

UASC Lodgings Host Information Pack

What are UASC Post 18 Lodgings?

UASC clients are “Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children” who have come to the UK under the age of 18 without a parent or other adult family members to support and nurture them. They have claimed asylum from the Home Office and have been transferred to other parts of the UK (other than where they first entered the country) under the National Transfer Protocol.

Under this arrangement Suffolk County Council have taken responsibility for accommodating and supporting a number of young people. Under this arrangement YMCA Trinity and another provider have been housing small groups of young people in the private rented sector in shared houses supported by our staff. This arrangement cannot continue once the young person turns 18 so we seek to move them to a lodging arrangement with a host family who has a spare room to let out.

Whilst the young person awaits the outcome of their asylum application this arrangement is paid for by Suffolk County Council. Once they receive the Right to Remain the arrangement can convert to one where they either claim housing benefit or ultimately pay their own rent once they are employed and earning a wage.

The Lodgings Scheme provides a safe and supportive environment for the young person, and an opportunity for them to develop life skills and the confidence to live independently. UASC Lodgings do not aim to replace the young person’s family, simply to allow the young person to have a comfortable and supportive home for the period of awaiting their asylum. Once they receive decision on their application they either are removed from the UK or may decide to move elsewhere e.g. if they know people in other areas. However they may choose to remain living in Suffolk and successful placements under the scheme may become longer term private lodgings arrangements.

How will UASC Post 18 Lodgings Work?

The young person will live as an adult member of the household, they will rent a room and they will have their own front door key. They will share bathroom, kitchen, laundry equipment, lounge and living space with other members of the household, and may also share meals. The young person should make a financial contribution towards their bills.

Young people will only be placed on the scheme if they have been assessed as suitable and the Host will have the final say on whether or not to accept a young person to live in their home.

The UASC Lodgings project works closely with the Leaving Care Team, who will continue to provide help and guidance for the young person during their stay. The young person enters into a written agreement between themselves, the Host, YMCA Trinity and Suffolk CC setting out the terms of their placement and the expectations of them.

Guidelines for UASC Lodgings Hosts

Hosts are not foster carers or counsellors, but they do act as much more than just a landlord. They encourage a young person to become more independent, offer friendly help and advice on 'life skills', such as cooking, cleaning, ironing, and budgeting, and motivate the young person to take responsibility for themselves and what they do.

All the young people who come on the scheme will have a Young Persons Advisor (YPA) from the Leaving Care Team who will support and help them with training and accommodation. Hosts are responsible for providing some meals, ensuring the young person has a safe place to live, providing emotional and practical support, and encouraging their motivation towards education and training .

Each young person will have different needs which Hosts can help them with, for example learning to cook, shopping for food, budgeting etc. We do not expect you to do everything for them – the aim is that they learn the skills they will need to survive reasonably well when they move out on their own - but you will probably need to help them to do things for themselves in the first instance. It might be that the young person is already quite able to do practical things, but needs a little extra emotional support and encouragement.

A written agreement will always be completed, which will provide safeguards, clarity, continuity and accountability, as well as setting boundaries.

When young people move into UASC Lodgings, it is likely to be a time of considerable change and adjustment for them. Sometimes there will be a 'honeymoon' period before young people are able to be clear about their views and wishes. In any event, it will be very important that everyone involved understands the arrangements and agreement. These arrangements and agreement will be individually tailored to the young person's needs and the providers' requirements. Everyone involved will agree whatever is arranged, as the conditions are attached to the young person staying in the placement.

Young people should be involved in agreeing the rules and daily living routines. Hosts and young people should respect each other's privacy and confidentiality, e.g. Hosts will not open a young person's mail.

Most young people may prefer to be flexible around food, and may not necessarily want to eat when you do, but mealtimes are a good opportunity for

the young person to act as a member of the household. Other household tasks should be agreed between the Host and the young person.

Financial Implications

-  The young person should pay you £20.00 weekly out of their own money, as their contribution towards household bills and any shared food. Asylum Seekers do not have the right to claim benefits or work so they are given a personal allowance of around £50 per week to meet living costs.
-  Any money Hosts receive for this service counts towards your income and should be declared to HMRC.
-  Hosts may receive welfare benefits at the same time as being a Host. However they should declare the income to the relevant benefits office.
-  If your home is rented or mortgaged, you should check whether you need permission from the Landlord or Lender. You should make it clear that you will be living there and sharing the accommodation with a young person, rather than offering a tenancy.
-  Your household insurance provider will need to be informed that a young person is staying with you as a lodger. YMCA Trinity's insurance cover is for our employees and buildings only.

What Support will I get?

As part of the assessment process, you will be asked to explain why you want to become a Host and about the skills, experience and attributes you would bring to the role. You will have the opportunity to discuss with the UASC Lodgings co-ordinator where you feel your strengths and weaknesses lie, and whether there are any particular issues you would like support with. Initially, you will receive training including safeguarding.

Being a UASC Lodgings provider may be frustrating and challenging at times. While you may have the support of family and friends, it is also important to have access to professional support. To ensure the scheme runs well, each Host receives support from the YMCA and this includes regular telephone and email contact as well as a face to face meeting at least once a month from a member of the UASC team.

Tasks and Responsibilities of UASC Lodgings Hosts

You will not have parental responsibility for your lodger. However we expect that Hosts will offer a warm and welcoming environment that the young person can call "home". This predominantly is created as a result of the warmth you show towards the young person. In addition to the support we hope you will be able to offer, a Leaving Care worker will be responsible for assisting the young person with any difficulties which may arise while helping them prepare for

more independent living, once they receive an outcome of their asylum application.

It is essential that you are clear about your responsibilities towards the young person, and that they are clear about what they can expect from living with you. You will not be expected to act towards the young person as a parent would, but there will be specific areas which you will be expected to help them with. These will be:

1. To provide a safe and consistent environment for the young person providing them with advice and adult support as and when required.
2. To liaise with the young person's YPA, and other agencies.
3. To take responsibility for decision-making on a day to day basis on matters that affects the young person's lodgings.
4. To contribute to the young person's care plan (if required) and preparation for independence by assisting the young person to develop life and social skills.
5. To provide a bedroom for the young person's sole use. To provide bathroom facilities and access to a kitchen for the storage of food and preparation of meals.
6. To collect a contribution from the young person towards the cost of the lodgings as agreed
7. To report to the YMCA Support worker if the young person is not living in the placement, is unwell, not attending education, training or work, or not caring for him/herself.
8. To support the young person in the use of community resources.
9. To participate in planning meetings, case conferences, reviews and other meetings as appropriate.
10. To inform the YMCA of any significant change in the young person's circumstances.

What happens next?

The Assessment Process Explained

We are sure you will appreciate that a robust process is necessary to carry out all of the checks to ensure support which of the highest standard. The safety of our young people is paramount. As you can see there is a

significant process to work through and it is likely that it will take more than one home visit. The good thing about that is you will be able to ask about anything you are unsure of as the process progresses.

Assessment Form

The assessment form is in two parts:

Part 1 asks for factual information about you and any other members of your household.

Part 2 asks about why you want to become a Lodgings Provider and about the skills, experience and attitudes you would bring to the role. It also asks about what you would expect of a young person and about the support you would be prepared to offer.

Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure Form

In the interests of the safety of our young people, we will ask you and any member of your household over the age of 16 to complete a Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure form. Do not worry if you have minor traffic offences or other minor offences from many years ago. Our main concern is the safety of the young person. In addition, we may also need to speak to your children or other people living in the house. We will check to see if you are known to Social Services.

Health & Safety Check

We also need to make sure that your home is fit for the UASC Lodgings Scheme. We need to look around your home and at the bedroom you have for a young person in order to carry out a Health and Safety check.

References

We will ask for the names addresses of two referees. These should not be provided by friends or family.

Training

You will be asked to complete training to ensure you are prepared for a young person to be placed with you. You will also be asked to sign a UASC Lodgings agreement with the YMCA which sets out what you can expect from the scheme and what the scheme expects from you as a lodgings provider.

After this, we will be able to match a young person with you, and begin the process of arranging for them to come and live with you.

Some Frequently Asked Questions about UASC Lodgings:

Q: I have a criminal conviction – can I still be part of the scheme?

A: We need to know about all previous criminal convictions. There are some convictions of a serious nature that would make it impossible for us to place a

young person with you. The best thing to do is complete the application form and we can take it from there.

Q: Can I provide UASC Lodgings if I smoke?

A: Yes, but we would ask you to be sensitive about a young person's feelings and needs as well as their health and right to live in a healthy environment.

Q: Do I have to be married or have had children of my own?

A: No, we value each individual's commitment, enthusiasm and energy over their personal circumstances.

Q: I experienced difficulties when I was a young person – can I still be part of the scheme?

A: If you have had problems in your personal life, you can still be part of the scheme, although we will ask you to discuss this to make sure you will be able to look after a young person, which can sometimes be stressful. It may be that your own tough experiences will give you a much better understanding of the problems young people face.

Q: I have some health problems. Will that be an issue?

A: In most cases, your health condition will not be a problem. Only a very debilitating illness would prevent someone from becoming a lodgings provider. Every person is considered individually, and our main concern is that a person's health and well being is not affected or that current health problems are not made worse by the additional responsibility of having a young person living with you in your home.

Q: How late can a young person stay out?

A: Most young people might like to think that they can return home at whatever time they choose. It is really up to you to decide what you think is reasonable, taking into account the young person's vulnerability, their commitments to work or education, and where they are going. It is likely that they will be expected home earlier on weekdays than at weekends. This will be discussed with yourself, the young person, and their support workers.

Q: Is the young person allowed to drink alcohol in my home?

A: The issue of alcohol will be negotiated with each young person as part of the individual placement agreement with their lodgings provider.

Accommodating a Young Person

When a young person is in need of UASC Lodgings, and we think that they would be a good fit with you, we will give you information about them. You will also be able to meet them before you decide whether you want them to live with you. The final decision about whether to accommodate a young

person will always be yours, and you should never agree for a young person to live with you if you are uncertain that you will get on well.

We will not place a young person with you if they are currently involved in criminal activity. However, some of our young people may have minor offences in their past. We will talk to you about this before we place a young person with you, so that you are able to make an informed decision about whether you want them to live with you.

We will not place a young person with you if they have substance misuse problems or chaotic behaviour. This scheme is only for young people who do not need a lot of support.

The safety of young people, and their protection from exploitation, is an important part of UASC Lodgings. Clear agreement must be in place between the young person and you about what time they are expected home, overnight stays with friends and relatives, whether they will be home for meals or will make their own arrangements etc. You must always be kept informed about the young person's whereabouts generally.

Safety and Security

One aim of UASC Lodgings is to show an accepting, non-judgmental attitude to young people in need of accommodation. 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 to them. You should bear in mind that the young person in your home may not be used to a secure financial situation, or may have been subject to physical or sexual abuse, and should be prepared to adjust your routine accordingly. Try to view your house from the perspective of a visitor, and make any adjustments required.

The Young Person's Room

- ↪ Ensure the bedroom window can be opened in an emergency
- ↪ Remove your personal possessions from the room
- ↪ Ensure the room does not have a lock, and cannot be accessed from the outside
- ↪ To avoid embarrassment, remember to close your bedroom or bathroom door, and wear a dressing gown or other clothes when leaving your room

Valuables

- ↪ We will provide a lockable box to keep in their room for their important papers and valuables.

- ↪ Items of value like your wallet or purse should be put in a less accessible place. Remember that items which may seem of little value to you could be viewed differently by a young person
- ↪ Credit card receipts, bills or other documents which might hold sensitive information about you should be removed from view
- ↪ You are responsible for making suitable arrangements for the safekeeping of your valuables and possessions.

General

- ↪ Make sure that you have smoke alarms in the house, and that they are working and have a working battery where relevant. It is good practice to check batteries once a week.
- ↪ If you have supplies of alcohol or medication in the house, remove them from view and, if possible, from anywhere the young person could access them, e.g. by locking them away
- ↪ You should avoid entering into any financial agreement with the young person, other than those concerned with board and lodgings.

Insurance

You must have your own building and home contents insurance policies. We will need to see your insurance schedule for proof of this. You will need to inform your insurance company of the fact that you are offering a placement to a young person.

Any Damage to your Property

You will be reimbursed for replacements of any items which are lost or damaged by young people staying with you, up to a value of £50. Any damage or loss will be covered by your home insurance or the YMCA insurance. In the event of a claim, you will not have to pay the excess.

Emergencies

In case of an Emergency

In the very unlikely event of an incident occurring and escalating, the first concern should be your safety and that of your family. You should:

- ↪ Remain as calm as possible

- ↪ Remove yourselves from any danger
- ↪ Telephone the emergency services on 999 if appropriate
- ↪ Contact the UASC Lodgings co-ordinator and the young person's YPA as soon as possible

Out of Hours Emergencies

If a young person does not come back at night, if you have concerns you can contact the Emergency Duty Team at Social Care Services. The member of staff can then make decisions with you about what needs to happen next. We will give your contact details at the start of the placement.

Violence

If the young person threatens you or is violent towards you, you should make contact with the scheme co-ordinator and their YPA without delay. Don't forget that you should contact the police if you feel in immediate danger. Assault, violence, or the threat of this will usually result in the young person being immediately removed from the placement.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of an accident, you should telephone 999 and ask for an ambulance immediately. You should contact the UASC Lodgings co-ordinator as soon as possible.

You must inform the UASC Lodgings co-ordinator and the young person's Leaving Care worker about any illness or health problems occurring while the young person is staying with you.

After an Emergency

- ↪ You must write down their account of the incident, in order to help the police and other agencies with their enquiries if required to do so.
- ↪ The UASC Lodgings co-ordinator will visit your home and ensure you are listened to and feel supported. You will be offered the opportunity for recovery and reflection.
- ↪ The YMCA Line Manager must be made aware of the incident as soon as possible, and will take responsibility for liaising with the appropriate agencies.
- ↪ Staff will examine the incident, any records about the young person, and how the incident was managed, and consider whether anything could or should have been done differently.
- ↪ YMCA Trinity must review the incident, evaluate its handling, and make any necessary changes to policy and procedure.