

## FAQ's

### Do I pay tax on the money from Wigan Council?

The 'Rent a Room Scheme' lets you earn up to £7,500 (from 2016) per year tax-free from letting out furnished accommodation in your home. If you earn more than the threshold, you have to complete a tax return.

### What if I have criminal convictions?

This does not necessarily stop you from becoming a supported lodgings provider. The type of offence and whether it would be relevant to safeguarding a young person placed in your home will be assessed.

Anyone living in your home who is over the age of 18 would also need an enhanced DBS check.

### How will I know if the young person is a 'match' for living in my home?

The supported lodgings coordinator will know a lot of information about the young person and about you. The assessment process helps us to fully understand your lifestyle and what would be realistic.

The young person will be introduced to you and the arrangement will only go ahead if you, the young person and supported lodgings coordinator are comfortable.

### What if I rent my home? What about mortgaged properties?

#### Council or registered housing association tenant

In some cases, you can still house a young person without any problems. If unsure, ask your housing provider.

#### Private tenant

Check the terms of your tenancy. If unsure, ask your housing provider or Citizen's Advice Bureau.

#### If you have a mortgage

Check with your lender to see if you need their permission. Make it clear you will be living there, sharing the home with a young person rather than offering them a tenancy.

#### If you own your own home

If you are a freeholder, you can have who you like living with you. If you own leasehold, check the terms of the lease in case you need permission.

### Will I have to increase my insurance?

You'll need to inform your insurance company in writing that you intend to provide supported lodgings to young people.

### Are there any meetings or reviews of the placement?

Any meetings we have will be arranged around your commitments and will help to make sure that the placement is working and that all the support you and the young person needs is in place.

#### What training is there?

In Wigan, we offer a rolling programme of training courses each year for foster carers, staying put hosts and supported lodgings providers. This is a varied timetable of opportunity and what you need to complete will be identified with your supported lodgings coordinator.

### What if I need help or am worried about something once a young person is placed?

You will get regular visits from your supported lodgings coordinator who will also be on the end of the phone during office hours to offer support. Wigan Borough's fostering team also offers a 'duty service' during working hours, which means that if the coordinator is not available, a social worker or support worker will be able to help you.

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# Supported Lodgings



### What is 'supported lodgings'?

Supported lodgings is a placement for young people aged 16-21 years old who are leaving care and have lived with foster carers or in other care settings. Supported lodgings is there to help prepare our young people for the future and support them in reaching their goals.

### How does it work?

A supported lodgings host is required to provide 7-10 hours of support per week, to help a young person to become practised in independent living skills. We ask each host to provide support for up to two years, depending on when the young person feels ready to move on. Once the young person has gained the relevant skills and is ready to move on to independent living, we will work closely with housing providers to ensure the appropriate accommodation is allocated.

Both you and the young person sign a 'Living Together Agreement' that outlines the household expectations and is a binding contract between you both. All hosts have regular support and supervision from the supported lodgings coordinator and will have access to the relevant training.

### What is the difference between a foster carer and a supported lodgings host?

A supported lodgings host is not a foster carer and does not need to follow the fostering regulations. Even though the host is not responsible for the young person in the same way a foster carer would be, they are asked to support the young person to live independently.

### How can you offer support?

Supported lodgings aims to offer young people stability and a chance to gain essential independent living skills to support them with becoming a responsible adult and to enjoy a rewarding life.

As a supported lodgings host, you would need to be able to offer the young person a room of their own, provide emotional support and a chance to learn life skills.

### How will you be assessed?

Your assessment will consist of your current and past personal information, background police DBS check, health and safety assessment within your home and person and professional references. The assessment process helps us to fully understand your lifestyle so we can have a young person with you and your home.

### What training is available for supported lodgings hosts?

Wigan Council also offers a rolling programme each year of courses for foster carers, 'staying put' hosts and supported lodgings providers. This is a varied timetable of opportunities and your supported lodgings coordinator will identify what you will need to complete. You can also access e-learning available, group sessions and one to one sessions.

As a supported lodgings host, you will have access to courses on our e-learning portal through your account to help you build on your skills and knowledge.

Here are some examples of courses available to strengthen your skill set:

- Awareness of child neglect
- Safeguarding – deprivation of liberty
- Looking after your own wellbeing
- Drug and Alcohol Awareness
- Passport to Independence
- First Aid
- Self-Harm and Suicidal Thoughts
- CSE (protecting young people from child sexual exploitation)
- PREVENT (to safeguard our young people from being radicalised)



"I've always helped people out as much as possible, so when I heard about supported lodgings, it was natural for me to want to help young people too. I want to send them in the right direction. A lot of the time, they're withdrawn and don't know how to do the laundry or clean, so I do my best to teach them these things so they're ready for adulthood. When I was first paired with my current young person, he wouldn't interact with people or even go on a bus because of anxiety but over time, he has come out of his shell and now he's more confident. Being a host is about understanding what the young person needs and what they're comfortable with – everyone is different, but the outcome is really rewarding."

- Roy Lowe

### To find out more

Call: 01942 487200

visit: [www.wigan.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.wigan.gov.uk/fostering)