



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

**16+ ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT PROVISION
MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS**

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1. Introduction

Semi-Independent Accommodation and Support provision for 16 years and over is not registered under the Care Standards Act 2000 and is therefore not inspected by Ofsted.

Semi-independent provision includes:

- **Semi-independent Group Living:** Service offering a group living communal environment with staff on site to deliver bespoke programmes of support, based on individual need.
- **Floating Support with Accommodation:** Community based accommodation services with floating support, sourced within the private rental market and supported by one to one staffing of varying levels.
- **Floating Support:** Community based services providing floating support to enable young people to live in their chosen accommodation and achieve the aim of the young person successfully moving to independence.
- **Supported Lodgings:** The Host will provide a young person with a room of their own in a private home where they are a member of the household but not expected to become a member of the family. The Host will provide a safe and supportive environment working alongside professional services to help and support the young person in gaining skills for independent adult life.

The standards below will be applied to all organisations providing semi-independent accommodation and support for Reading's young people in the care of the local authority, those coming into care and those 16 – 18 year olds (including UASC) coming through the Housing route assessed as a 'Child in Need'.

2. Managing Risk and Placement Matching

Each organisation that provides shared accommodation for 2 or more young people will have an assessment, risk management and client matching policy to ensure young people do not present a risk to each other. This is particularly important when a provider places young people from different local authorities or where providers support young people from age 16 – 24.

3. Client information

Any client information provided by Reading Borough Council should be treated in the strictest confidence. All information and files on clients should be held in a locked and secure setting. Computers containing client information must always be password protected and compliant with Data Protection Act requirements.

4. Referrals and Placements

All referrals will be sent to Providers using password protected documents. Passwords will be sent by separate email.

Where practical a young person should view a new placement or accommodation prior to moving and their wishes and feelings should be taken into account. The young person's education, training and employment needs must be considered when assessing the placement suitability and location.

5. Property – Health and Safety

Supported Accommodation providers should ensure all properties comply with current Health and Safety Legislation requirements and have an up to date Health and Safety Policy.

6. Provider Insurance Cover

Supported Accommodation Providers must hold the following levels of insurance cover:

Professional Indemnity Insurance	£5 million
Employers Liability Insurance	£10 million
Public Liability Insurance	£5 million

Providers must have appropriate damage and contents insurance cover in order to make good all damage to the property and ensure replacement of the provider's equipment and contents.

7. Events and Notification Procedure

Providers will have a Notification Policy which sets out the arrangements for notifying Reading Borough Council of any serious incident. The provider must have a process in place to notify the local authority within 24 hours of the occurrence of any significant event.

A written record must be kept which includes details of the action taken and the outcome of any action or investigation following a notifiable event.

8. Case Recording

The Provider will record all contacts with clients (young people), professionals, young people's family and friends and other individuals or organisations relating to young people in their placement.

Case files should be structured as follows:

- Basic and Essential Information
- Referral form
- Individual Placement Agreement
- Placement Plans, Care Plans and Pathway Plans
- Health Information and health Plans
- Personal Education Plans, Training and Employment Activities
- Risk Management Plan
- Letters
- Finance Information
- Supervision Actions
- Case Recording
- Keywork Sessions

9. Safer Recruitment

The provider's Safer Recruitment Policy must ensure potential applicants have:

- Photographic evidence of identity and the right to work in the UK signed and verified
- Evidence of their current address
- Qualifications evidenced
- Verification of gaps in employment
- 2 written references followed up by a telephone call
- A valid enhanced DBS
- Evidence of further checks where the member of staff has not always been residential in the UK to ensure their right to employment
- A personal interview
- All of the above checks and information requirements should take place and be confirmed before the staff member is provided with an offer of employment and a contract.

10. Staffing and Supervision

All staff should have a personnel file containing the following details:

1. Start date and personal contact information
2. Application Form, CV, appointing information, references and identity documentation
3. Qualifications and previous training
4. Evidence of a new enhanced DBS
5. Evidence of a risk assessment and risk evaluation where an enhanced DBS check highlights a 'trace'
6. Contract
7. Induction Programme and evidence of completion
8. Training record with the provider
9. Supervision notes
10. Record of sickness, leave, disciplinary issues

11. Staff Training

Providers should have a training strategy to ensure that they have a suitably skilled workforce to include:

1. Essential core and foundation training
2. Specialist and advanced training

All providers must have a matrix setting out the courses that each member of staff has completed and the frequency that courses should be repeated. Providers should detail the percentage of their staff that has a recognised health, social care and housing qualification.

As a minimum all staff must have attended:

1. Child protection/safeguarding training
2. Substance and alcohol misuse training
3. Managing risk training
4. Cyber bullying, e-protection training
5. Sexual exploitation training

6. Child and adolescent development training relating to preparation for independence and the transition to adulthood (leaving care).

Depending on the level of need of the young person placed within a particular provider setting, staff will be expected to have specialist and advanced skills.

12. Safer Caring

Providers should have policies on 'Safer Caring' that sets out guidance procedures and protocols regarding parameters within which staff work. The policy should cover:

- Lone working
- Entering young people's rooms
- Personal and private space – bedrooms
- Young people's visitors
- Young people's family visiting
- Shared space – communal areas
- Allegations of inappropriate behaviour
- Sanctions
- Staff codes and behaviour whilst on duty
- Undertaking external visits
- Confidentiality, sharing information and e-protection

13. Provider Staff – Personal Information

Provider staff must not share their own or family personal details or contact details with young people. They must be responsible regarding the information they leave on social networking sites and should not have contact with young people via these sites. Provider staff should not have contact with young people outside of working hours. Any such incidents must be reported to the provider manager and Reading Borough Council.

The Provider should have policies on staff personal disclosure and the types of information it is appropriate to share with young people to promote positive role models and working relationships and what should not be shared. Whilst this is a complex area, it is expected that providers will develop guidelines for staff members and should be covered in a 'Codes of Conduct' manual.

14. Boundaries and Confidentiality

Providers should not accept gifts from young people. However in practice young people will often give small gifts such as chocolate and to refuse these may be considered rejecting and may result in a negative working relationship. Where it is considered inappropriate to reject or turn down a gift the gift should be recorded and Reading Borough Council should be informed.

Providers should maintain confidentiality regarding all aspects of the young person's situation and circumstances. Information about current or previously placed young people should never be exchanged with other young people.

In situations where providers have concerns about any aspect of confidentiality or the need to share information they must always contact the nominated Reading Borough Council contact and the young person's social worker.

Young people must be made aware of the limits to confidentiality when they move to Supported Accommodation and that providers have a duty to share information where it is assessed that the young person is at risk or putting others at risk.

15. Equality and Diversity

The Provider should have equality and diversity policies that address how they will avoid discrimination on the grounds of gender, class, religion, belief, culture, race, language, sexuality and sexual orientation.

16. Meeting Cultural and Linguistic Needs

The provider organisation should be able to access staff who are able to understand and meet the cultural and linguistic needs of young people placed with them. This is particularly important where organisations are providing placements for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. Provider staff should have sufficient literacy skills to ensure that they can support young people with education activities involving form filling and written tasks as required.

17. Transporting Young People

Where providers transport young people the following requirements must be observed:

- Vehicles must have a valid MOT, to be roadworthy at the time of use and have a current Road Vehicle Licence (Tax)
- Drivers must hold a Full Driving License and have Fully Comprehensive Business Use Insurance. Both must be relevant to the category of vehicle used to transport the young person

18. Anti-Smoking Policy

Providers should have an Anti-Smoking Policy that sets out the providers approach to discouraging smoking which includes:

- Having a designated smoking area outside of the individual supported accommodation
- Ensuring staff do not smoke in the presence of young people
- Promoting the positive health benefits of non smoking
- Promoting strategies for helping young people to give up smoking

19. Anti-Bullying Policy

Providers should have an Anti-Bullying Policy that sets out the providers approach to discouraging and dealing with incidents of bullying that includes:

- Developing staff awareness and understanding of bullying
- Understanding cyber bullying

- Dealing with incidents of bullying
- Helping young people to understand bullying and its implications
- Helping young people to be assertive and disclose bullying
- Promoting awareness of organisations and services that can support those being bullied

20. Substance Misuse Policy

Providers should have a Substance Misuse Policy that sets out the providers approach to discouraging and dealing with substance misuse that includes:

- Promoting knowledge (amongst staff and young people) of the effects of alcohol, prescription drugs, illegal drugs and other substances that can be misused.
- Awareness of agencies and services that can help young people deal with substance misuse and its effects
- Promoting strategies to assist young people avoid substance misuse

21. Promoting Positive Health Policy

Providers should have a Promoting Positive Health Policy that encompasses their anti-smoking and anti-substance misuse approach, as well as how the provider promotes general health and well being including positive nutrition, health awareness, sexual health, dental, optical and hearing awareness.

22. Missing Policies and Procedures

Young people assessed as capable of living in a semi-independent setting are generally expected to take a degree of responsibility for themselves, with appropriate guidance, as part of their preparation for independent living. Young people are expected to reside overnight on a full time basis in their supported accommodation, however, if they wish to stay away on an occasional basis they should seek permission from their social worker. The young person should provide an address and contact details in order that a risk assessment can be undertaken and permission given. This is required to ensure all 16 and 17 year olds are safeguarded and their whereabouts are known.

The Missing Policy should set out the procedure in the event of the following three categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Absconding
3. Missing Young Person

Providers should develop a 'Missing and Absence' Policy detailing how they monitor young people placed with them which sets out:

- What time the young person is expected to return to the accommodation
- Signing young people in and out of the accommodation (also required for health and safety and fire monitoring procedures)
- A process for assessing whether a young person who is not present in the accommodation is an unauthorised absence, an absconder or a missing young person

- Where Provider staff have any concerns regarding a young person who is absent from the placement and there are any risks/issues regarding the young person (both to the young person and others) it may be appropriate to report them missing immediately to the Police
- Provider staff should contact their manager, the young person's social worker, the nominated Reading Borough Council worker and the Reading Borough Council Emergency Duty Team.

When a young person moves to the supported accommodation a record of friends, family and key contacts should be made and an up-to-date photograph placed on file. In circumstances where the young person is missing, staff should contact the relevant friends, family and key contacts and where necessary the photographs should be provided to the police. Young people should be made aware of the process that will be followed should they go missing. Any incident of a young person going missing must be notified to their social worker and the responsible authority named contact.

The Provider must hold a copy of the Reading Borough Council Safeguarding Children Board Procedures Manual and Children Missing from Home or Care and comply with all elements of the Policy and Protocol.

Where young people are placed out of Reading, the Provider must hold copies of the Local Authority Policy and Protocol for the given area on 'Missing Young People' and comply with this Protocol.

Supported Accommodation Providers Missing Policies will need to recognise the type of supported accommodation and the level of support being provided.

23. Health and Development

When young people first move to Supported Accommodation, providers should ensure young people are registered with:

- Doctor
- Dentist
- Optician

In addition providers should ensure young people are aware of the nearest:

- Accident and Emergency Unit
- NHS walk-in health centre
- Sexual Health Clinic
- Alcohol, drug and substance misuse service
- Services related to mental health and emotional well-being

Young people should understand how to access these services and the benefits they can provide.

24. Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Providers should develop a Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy to incorporate:

- Complaints from young people
- Comments and concerns raised by young people and professionals

- Compliments from young people and professionals
- Gathering young people's feedback
- Ensuring feedback regarding young people's views to the responsible authority

25. Preparation for Adulthood and Independence

The primary task of the Supported Accommodation Provider is to assist young people to develop practical, emotional, relationship, resilience and financial skills to achieve a successful transition from care to independent living within a safe caring framework including:

Independence skills

- Managing finances including budgeting and paying bills
- Shopping and meal planning
- Food preparation and cooking
- Washing clothes
- Cleaning and basic home maintenance
- Personal hygiene
- Setting up utilities
- Health & Safety within the accommodation, in particular fire safety and carbon monoxide safety
- Claiming welfare benefits (where appropriate)
- Supporting to find and make a planned move on to other suitable affordable accommodation before the young person becomes 18 years old
- Accessing and maintaining education, training and work opportunities by ensuring the young person has access to guidance and support with job applications i.e. CVs, completing application forms and understanding interview techniques.
- Relationship Skills: Providing support and guidance to the individual young person in relation to the development and maintenance of friends and work/education relationships
- Social Integration through: Supporting the young person to have an increased awareness of local community based recreational and leisure facilities and increase their social, problem-solving and communication skills.

26. Measuring and Evaluating Outcomes

The provider will have effective monitoring tools for evaluating outcomes such as the Reading Borough Council Outcomes Monitoring Form (Appendix Three of the Service Specification)

27. Business Contingency and Business Continuity

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Local Authorities to ensure that all suppliers have Business Continuity Plans in place to ensure that they can deliver their critical services and products in the event of an emergency or business continuity incident.

Business Contingency management is a holistic process that identifies potential threats and provides a framework for building organisational resilience with the capacity for an effective response.

Classification: OFFICIAL

Both Business Contingency Plans for the organisation as a whole and Business Continuity Plans for the individual homes/placements must be in place.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROVIDER ORGANISATION

Pre-assessment visit checks

The following documents must be made available to the local authority prior to the assessment:

1. Buildings insurance
2. Contents insurance
3. Employers insurance
4. Public liability insurance
5. Professional indemnity insurance
6. Completed Policy and Procedure Checklist
7. Up to date statement of purpose
8. Staff handbook
9. Current staff list with qualifications
10. 3 months staff rotas
11. Information Commission Registration Number
12. Staff DBS checks/records

Information required during Inspection Visit:

1. Emergency contact for staff if needed and the process
2. Vehicle insurance for organisation's own vehicles
3. Vehicle insurance evidence checks when employees use their own vehicles
4. Vehicle documents – evidence of suitability of staff transporting young people (MOT/insurance/driving license details etc)
5. Staff files (spot checks). Ensure staff have agreed that local authority officers can access these files
6. Supervision of staff, recorded consistently
7. Staff induction/probation/appraisal – induction programme
8. Staff training matrix is up to date with evidence of individual staff training held on file
9. Safeguarding children and young people – copy of local safeguarding board procedures
10. Complaints procedure and recording process
11. Evidence of planning and review procedures (care plans, placement plans, IEPs, personal education plans, health plans, transition plans).
12. Up to date Pathway Plan – how is the plan monitored and the outcomes recorded?
13. Key worker sessions documented and evidencing the young person being supported with independent living skills
14. Attendance at LAC reviews and frequency
15. Evidence of regular reports to social workers and the format of these i.e. written, verbal etc.
16. Finances are accounted for, money checks completed and policies followed
17. Evidence of seeking the views of young people placed and their family
18. Education Health & Care Plan
19. Evidence of a Positive Behaviour Management approach including recording systems for incidents requiring control and restraint.
20. Files are up to date with incidents, actions and progress of young people
21. Sample risk assessments for on and off site leisure activities

22. General condition of the property
23. DBS check records
24. Health and Safety of the property to include:
 - a. fire safety with evidence of weekly fire system checks, equipment checked by a professional and signed off and fire doors in good working order
 - b. first aid, including staff trained in first aid on duty
 - c. accident recording
 - d. electrical equipment PAT tested
 - e. security
 - f. gas/electricity and monthly water temperature checks
 - g. kitchen equipped to enable safe food hygiene
 - h. maintenance logged and reported

The Local Authority representative may ask to see a copy of any of the policies detailed below.

The Provider must have the following Policies & Procedures in place:

1. Statement of Purpose
2. Safer Recruitment
3. Safeguarding
4. Lone working
5. Whistle blowing /allegations of abuse
6. Disciplinary
7. YP at Risk of Sexual Exploitation
8. Missing from Home
9. Weapons
10. CCTV (where there is a system installed)
11. Health, Safety and Fire Risk including Buildings Regulations/Requirements
12. Quality Assurance and Monitoring Procedure
13. Managing risk
14. Managing Challenging Behaviour
15. Client Matching
16. Managing client information
17. Referrals, Admissions and exclusions
18. Notifiable events
19. Case recording
20. Staffing and supervision
21. Staff skills and training
22. Staff personal information
23. Professional Boundaries
24. Confidentiality
25. Equality and diversity
26. Transporting
27. Anti-smoking
28. Anti-bullying
29. Substance misuse

30. Health care policy (promoting health awareness)
31. how young people can access their information and files
32. Preparation for independence policy
33. Compliments, comments and complaints and grievance policy
34. Promoting family contact policy
35. Safety guidance for leisure activities/on/off site activities
36. Medication policy