



# YOUNG PERSON'S **G**UIDE SUPPORTED LODGINGS

# Welcome to YMCA St Paul's Group

We warmly welcome you to our Supported Lodgings!

This handbook contains lots of useful information so please take time to read it.

We also have a web site: [www.ymcastpaulsgroup.org](http://www.ymcastpaulsgroup.org) where you can find lots of other information about YMCA SPG services.

This guide will help you understand what the scheme is all about. If anything here is not clear or there is more you would like to know about the scheme, just ask!

Support is available via our Supported Lodgings team, based at the YMCA in Roxeth Gate, Roxeth Hill, Harrow, HA2 0JN.

If you need to speak to a member of staff at any time, come and see us in the office or ring:

020 8832 1551

TIP: save this number into your phone now so you can ring us when you are out an about and you have an emergency.

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## 1. LIVING IN SUPPORTED LODGINGS

### 1.1 What is Supported Lodgings?

A supported lodging is a home belonging to a supported lodgings host. The host will give you somewhere safe and secure to live.

You will be living in a home with at least one adult who has been through a process of assessment and is considered suitable to become a host. Everyone in the home who is over 16 years old will have had a DBS check.

**YMCA St Paul's** Group has approved hosts available across west London. We will try to find you a home in an area of your choice and will discuss with you the kind of household you would like to live in.

### 1.2 Accessing Supported Lodgings

The London Boroughs of Harrow, Ealing and Hillingdon have referral rights to our supported lodgings hosts. When a place becomes available a Support Worker will notify the appropriate referring agency.

All applicants attend an interview and risk assessment at the YMCA project at Roxeth Hill, Harrow HA2 0JN. We may ask for background information by telephone from the referring agency before matching or offering a placement with a host. Applicants can meet the host and view the property up to 3 times before accepting an offer.

Emergency referrals are accepted between 9am – 3pm Monday to Friday.

### 1.3 What can I expect from Supported Lodgings?

- ▶ you will have your own room
- ▶ shared use of lounge, kitchen, bathroom, washing machine and garden (if there is one)
- ▶ you will get support from the person or people you live with AND from your YMCA support worker

When you move in, you should talk about how you and the host can live together happily.

You should talk about things such as:

- ▶ friends visiting and staying over.
- ▶ going out – when you can and what time you should be back.
- ▶ staying out – you may want to stay a few nights with family or friends.

You will have to behave responsibly and treat the people you live with as you would like them to treat you. You will discuss house rules with the person you are going to live with and agree them between yourselves.

### 1.4 YMCA Support Staff Office

Our office in Roxeth Gate is your first point of contact for any queries and is staffed Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5.00pm. You can call us on: 020 8832 1551.

At placement you receive copies of the House Rules, Licence Agreement (which is between you and the host), Emergency and Placement Breakdown Procedure, Move-on plan and Complaint Procedure.

All other policies and procedures are available on request from the office. Staff are always happy to assist with any queries or problems during office hours.

### 1.5 How long will I stay in Supported Lodgings?

Placements can last for up to 24 months or more. However, this time is not fixed. When you feel ready to move on, we can help you.

### 1.6 Who else will live in my Supported Lodgings placement?

This is different in each home. Some of our hosts are single people and others are families. The most important thing is that you will be in a safe and friendly home.

### 1.7 Health & Safety

The staff will always be available to help you with any problems or concerns you may have and will make sure that you are happy and safe and that your needs are fully met.

In order to do that, they may need to tell the people who you live with any important information about you and your family background.

## 1.8 Maintenance & Housekeeping

The safety and upkeep of the host home is a collective responsibility.

The host is responsible for any repairs to your room, so it is important that you report anything that is not working or needs fixing as soon as possible. This includes broken furniture if they provided the furniture to you.

We believe that good housekeeping is an essential life skill, and part of the life skills programme that we provide is to support you to learn and develop skills of good personal and collective hygiene. This involves keeping yourself and your environment clean and tidy. You must always keep your room clean and tidy so that you have a healthy environment in which to stay.

If you are struggling to keep on top of your cleaning and housekeeping, or need some tips on how to best keep your room in a good condition, please speak to your host and/ or your YMCA support worker.

## 1.9 Hosts and YMCA staff accessing your room

Hosts and YMCA staff will not enter your room without your consent unless there is cause for concern regarding your safety or we suspect illegal activity. In such cases, the host/staff may decide that its within best interests to enter your room and will knock and state clearly that they are about to enter.

Hosts carry out regular health & safety and welfare checks of your room. You will be notified in advance of when they will require access to your room. When carrying out one of these



checks they will always knock on your bedroom door and wait for your authorisation to enter.

Sometimes YMCA staff may also come and visit you in your room to ensure it is still meeting your needs. If staff are conducting one of these checks, they will always let you know in advance.

### 1.10 Warnings & Evictions

If you persistently breach the house rules set with your host, a total of 3 grade warnings are issued followed by a termination of placement notice.

Please note that your licence agreement with the host (which gives you the right to live in their home) could also be terminated used the standard process of terminating such agreements.

### 1.11 License fee/rent

In order for someone to stay in supported lodgings, the hosts charge a weekly licence fee (we also call it rent). If you are under 18, social services are likely to be paying for your rent. When you turn 18, social services might no longer pay for your rent and you will need to apply for benefits (if you are entitled) or start paying the charge through your earnings (if in work). Your support worker will support you with making a benefit claim if you are eligible.

Don't worry, your Support Worker will talk you through this bit in detail and explain when things are likely to change for you. They can also help you with budgeting once you start becoming responsible for some of these things yourself.

## 2. SUPPORT

### 2.1 Supporting You

Our supported lodgings team and all our hosts want to achieve amazing things with this project and with you.

We are determined to provide and promote a positive impact in your lives. We believe in the young people we house and support, and we want to give you the best chance to succeed and be happy in your life, and we hope the support we offer gives you the greatest chance to achieve this.

Our service aims to provide accessible accommodation, training, personal development, job searching facilities and other essential services, together with community involvement and resettlement opportunities.

Where appropriate, other professional agencies will be asked to provide any specialist support that may be needed.

### 2.2 Support Plans

As part of your stay we will provide you with a Support Worker who will help you to put together your own personal support plan. This plan will help you to identify goals and build on your strengths and as it is yours you can change it whenever you want.

To ensure we capture your needs appropriately and can track your journey of support we use the Outcome Star framework.

The Outcomes Star allows us to develop a personalised plan for you, helping you identify your own strengths and weaknesses as well as develop your own action plan to overcome any challenges you may face.

The ten areas of focus (strands) of the Outcome Star are:

1. Motivation and taking responsibility
2. Self-care and living skills
3. Managing money and personal administration
4. Social networks and relationships
5. Drug and alcohol misuse
6. Physical health
7. Emotional and mental health
8. Meaningful use of time
9. Managing tenancy & accommodation
10. Offending

Your support plan will be reviewed together with your Support Worker on a regular and planned basis to see how you are getting on, however, you can arrange to meet with your Support Worker at any time. The support plan is yours so any changes you wish to make can be shared with your Support Worker.

### 2.3 Move on

An important aspect of your support plan is to help you work towards becoming more independent.

The supported lodgings accommodation is temporary, offering the support you need to be able to successfully move on. Your placement authority may be responsible to support you to find suitable move on accommodation, however in some cases, you may be required to explore move on options. We are here to

offer advice and support in exploring your move on options, so you won't feel alone with this.

Although the YMCA does not provide move-on accommodation to residents, assistance with resettlement is provided as part of the support programme. If you have a social worker, the YMCA will work with you and your social worker to find suitable move on accommodation once you are ready for it.

Please speak to your support worker if you need more information.

## 2.4 What you are entitled to (benefits etc)

### Universal Credit

Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to claim universal credit. Your support worker can advise you on whether you are entitled to this and will support you with making a claim.

### Other Benefits & Entitlements

You may well be entitled to other state benefits such as ESA or PIP. Your Support Worker will be able to assist you in making the relevant claims. If you have a social worker, they will also be able to advise you on any entitlements you may have.

### Change of Circumstance

If there is any change in your circumstances during your stay, for example you have started full time education, started work, if working your hours worked, earnings, benefits, going on

holiday etc. you must inform the local benefit office and your Support Worker immediately.

This is because it could affect your benefit entitlements. If in doubt, always ask!

We will help you to look after your benefit claims and help you to provide all the information the benefits office need, but you are responsible for your claim, not us.

## 2.5 Progression Team

During your stay, you will be supported by and have access to our dedicated Progression Team Coaches.

The Progression Team works to support you with all the things you may need in your development with living skills, training / education, and employment support, as well as progression towards independent living and move on. The Progression Team has a syllabus designed to support you to achieve your hopes and goals towards your future.

Your Support Worker will be able to give you a copy of the latest timetable or the contact details of your Progression Coach.

## 3. INVOLVEMENT

We actively encourage our supported lodgings young people to get involved in all aspects of YMCA life.

### 3.1 Consultation

We value your opinion and therefore an important aspect of our work is consultation.

- ▶ We want to hear your views on particular issues.
- ▶ We want to involve you in the decision-making processes.
- ▶ We want your ideas and suggestions for improving our services.

How do we do this?

### 3.2 Young People Meetings

We sometimes hold meetings where we bring all young people living in our supported lodgings placements together. They are a good opportunity for you to find out more about what is going on in the YMCA and make decisions about the services you receive.

### 3.3 Resident Questionnaires

These are given to all young people on a regular basis, so that we can assess how we are performing and make improvements.

### 3.4 Suggestions

You are encouraged to make suggestions on how we could improve or do things differently. You can write down any comments as and when you wish and hand it over to a member of staff.

### 3.5 Being a part of the wider community

We not only provide you with opportunities within the YMCA but also encourage you to be involved in the wider community.

This could be by attending a Social Club, leisure centres, training courses etc. Your Support Worker will discuss all the options with you as part of your support plan.

### 3.6 Your Rights & Responsibilities

#### Our commitment to you

As someone who uses our services, you have certain rights and responsibilities. **YMCA St Paul's Group wants to ensure that the young people's voice is at the heart of everything we do, from excellent service delivery, to shaping our future.**

Understanding you and everyone we work with is essential to help us as a YMCA best meet your needs and aspirations and to deliver services that matter in the right way.

We believe in empowering our young people, so you are able to have a better say in decisions that affect your lives and supporting your personal growth in wider life.

We have worked with our residents (including young people) to create a Customer Involvement, Engagement and Empowerment Charter, which sets out our commitment to our young people and wider resident and customer base.

The charter is our promise to continue to develop our culture that values, listens, and acts on the views and needs of the young people we house.

By understanding you, we will be able to take better decisions that improve the quality of outcomes for all.

You can find the charter on our website or ask a member of staff who can give you a copy.

### Working together

You and us will work together to ensure that everyone living in a Supported Lodgings placement can:

- ✓ use the services provided within a safe environment
- ✓ live free from abuse, harassment and bullying
- ✓ be treated equally
- ✓ have their privacy & confidentiality respected
- ✓ be consulted and able to express their views

### To use services provided within a safe environment

What you can expect from us:

We will ensure your host accommodation meets all necessary standards and legal requirements so that you experience a comfortable and secure living environment during your stay.



We do this by ensuring that we provide you with accommodation:

- ▶ that is designed and furnished so as to meet the needs of each of you individually;
- ▶ that is suitable for the purposes of supported lodgings accommodation and is accessible, safe, secure, and well-maintained;
- ▶ that offers a comfortable, positive, and nurturing environment, while respecting your needs for privacy;
- ▶ that is adequately maintained so as to provide a welcoming and homely environment within both individual and shared living spaces;
- ▶ that is designed, furnished, and maintained to remove avoidable hazards which could pose a health and safety risk
- ▶ that complies with all relevant health and safety and fire safety legislation, that being any statutory provision dealing with health and safety or fire safety matters;

What we expect from you:

You will therefore appreciate that if you irresponsibly cause yourself or others to be placed in danger, it will be treated seriously, and action will be taken. In case of an accident or emergency please inform a member of staff immediately.

To live free from abuse, harassment and bullying

What you can expect from us:

Our Safeguarding Policy & Procedures cover a wide range of abuse, including bullying & racism, none of which will be tolerated by the YMCA. We will ensure that all young people are protected from harm, kept safe and have their individual needs met. Staff are regularly trained to ensure that they can continue to offer these services to a high standard.

What we expect from you:

If you have been abused, harassed, or bullied, or suspect abuse is taking place please contact an appropriate member of staff or your social worker.

We expect all residents, visitors, and staff to treat each other respectfully and politely. Any such behaviour that is deemed as abusive will be dealt with appropriately.

Further information is contained within the **‘What is Abuse?’** leaflet given to you when you move in.

### To be treated equally

What you can expect from us:

Our Equality and Diversity Policy seeks to ensure that all residents are treated fairly and without discrimination and that services are accessible to all.

What we expect from you:

If you believe you have been discriminated against, please let a member of staff know.

If you feel that a decision we have made was not fair, you have the right to appeal by following our Complaints Procedure (complaints procedure information is set out later in this guide).

### To have your privacy and confidentiality respected

What you can expect from us:

We hold information about you so that staff can provide you with the best possible support. Information normally remains within the Housing Team, but our policy obliges us to comply with any requests from your placement authority social worker or placement officer, and or the emergency services.

What we expect from you:

You have the right to access information on your file at all times unless it is supplied by a third party. You also have the right to receive all mail unopened which is addressed to you.

### To be consulted and express your views

What you can expect from us:

Our Customer Involvement, Engagement & Empowerment Charter clearly states that we seek to inform you about things which affect you and obtain your views wherever possible. For more information on how we consult young people see the Involvement section in this guide.

What we expect from you:

Get involved. Tell us what you think! If you have an idea, let us know. If you are not happy with something, speak up.

### 3.7 General expectations to ensure a good living environment

All young people have the right to peaceful enjoyment whilst living in a supported lodgings placement.

A set of expectations are therefore implemented to ensure that everyone can live comfortably and be respected by one another. These expectations are part of the house rules you agree with your host.

When it comes to behaviour, we do understand that everyone has a bad day from time to time, however, we will not tolerate violent, abusive, or threatening behaviour towards hosts or staff. Any such behaviour will be dealt with appropriately, which could involve contacting the police, and or the referring authority / social worker.

Behaviour deemed as inappropriate could lead to investigation and decisions regarding your placement with YMCA St **Paul's** Group. This could potentially lead to termination of your stay, and referral back to your placement authority / social worker.

The sort of things that definitely are not acceptable (even if you are having a bad day):

- ✘ violence and threat
- ✘ sexual or predatory behaviour
- ✘ bullying or harassment
- ✘ discriminatory behaviour (including racist, homophobic or sexist comments)
- ✘ gang involvement

- ✘ county lines involvement
- ✘ drug dealing
- ✘ misuse of illicit substances and or alcohol
- ✘ acts of terrorism
- ✘ criminality including anti-social behaviour / criminal damage / theft / carrying or use of weapons (such as knives or firearms)
- ✘ inviting external persons into the service without permission
- ✘ breaking curfew and or going missing without communicating whereabouts
- ✘ non-engagement with the support offered by the service.

If you are struggling with any of the above (both as the perpetrator or the victim), please speak to a member of staff or your social worker. We are here to support you and help you find ways to overcome these challenges.

And if you are regularly feeling like you are having a bad day, definitely come and have a chat.

Obviously we expect the same (and a bit more) around behaviour of our staff (and hosts and other professionals).

Please speak to your support worker and or social worker or other professional if you have concerns about your placement. This could be if you are concerned about the behaviour of a staff member or other professional, the host (or someone else living in the host home) or someone from the local community, place of study or work. Any concerns will be treated seriously and with the upmost confidentiality within the limits of yours and other's safety first.

### 3.8 Advocacy

Advocacy allows you to have your views, wishes and feelings heard when important decisions are being made that will affect your life.

You have a right to be listened to and have your views taken seriously. Sometimes, it can be difficult to express how you feel, and you may think that your voice **isn't** getting heard. This is when you might need the support of an advocate.

If at any time you feel that you will benefit from an advocate, you can speak to your support worker, housing manager or social worker, who will support the arrangement of obtaining advocacy from an independent advocacy service.

Alternatively, you may seek and arrange an advocate, yourself, at any time.

## 4. OTHER YMCA SERVICES

### 4.1 Roxeth Gate Lounge and IT Room

There is a dedicated young **peoples'** lounge and games room at our YMCA centre in Roxeth Gate. There are pool tables, television sets, games etc. All young people in Supported Lodgings placements have free access to use the facilities. You will need to tell Roxeth Gate staff that you live in Supported Lodgings. The staff on duty will check this. The YMCA at Roxeth Gate has staff on duty 24 hours a day.

The Roxeth Gate training and computer room has 10 computers and printing facilities and is also open to all young people placed in YMCA St Paul's Group Supported Lodgings.

### 4.2 YMCA Gym, Children's Activities and Pool

You are able to use any YMCA St Paul's Group gym and the outdoor pool we operate, Hampton Pool in Hampton, free of charge. See our website for details on where we have gyms or speak to your support worker.

If you have a child, you may also be able to access some of our children activities, including our softplay pod in Kingston. See our website for details of what is on offer, and then speak to your support worker if you wanted support with any costs to access those services.

You may also be able to access some of our youth activities for free – check out our website to see what is on offer.

### 4.3 Volunteering Opportunities

YMCA offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities in the following areas:

- ▶ Children's Work
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Catering
- ▶ Charity Shop
- ▶ Gardening

Please see a Housing and Support Officer for more information on how you can get involved.

### 4.4 Spiritual Development

If you would like to receive support, help or guidance with your own spiritual development or journey, or just want to talk, your support worker can arrange for you to meet with one of our **YMCA St Paul's Group chaplains, who will be** able to assist you.

To find a place of worship for your faith, please speak to your support worker who will assist you in locating places of worship within the local area.



## 5. How to make a complaint

How you can complain or tell us about something **that's not** going well

When you want to make a complaint, comment, or suggestion you can speak to your support worker or the manager who will try and help you with the issue.

**If this isn't** working, then they can make a formal complaint, in line with our Complaints Policy and Procedure.

In addition to raising a complaint directly with the local team, complaints can also be submitted in a number of other ways:

Email Address: [complaints@ymcaspg.org](mailto:complaints@ymcaspg.org)

On our website: [www.ymcastpaulsgroup.org/feedback](http://www.ymcastpaulsgroup.org/feedback)

Throughout the process you will be kept informed and supported as necessary and made aware of any entitlements to additional support such as an advocate.

Complaints are fully responded to within 10 days (and a maximum of 20 days should they be of a more complex nature) and we do offer an appeals process, should you not be happy with the initial outcome.

## Raising concerns or a complaint externally

### Housing Ombudsman

As a registered provider of supported accommodation, we are also subscribed to the [Housing Ombudsman Service](#), and any young person living with us who has a complaint in relation to our landlord functions can contact the Housing Ombudsman who can offer support to residents making a complaint and considers complaints that have exhausted our complaints procedure.

As a registered landlord, we have to comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code which can be found [here](#).

The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted in a number of ways:

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Housing Ombudsman Service  
PO Box 152  
Liverpool  
L33 7WQ

### OFSTED

As a registered provider with OFSTED for the provision of 16/17 supported accommodation, you can also contact OFSTED if you have any concerns in relation to the service we provide:

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0300 123 1231

## OTHER AGENCIES

The following may also be contacted at any time to raise concerns or get support:

### **The Children's Commissioner**

0800 528 0731 (Help at Hand) or 0207 783 8330 (for general enquiries)

Help at Hand is the Children's Commissioner's advice and assistance service for children in care, children who have a social worker or are working with social services, children living away from home and care leavers.

Children, young people, or their advocates can get in touch with Help at Hand for free by phone, website or email. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/>

NSPCC Helpline 0800 1111

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) Helpline 0808 808 1001

## 6. ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEED?

And last but not least, we hope we have provided you with all the information you may need in this guide.

However, if there is anything else you need, please don't be afraid to ask.

This may be the first time you have to cook for yourself, do your own shopping or your own laundry.

We will never assume that you know how to do any of those things, so don't be afraid to tell us or your host if you need us to show you how things work around the house or need some guidance on where to best go shopping or how to change your bedding.

This is exactly what we are here for 😊.