

INFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY HOSTS

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LAMBETH COUNCIL

**“I HAVE
POTENTIAL”**

SUPPORT A YOUNG PERSON
TO FULFIL THEIR GOALS

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT**

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SOUTH LONDON



What is Community Host Scheme	3
Who can be a community Host	3
Reasons why a young person needs a Community Host	4
Assessment Process for Community Hosts	5
Role of the family mediation service	7
Emergency, Security and Financial Support	7



WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY HOST SCHEME

The Community scheme is an innovative new way to support young people at risk of homelessness. If a young person can no longer live in their family home, the scheme will find suitable placements in the community, this could be with a family, couple or single person.

The scheme aims to provide supportive accommodation in a homely environment for young people to help them gain the skills required to become independent. Community hosts will be required to work in partnership with South London YMCA.

WHO CAN BE A COMMUNITY HOST

South London YMCA aims to recruit hosts who are locally based families, couples or individuals, able to provide accommodation and some support to young people in understanding and overcoming their issues. The host recruitment process will be rigorous and transparent.

You need to have a spare room in your home, and the time to provide support and motivation to a young person.

After references are taken up and medical check obtained, hosts will be provided with training to prepare them for the role. Hosts will be required to provide each young person with somewhere to stay, and basic support. When a young person in need of accommodation has been identified, they will make an initial visit with a South London YMCA worker to meet the host family and look at the accommodation. Following this visit, both parties will be given a few days to consider the suitability of the placement, a second visit will be made by the young person to the host on his own and only then once both have decided they wish to proceed will any paperwork be signed.

A young person may be placed with a community host on a temporary basis, (while mediation takes place with the young person and their family to assess whether the young person can return to the family home) or on a more long term basis of 12 to 18 months.

Support Workers will meet with the young person regularly, usually once a week, to give support, guidance, advice and ensure that the placement is progressing well. Sometimes this will take place at the office or other appropriate venue but other times, it will be on your premises.

We will help young people to maximize their benefit entitlements, access suitable training courses and/or assist to complete job applications.

REASONS WHY A YOUNG PERSON NEEDS A COMMUNITY HOST

Some young people are unable to live at home with their families for a number of reasons including:

- bereavement of parents
- family breakdown
- unaccompanied minors
- parents in prison
- risk of harm at home
- parents have mental health problems
- parents in hospital
- parents on drugs and /or alcohol
- young person displays challenging behaviour
- young person at risk of sexual harm and emotional abuse
- young person beyond parental control
- family crisis
- homelessness

With the young person's consent, we will tell you why they have become homeless.

STAFF SUPPORT

While a young person is living with a Host, as well as receiving support from the host they will also have a dedicated support worker employed by South London YMCA.

The community host worker will help with problems and make sure that the young people are happy, safe and that their needs are fully met.

- they will meet with the young people weekly to do formal support work and find out how the placements going
- they will arrange meetings and accompany the young people to some appointments.
- They will organise support and placement reviews
- they will help you to claim any benefits which you are entitled to.

The community host workers and hosts will jointly work to help the young person to develop the life skills needed to move on to future independent accommodation.

All the young people will be strongly encouraged to be in education, training or employment whilst living with a host.

Community Hosts will be provided with 24 hours ongoing support and will have round the clock access to staff in the event of an emergency involving the young person.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS OF COMMUNITY HOSTS

To be considered as a community host;

- you will be required to complete an application form, where a couple is applying, each person may need to complete an application form although their application will be considered together.
- you will then receive a letter informing you whether or not your application is successful and can progress to the next stage of the assessment
- the next stage will be the initial home visit to see the spare room and to conduct a health and safety check of your home, this will include finding out if you have gas safety certificate, electrical safety certificate, smoke/ fire alarm are fitted on each floor. If we identify any problems regarding health and safety, we would discuss and advice on how this could be rectified
- you will receive a letter informing you of the outcome of the initial home visit and what happens next
- if you are approved to go to the next stage, we will visit you again to start your formal assessment. This will include your background, family profile, ability to support a young person, ability to provide a safe and caring environment, skills, interests, hobbies, talents, weaknesses, career, employment, relationships and personality. During home visit, we will need to see **two** identification documents. **These areas will be explored in a relaxed atmosphere to enable us to reach a decision as to your suitability to become a host to a young person, we will be non-judgemental on your answers, comments or situation.**
- you will be asked to provide **three** referees, we will then arrange to meet with the referees to interview them about your ability to support a young person in your home. Any information received will be confidential.

- you will be required to attend a number of training sessions to prepare you as a community host.
- you and all adults in your home will be required to undergo a police check (CRB) and we will also require a medical reference from your doctor. We may also ask questions about your financial situation and if you have arrears on your home.
- you will be given a copy of your assessment report excluding any confidential information received on you.
- if your initial assessment has been successful, you will be introduced to a young person.

Remember that you can stop the assessment at any stage if you are not entirely comfortable with the assessment.

Stages;
1. Information Evening
2. Completed Application forms returned
3. Initial Home Visit
4. Formal Assessment begins
5. Referees contacted and Visited
6. CRB / Medical checks, home check
7. Introduction to young person
8. Training Sessions begin
9. Introduction to young person
10. Contract agreed and signed.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A COMMUNITY HOST

1. To provide a bedroom in a homely setting which helps the young person to develop confidence.
2. To give the young person access to the kitchen, bathroom and living room.
3. To have patience and understanding.
4. To communicate and empathise with the young person.
5. To provide the young person with the front door and bedroom keys.
6. To provide a safe, friendly and supportive environment that will allow the young person to have their needs met through support.
7. To contribute to the young person's developmental plans.
8. To act as advocate for the young person
9. To understand with training provided by South London **YMCA**, issues of confidentiality, risk assessment, boundaries, diversity, child protection, communication skills, lone working, drugs and alcohol, stress management, challenging behaviour, dealing with allegations and other South London **YMCA** policies. (You will be issued with a certificate for every training attended).

10. To work in partnership with South London **YMCA** in supporting and preparing the young person to gain lifeskills needed for adulthood including cooking healthy meals, budgeting, personal hygiene and cleaning.
11. To encourage a young person in day time activities e.g education, training and employment.
12. To inform South London **YMCA** if the young person is unwell.
13. To inform South London **YMCA** of any incidents that occur with the young person.
14. To inform South London **YMCA** if the young person drops out of a planned daily activities.
15. To inform South London **YMCA** if the young person breaches any of the house rules or conditions of stay.
16. To inform South London **YMCA** if the young person fails to return to the host home.
17. To attend community hosts quarterly meetings.
18. To keep written records of support provided and attend review meetings.
19. To attend recommended training.

ROLE OF THE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE

The aim of family support service is to help young people to achieve better understanding and improve communication and relationship with their families. Conflicts within the home are a major cause of homelessness among young people and the family mediation service will ensure where possible that the young people are able to return home.

Referrals to the Community Host scheme will be from the relevant (depending on the Borough) Local Authorities Supporting People Team. They will have as much information on the young person as possible. However, we will complete our own forms including needs and risk assessments. If we accept the young person on to the Scheme, we will try to match the young person's needs to the most suitable community host. We will arrange to take the young person to the host family to see if they feel the placement could go ahead. At this stage neither the young person nor the Community host would be made to go ahead if they did not feel totally comfortable and another young person would be found.

EMERGENCY, SECURITY AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Our community hosts will not be left without support in any emergency occurring with a young person. South London **YMCA** will provide community hosts with daytime and out of hours emergency numbers. Community hosts will be trained and expected to know when to call emergency services e.g police, ambulance and fire services. However, where a young person is disruptive as a result of being under the influence of drinks and/ or drugs, we may arrange to remove the young person to one of our hostels to spend the night. The community host manager will make weekly contacts with hosts either through visits or by telephone to ensure that the placement is progressing satisfactorily.

The aim of the community host scheme is to show an accepting and non-judgmental attitude to a vulnerable young person who needs support. However, whilst showing them trust, we do not want to put them in a position where they may be tempted to abuse the hospitality being offered. You should bear in mind that a young person in your home may have been subject to physical, emotional or sexual abuse.

Young person's bedroom

- Ensure that the bedroom window can be opened in an emergency.
- Ensure there is adequate ventilation and light in the room.
- Ensure there is no dampness in the room.
- Ensure that the bedroom door has a lock.
- Ensure that the young person has sole use of the room.
- Ensure that the bedroom is comfortable and fully furnished, and of a reasonable size.

Keys

The young person will receive two keys, one for the front door and the other to their bedroom. If they lose the key it will need to be replaced and the young person will pay for the replacement cost.

House Rules

South London **YMCA** will assist to devise fair house rules when a young person is placed with a host. There will be a licence agreement between the young person and the Community host which will set out what is and what is not acceptable, the young person will have some input in drawing this up.

Financial support for Hosts

Hosts will receive rent for the room of approximately £80 to £100 per week; they will also receive a support cost of £80 to £100 per week.