding suitable types of placements.



## Matching and linking

This is carried out by the throughcare team and will involve an assessment of the supported carer, the young person and others who may be involved with the young person.

The throughcare team will have information regarding both the supported carer and the young person, which will inform the matching and linking process. Although information will be shared about the young person and the supported carer, this will be done sensitively with the aim of allowing both parties to make an informed decision about whether they wish a placement to go ahead.

It is important that the matching and linking process involves a significant amount of choice and that those involved have the right to refuse a particular placement. A placement may also be subject to practical constraints such as location etc.

The process usually involves a short visit followed by an overnight or a weekend stay. This allows for both parties to get to know each other and to decide if the placement seems right for them. In some cases the introductory period can last for several weeks whilst in other cases, once the introductions are made, a move can follow quickly.

Payments to supported carers during the introductory visits will be made on a pro rata basis for the overnights that a young person stays.

## Occupancy Agreement and House Rules

It is important that there is agreement on rules and boundaries for young people so that they understand what they can and can't do.

Some of the arrangements that need to be considered include:

- Arrangements for coming and going, including overnights
- Access to door keys
- Visitors
- Family Contact



- College/ Training/ Employment
- Support required
- Domestic tasks
- Smoking/ Alcohol/ Drugs
- Behaviour
- Finance

This list is not exhaustive and how these issues are dealt with will depend on individual circumstances and the relationship between the young person and the supported carer. An Occupancy Agreement and House Rules Agreement is completed which is the basis for a formal agreement on conduct and responsibilities.

## Supported Carer allowance

To reflect the demands of providing supported care for a young person, an allowance is paid to supported carers. Depending on individual circumstances, the young person may be asked to contribute to this allowance or to cover additional household costs, for example, food.

## The role of a Supported Carer

Your role will be to help the young person to develop the skills needed for independent living.

To do this, you will be expected to provide:

- Practical and emotional support
- Accommodation which provides some degree of privacy
- Access to laundry and cooking facilities

In practical terms this means assisting the young person with basic cooking, laundry, personal budgeting and other household management skills. Support should also be provided to encourage the young person to develop social and relationship skills, which will help them in facing challenges, dealing with conflict and learning the skill of negotiation. Social and emotional support is central to the role of supported carer.



## Rights and Responsibilities

### Supported Carers - Rights

- To receive sufficient information about the young person, in order to meet the young person's needs in the placement. This information is strictly confidential and should only be shared with other adults in the household when necessary to allow them to support the placement.
- To receive a supported carer allowance.
- To receive regular support from an allocated support worker from the throughcare team.
- To seek support and training from the throughcare team and other agencies as appropriate.
- To be given a period of notice (where possible) if the young person has to leave.
- To be given information on the financial implications of providing supported carer placements.
- To end a placement immediately in the event of an emergency situation.

### Supported Carers - Responsibilities

- To provide a suitable room in good order and repair for the exclusive use of the young person, which provides space for the young person to sleep in and sit in.
- To provide facilities for the provision and preparation of meals.
- To provide accommodation which meets reasonable health and safety standards, which may be checked by Strathclyde Fire and Rescue.



- To provide the young person with a record of contribution and to record their contribution to the cost of the placement (if applicable, as agreed jointly with the allocated worker).
- To give appropriate practical and emotional support to the young person throughout their placement.
- To obtain public liability and car insurance as appropriate.
- To provide at least one month's notice to the throughcare team if they wish to bring the placement to an end. (In exceptional circumstances a placement may be brought to an immediate end).
- To ensure that the young person is treated fairly in respect of their rights, choice, privacy and equality of opportunity.
- To give adequate notice to the throughcare team and the young person if they wish to take a holiday so that alternative arrangements can be made for the young person's accommodation if necessary.
- To attend reviews for the young person and to communicate appropriately with the fostering team regarding any concerns.
- To accept that they might have to inform the Inland Revenue of the allowances you receive.
- To complete an Occupancy Agreement and House Rules Agreement between themselves, the young person and the throughcare team.
- To complete a Supported Carer Scheme Agreement.
- To operate within the guidelines outlined in the Supported Carer Scheme Agreement.



## Young People - Rights

- To feel safe and secure in their placement.
- To privacy as agreed between themselves, the supported carer and the throughcare team.
- To ask the supported carer for help and support as appropriate.
- To be treated with respect.
- To have visitors if agreed with the supported carer.
- To receive support from the throughcare team until the placement ends or the young person reaches the age of 21 years (or 24 years if they are in full-time education).

## Young People - Responsibilities

- To pay their contribution to the accommodation charge as agreed, and to inform their Throughcare worker of any change in their circumstances which could alter their contribution.
- To ensure that the supported carer, their family and neighbours are treated fairly, in respect of their rights and privacy.
- To co-operate with any claims being made for housing benefit.
- To use the support from both the supported carer and their Throughcare worker to develop independent living skills to help them in the transition to living in the community.
- To pay the cost of any wilful damages.



- To accept that they may be required to make full or part payment for any accidental damage.
- To give four week's notice in writing to the supported carer and the throughcare team if they wish to terminate the placement.
- To find or accept alternative accommodation if required for up to four weeks a year to cover the supported carer's holidays and any other exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness, family circumstances).
- To accept responsibility for insuring their own personal belongings where necessary.
- To attend reviews.
- To complete an Occupancy Agreement and House Rules Agreement between themselves, the supported carer and the throughcare team, and to adhere to it.
- To sign a Supported Carer Scheme Agreement.
- To adhere to the guidelines outlined in the Supported Carer Scheme Agreement.

### **Throughcare Team - Rights**

- To call an emergency review of the supported carer placement where necessary.
- To end a placement where the responsibilities outlined in the Occupancy Agreement and/ or Supported Carer Scheme Agreement are not being fulfilled.

### **Throughcare Team - Responsibilities**

- To appoint a worker who will advise and support the supported carer and arrange training as appropriate.
- To review the placement every 6 months, to produce minutes and reports, and to implement any decisions made.



- To liaise with other agencies and keep the carer informed of any developments relevant to the placement.
- To inform all those concerned of any changes in circumstances which could affect the placement.
- To co-ordinate the assessment of supported carers and young people.
- To co-ordinate the introduction of a young person to the supported carer.
- To provide an annual review of the supported carer's ability to continue to provide placements.
- To provide an end of placement report for the supported carer and the young person.

## Finance Policy

Given that supported carer placements aim to furnish young people with independent living skills, young people will be expected to control their own finances, but may receive some support from carers in relation to budgeting skills and money advice. The young person's Throughcare worker may support the young person in dealing with their finances, or refer the young person to an external agency (e.g. Advice Works) for further advice if necessary, but the carer would not be expected to become involved or take responsibility for the young person's finances.



## Contribution Card

If it is agreed that the young person will contribute towards household costs incurred by the carer (for example, food), then young people will be responsible for paying this sum to the carer. This arrangement will be outlined in the Supported Carers Scheme documentation issued to young people and their carers and logged on a contribution card. The young person's Throughcare worker or the link worker for the carer may intervene if any problems arise in relation to this arrangement but the carer would not be expected to carry out any financial transactions on behalf of the young person in placement.

## Savings Card

If a young person requests additional help from the carer to handle their finances, then an agreement will be drawn up which specifies the nature of the support the carer will provide. Any money exchanged between the carer and the young person will be logged on a savings card and signed by both parties.

## Medication Policy

Supported carers recruited by the throughcare team will not generally be expected to store or administer medication to young people in placements. However, if there are any exceptions to this, the carer would be expected to follow medical advice with regard to the administration and storage of medicine, and would be supported by the link worker to carry out these duties. In these circumstances, the carer would be required to:

- Store the medicine in a suitable place that is not affected by extreme heat or moisture
- Support the young person to store his/ her medicines if appropriate
- Follow medical advice regarding the administration and storage of medicine



A formal written agreement outlining the responsibilities of each party with regard to administering medication would be developed to reflect the particular needs of the young person and the level of support required (see Appendix 4). In this situation, carers may be expected to attend the Renfrewshire Council 'Handling Medication in Social Care Settings' training course.

## Supported Carer Groups

If we manage to recruit a sufficient number of carers, we intend to run a carers group so that carers can meet and discuss shared experiences (within confidentiality guidelines). This group will be a forum for carers to provide feedback on the scheme which will help to inform the development of the service.

## Complaints procedure

Supported carers can discuss any complaints confidentially with:

- their link worker; or
- the throughcare team's senior social workers.

The team will endeavour to respond to any complaint quickly and efficiently, and within 14 days of the complaint being made. If the supported carer is not satisfied with the response, they can make a complaint using the Renfrewshire Council Social Work complaint procedure, a copy of which is available from the throughcare team or online at [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk).



Any carer who remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint can contact the Care Inspectorate:

**Care Inspectorate**

Renfrewshire House

Cotton Street

Paisley

PA1 1WB

Email: [enquiries@careinspectorate.com](mailto:enquiries@careinspectorate.com)

Carers can also contact the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman within one year of first making a complaint. Their address is:

**Scottish Public Services Ombudsman**

4 Melville Street

Edinburgh

EH3 7NS

Tel: 0870 011 5378

Fax: 0870 011 5379

E-mail: [enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@scottishombudsman.org.uk)



## Procedure for dealing with allegations against supported carers

Where an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against a supported carer, a decision must be first taken as to whether to use formal adult protection procedures. A key factor in reaching this decision is whether or not the young adult is believed to have suffered significant harm, with responsibility resting with the supported carer. Harm is defined as physical or mental injury or damage, and is likely to be significant if it is severe and/or frequent.

The locality manager should liaise with the social worker for the young person, the SSW in the Throughcare team and Adult Services Protection Coordinator to decide if there should be an Adult Protection Investigation. If an Adult Protection Investigation is the agreed response, the supervising social worker should provide the carer with information about the procedure whilst the locality team undertakes the investigation.

Where an allegation is made, but the response is not under Adult Protection Procedures, a decision should be made about whether the allegation should be investigated by workers from the adult services locality team, or a joint visit by adult services locality team and throughcare service staff. Following the investigation, a decision should be made by the locality manager in liaison with the throughcare managers about what, if any, action should be taken. The SSW is responsible for writing to the carer once the investigation is completed, outlining the outcome and any decisions taken. As with the complaints procedure, there may be a training or development issue for the carer, or a need to restrict the carer's registration, or arrange a supported carer review.

