



Service Users Handbook

Supported Living Services respects your rights and expects every staff member to uphold these rights, on your behalf.

We will never knowingly refuse anyone the right to move forward to independent living in a fully supported environment.

Your Rights

- To have privacy in your own home
 - To be protected from harm
 - To make decisions about any changes in living arrangements
 - To have visitors of your choice
 - To have a service plan that is clearly laid out
 - To know your belongings are safe
 - To have your living space just how you like it
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- To choose how you want to be addressed
 - To have access to a range of specialist services
 - To choose what you want to eat
 - To have access to an advocate
 - To be treated as an individual
 - To have opportunities to develop your skills and interests
 - To know how to complain if things go wrong and that your complaint will be dealt with properly
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- To register and vote in elections
 - To mix with the local community
 - To choose your own GP and dentist
 - To be independent without any unnecessary restrictions
 - To have your own cultural and religious needs respected
 - To care for yourself whenever possible
 - To be prepared for life in society and independent living, with the necessary help available to you while you achieve this

Who are we and why are we here

Supported Living Services provide quality, focused housing and support to individuals with a wide range of needs. We are committed to providing an individually tailored service to the young person within a framework of equal opportunities, anti-discrimination and respect.

S.L.S is one of very few units in **Kent** that offers a transition from residential or foster care for 16 + into full independence living via a intensive semi independence training programme linked to the pathway plan and 2001 leaving care act.

Supported Living Services opened in 2006 in response a need in alternative care for those with a learning disability ~ providing independent living support within initially a high intense unit moving onto a further unit (where appropriate) with less support and more autonomy and finally into the community.

We are committed to the ongoing development of our service user and in light of this seek to promote the recreational and educational opportunities that are available through other agencies.

Supported Living Services works with the service user to identify areas which they can be involved socially within their community, this can involve clubs, pubs, cinema, theatre, religious activities, nightclubs, holidays (both at home and abroad) and any other activity the service user wishes to pursue.

Supported Living Services encourages you to visit a travel agencies to collect information of places you would like to visit, work out a budget, and if the visit is possible work out the details within an attainable timescales. The project workers will encourage you to locate local clubs etc. To enable you to develop a full social life.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our key aim is to provide accommodation for 16+ young people moving from residential or foster care. To develop their transition through our outreach team to full independent living.

To achieve our aims we have set a number of objectives including:

- Accommodation providing good quality furnished accommodation which offers reasonable levels of comfort, homeliness and privacy.
- Support: helping new young person settle into the accommodation; being available to discuss day-to-day problems as they arise for the young person; advising residents on financial and practical issues in relation to their housing, including payment of rent and claiming benefits; encouraging and guiding individuals to develop a structure and pattern to their life allowing them to lead more independent lives; and providing emotional support when needed;
- Move on and resettlement: assist residents in finding more appropriate long term accommodation; assisting with preparation and planning for the move; and assisting with the actual move where needed;
- To find training, employment or higher education through our in house personal adviser.

What to expect on the start of your tenancy

Residents are granted assured shorthand tenancies for a fixed 6 months term.

All tenancies are reviewed at 4 months and at the end of the six month term they revert into monthly periodic tenancies. Residents are not normally expected to need the service for longer than two years and are encouraged to move on when ready, competent and confident to do so, assuming that suitable move-on accommodation has been identified and is available.

During their stay at **S.L.S** residents are expected to abide by the house rules. Residents are encouraged to use the **S.L.S** complaints procedure if they are dissatisfied with the accommodation or service provided or are experiencing harassment or discrimination

Supported Living Services will consider each on an individual merit – We will never knowingly refuse anyone the right to move forward to independent living in a fully supported environment.

During the first few weeks you will get to know the staff. You will become familiar with how the house operates and may have a few ideas that you would like to see in operation. That is why we have house meetings this is where you all discuss daily issues in running your household.

House meetings can be requested at any time by any tenant or project worker/Manager. They can be led by any staff member or upon request and agreement by the service user.

With the help of you, the project workers/managers, care manager and where appropriate family, a support plan will be written up. This is to help you on your path towards independence and enables you to gain the skills to achieve your ambitions.

However long your stay is, we hope your new home will be a happy and fulfilling experience for you. All at Supported Living Services are here to ensure that you have a safe, secure and homely environment.

Within the function of Supported Living Services we cannot accommodate those with a mental health issue. Placement is reliant upon whether Supported Living can be foreseen to meet and be responsive to the needs of the referred person.

Referrals are made to Supported Living through Social Services departments. All service users must have a pathway plan, risk assessments prior to placement being offered.

In accordance with the company admission criteria Supported Living Services will create a support plan in respect of the service users needs, religious and cultural identity. Such plans will reflect variations in diet, dress and any risks involved.

Admission Procedure

Upon receiving a referral Supported Living Services will request a sufficient information to ascertain whether the referral falls broadly in line with any of our criteria, I.e. age, sex, presenting problems, projected length of stay and funding.

Once this information has been received a referral panel meeting with the Director/Proprietor, Managers and Project workers will take place in order to identify if the referral meets our criteria and what service we would be able to provide in line with our purpose and function. Upon the outcome of this meeting we would contact the Social Services with the appropriate amount of hours of support and a date for moving. Together with various other papers that would need to be completed and sent back to Supported Living Services before the service user starts their tenancy. i.e. Placement agreement, risk assessments.

Prior to admission Supported Living Services will need to receive as much information, documentation on the service user as possible. This should include copies of any medical history, education and work history. At this point the service user will be issued a tenancy agreement, service user's handbook and any other relevant information.

On the day of admission the service users room will be prepared before he/she arrives. On arrival the service user will return the tenancy agreement signed and dated.

Health

Upon admission it will be ascertained if the service user needs a complete health check and to register with a local G.P. This also encompasses registration with other health services deemed necessary.

Medication will be assessed and recorded within the support plan. With a view to independent living all medication will be collated and setup in blister pack format for the client to take.

Contraception and sexual health issues are openly discussed in response to need and good practical advice is actively promoted by the staff, and where necessary community nurses or clinics are accessed for advice. Any health issues which require attention will be acted upon and included in the care and support planning consultation with all relevant parties.

Finance

All of us here at supported Living Services, will do all in our powers to help you towards independency and living the life you have chosen.

During your previous visits we have discussed the conditions and implications of living here, all of which you have accepted before your tenancy was confirmed.

A big part of living independently is being responsible for your own budget. The support staff will advise you on all the benefits that you are entitled to and will help you to claim them also they will offer practical advice on budgeting skills but all the decisions are your own, however if you do not pay your own expenses you may be breaking your contract. The rent is identified on your tenancy agreement and housing benefit will pay part of this and you must pay the difference.

Guidelines

Listed below we have set out the general rules you have agreed to live by and some policies and procedures designed for your safety and comfort:

Tenants must not enter the other tenant's rooms unless invited and accompanied by the tenant

Other Supported Living homes can only be visited by invitation and with consent of the tenants

Any aggressive behaviors, stealing or criminal damage will be reported to the police, social services and all other relevant parties.
And could result in termination of your tenancy

To pay your rent and household bills promptly

To do your share of the general cleaning upkeep of the garden

To be a law abiding member of society

To have consideration for your neighbours, fellow tenants and staff

To be involved in house meetings

To be aware of the service user handbook

Equal Opportunities Policy

The care plan will give proper consideration to family, ethnic and community ties and staff will promote such ties inline with those essential features of the care plan diet, religion, language, physical needs and our recruitment policy.

Supported Living Services aim to ensure that all of its employees, job applicants and service users are treated equally irrespective of disability, race, color, creed, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, age, sex, or sexual orientation. Our policy sets out instructions that all employees are required to follow in order to ensure that this is achieved.

Religious Observances

Each client will, as far as is practicable, have an opportunity to attend such religious services and receive such instructions, which are appropriate to his/her religious persuasion.

Positive steps will then be made to provide facilities to allow the client to practice his/her religion in a manner appropriate to his/her age and ability. The extent to which the staff can do this directly will of course depend upon their own religious persuasion. We may need to help the client make contact with local church or group of adherents to the client's religion. Great sensitivity will be given and the clients own family may be asked to assist. If the client is in contact with his/her own family it is possible that he/she could accompany his/her family for religious services.

Policy on physical intervention

Supported Living Services has a policy of non physical intervention as a behavior management tool.

Contact

Contact with family and friends are encouraged in accordance with individual support plans. This often takes place within the client's own home. However there is commitment to facilitate contact and if a client needs to be transported, this will be undertaken. There is a commitment to enhance and widen the circle of friends and acquaintances that the client has and every effort is made to widen the scope of the clients within the community, whilst maintaining their safety.

Telephone contact

In every home clients have access to a phone for emergencies. A list of on-call and emergency numbers is handed to all new clients and they are actively encouraged to have their own mobile phones.

Rights

Advising the service user of their rights in respect of complaints procedures, access to files and confidentiality policies ensures staff at Supported Living Services practice in a manner which not only treats the adult with equality and fairly but counters disadvantage. All service users will have equal rights to all services and treatments without exception.

Supported Living Services respects every adults right to live free from abuse in accordance with the principles of respect, dignity, autonomy, privacy, and equality. The staff is dedicated to the provision and encouragement of these rights without exception.

Staffing

Within the core unit staffing will be covered on a 24/hour basis.

Training

All new appointees on commencement of employment receive a three month induction program. From this individual training needs will be identified which will include that training that is mandatory – to be undertaken within the first six months of employment. Further training will be identified during the course of the staff regular supervision.

All new employees will have had a CRB, and references checked before any post will be offered.

Handovers

For ease of communication, there are communication books, where the previous shift will have recorded all points of relevance, appointments, general mood in the house and any likely or potential problems or areas of concern.

Staff Supervision

All staff will receive individual supervision from their line manager.

Quality assurance

Supported Living Services ensures service users are consulted about all aspects of the service during the monthly house meetings. These meetings are minuted and any suggestions are taken into consideration when revising the service offered. Clients also have the option to call meetings during the month.

Supported Living Services annually conducts a quality Assurance Survey this is distributed to all service users, their relatives/representatives and all interested parties. Results of the survey are sent to all mentioned parties in

an annual newsletter and the results are used in the future planning of the company.

Grievances

If at any time you have a problem / grievance that has not been sorted out with the house meeting to your satisfaction. The following procedures shall be applied to settle all disputes or grievances of concern to you.

The Procedure

Where you have a grievance, you will raise the matter at a house meeting

If the matter has not been resolved you can ask to be referred to a manager

A statement(s) summarizing the main details of the grievance and the reason for the failure to agree must be prepared and signed by all parties

In the event of a failure to agree, all parties will consider whether conciliation or arbitration is appropriate

The company may refer the disputes to social services or an independent advocate, whose findings may, by mutual prior agreement, be binding on all parties.

Complaints

Procedure

All service users, employees, and relevant bodies should be fully aware of the existence of the complaints procedure and what it means to them

Service users should be encouraged to comment on the service they are receiving and should not feel that making a complaint is a difficult process

Many problems that occur can be sorted out to everyone's satisfaction without becoming the subject of a formal complaint

However any complaint not so resolved should be recorded in writing and logged in the complaints book within seven days of the original complaint. The status of the complaint is now formalized

To make the process of the complaint easier for the service user there are key individuals within the organization identified to deal with complaints

Service users should be encouraged to record their complaint within three days

Where necessary, service users should be represented by a family member, friend or independent advocate. It is the key individuals responsibility to assist in this matter

All complaints will be acted upon and service users, employees and relevant bodies will be kept informed of action taken within 24 hours.

Complaints will be resolved in the shortest time frame possible. All parties will be informed in writing within twenty eight days of the outcome and action taken

The employees or who “named” will not be involved in the investigating complaints relating to their own behavior

Where serious allegations are made the “named” contact will not be involved from the beginning

After investigating the complaint and following the companies procedures with dealing with the complaint and the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation the complainant has the right to an independent complaints advisor

Where serious allegations suggest a criminal offence may have been committed the police should be informed. Where possible the wishes of the service user and/or the employees should be taken into account

The service users will not be victimized by the company or employees as a consequence of making a complaint

All complaints will be logged in the company complaints book

Client Complaints Policy

To ensure that the service we provide matches your needs and your expectations, we welcome any comments you may care to make

As one of our service users you are encouraged to raise issues which are of concern and to make complaints at any time using the procedures set out. Complaining can be a positive and constructive step in order to ensure the quality of your service. If you wish to complain about the service you are receiving from the company, or from an employee, you should follow the steps below;

If possible you should discuss the problem with any member of the team (not those involved in the complaint) who will do their best to resolve the problem

If you feel unable to discuss the problem or are unable to resolve it with the key individual, staff team or care manager.

If you still feel that it isn't resolved it is at this stage that it needs to be put into writing within seven days, and given to the key individual who will ensure that it is brought to the attention of appropriate managers. (You may wish to ask a relative to write out the complaint for you and you then sign it alternatively the key individual could help write the complaint for you, to check the accuracy, for you to sign and date).

If there is no immediate solution we will investigate your complaint fully, contacting those concerned and taking the appropriate action to ensure it should not happen again and discuss this with you.

Within twenty eight days of your original complaint, we will write to you with the details of our findings and any actions we have taken.

If at any stage you are unhappy with the way in which the company is dealing with your complaint, please feel free to contact your care manager.

Contact details for your care manager;

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This document any investigations or recommendations made in accordance with it does not in any way effect your rights in law.

Abuse

We aim to provide a safe and secure environment for you, but if you have any concerns about anyone or anything we would encourage you to report it to someone you trust. You can talk about anything even if it about someone who works or lives with you.

If you are worried about abuse or you wish to make a complaint or indeed a compliment there are some numbers listed below;

John Forrest (Proprietor/Director) 07976 725 979

Paul Nolan (Outreach Support Manager) 07970 303 553

Lesney Billings (Finance Manager) 01843 595 091

Other numbers and useful contacts please see Appendix A.

Health and safety

The staff will show you the risks involved in the kitchen, bathroom, and garden and generally around the house.

You with the project worker will identify any particular risks involved with your own health and safety and write the appropriate risk assessments.

Security

Have a routine to lock all doors and windows when you go out at night

Do not invite people you do not know into the house. If in doubt close the door and ask a staff member for advice.

Do not but anything from anyone on the door step and do not sign anything, unless you sure it is for yourself.

Fire Safety

The company fire officer will help you with fire safety issues identified below;

Escape routes in case of fire will be identified, planned and practiced

Make yourself aware of the position and sound of the smoke detectors and the correct maintenance and cleaning of them to ensure they are working properly

If you discover a fire shout “**FIRE**” to all in the house and get out of the house, assemble at the road opposite to the home. Where appropriate

We have a fire test weekly(also random tests in week)

Monthly evacuation test where all in the building must take part in.

These guidelines are to help you live safely and independently in the community and we are all here to help you to work and understand them.

Confidentiality policy

All work undertaken by employees is to be treated as confidential and is not to be discussed with any unauthorized persons, excepting the course of their duties and without compromising the clients rights of confidentiality, either during the period of their employment or any other time thereafter. Use, make public or discuss with or indulge to any persons any confidential document or information:

- A. concerning the business, accounts or finances of the Company, except where such information is a matter of public record; or
- B. concerning transactions or negotiations conducted with of/for any clients; or
- C. concerning negotiations with, correspondence, credit or financing arrangements relating to the company or its clients or any third party with whom such a customer is negotiating or conducting business,

Any breach of these terms will be regarded as gross misconduct and may result in disciplinary procedures.

Any request received by employees for information about any clients affairs received from another client or from any third persons, should be reported to the managers.

Staff should be conversant with the data protection act which governs the transmittal and handling of all information of a sensitive and confidential nature. At all times the individual records relating to both the clients as well as the staff employed by the organization should be kept in a secure location and access to which should be restricted to only those persons authorized to do so.

When passing information of a confidential or sensitive nature, whether, verbal, written or electronic (including email, fax and telephone) this should only take place through the line management structure of the agency.

Access to Files

Clients have the right to access information recorded by the agency in their individual files and should be supported in doing so by the organization. Any information contained in the files produced or supplied by a second or third party however is not subject to this, and written permission should be sought in this instance.