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| **Eilís McDaniel**  Director  Family and Children’s Policy Directorate  **POLICY CIRCULAR** | |  |
| **Subject:**  **MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SUPPORTED LODGINGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG ADULTS (AGED 16 -21) IN NORTHERN IRELAND** | **Circular Reference:** **FCPD Communication 01/2016**  **Date of Issue: 10 March 2016** | |
| **For action by:**  Chief Executive, HSC Board  Director of Social Care and Children, HSC Board  Chief Executives, HSC Trusts  Directors of Children’s Services, HSC Trusts  Chief Executive, RQIA  **For information to:**  Chief Executive, NIHE  Chief Executive, Supporting People  Chief Executive, Council for the Homeless NI  Director of Housing Policy Branch, DSD  Asst Director Housing, DSD  Manager of Supported Housing Branch, DSD  Chief Executive, Fostering Network  Chief Executive, VOYPIC | **Related documents**  ***Minimum Leaving Care Services Standards for Northern Ireland***  <https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/standards-leaving-care-services-northern-ireland>  **Superseded documents**  N/A  **Status of contents:**  DHSSPS standards which must be complied with.  **Implementation:**  From date of publication – 9 March 2016.  **Enquiries:**  Any enquiries about the content of this Circular should be addressed to:  Family and Children’s Policy Directorate  DHSSPS  Room A3.5B  Castle Buildings  Stormont  BELFAST BT4 3SQ  🕿 028 90520243 🖂 fcpdadmin@dhsspsni.gov.uk  **Summary of contents:**  Supported lodgings aim to provide young people with safe, suitable and supportive places to live within a local familial type environment. The minimum standards for supported lodgings accommodation will set a benchmark to be used by current and future supported lodgings service providers to ensure the provision of high quality social care and housing support. They will also be used by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in their inspection of the supported lodgings service during a two year pilot and will be reviewed and amended as necessary on completion of the pilot. | |

**POLICY CIRCULAR – FCPD 01/2016**

**MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SUPPORTED LODGINGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG ADULTS (AGED 16 -21) IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

Dear Colleagues

The purpose of this circular is to bring to your attention the publication of the ***Minimum Standards for Supported Lodgings*** *–*  <https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/minimum-standards-supported-lodgings-young-people-and-young-adults-aged-16-21-northern>*.*

The Standards apply to Health and Social Care Trusts (HSC Trusts) and other agencies commissioned by HSC Trusts to assist them in delivering a high quality Supported Lodgings Service.

In addition to the STAY Supported Lodgings Project in the Southern HSC Trust, the Supported Lodgings Service is being expanded as part of a pilot. Preliminary work to establish the pilot commenced in April 2014 to: secure an Agency Provider for the Supported Lodgings Service; to appoint relevant staff for the delivery in Northern and Western Trust areas; and to develop policies and procedures that will govern the service and the recruitment, assessment, approval and training of hosts. The Standards will apply from date of publication and will be used by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority in their inspection of the supported lodgings service during the pilot and will be reviewed and amended as necessary on the completion of the pilot.

The Standards should be read in conjunction with the ***Minimum Leaving Care Services Standards for Northern Ireland*** which represents the minimum standard of service provision linked to leaving care services, expected of all HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland.

**Background**

The development of a continuum of supported living options to assist young people’s transition from mainstream care placements as they journey into adulthood is recognised as an essential element of the services available. Supported Lodgings are part of the continuum and offer an integrated care and housing support model that is in keeping with the needs of young people leaving care, as a step-down from a core care setting or young people presenting as homeless.

As the result of joint working between the NIHE and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) and HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland, it was recognised that the housing related support needs and social care needs of young adults, whether leaving care or homeless, are interlinked. The NIHE, HSCB and the HSC Trusts accepted that there were shared benefits in adopting an integrated approach to planning and providing a model of Supported Lodgings and worked together to develop a model for Northern Ireland. Under this model a young person is placed in a Supported Lodgings placement which is a host arrangement with a family with the involvement of the Supported Lodgings Service Provider, the referring agent and where applicable the agency with primary responsibility for the young person.

This model provides a supportive domestic environment for some young adults, in the transition towards increasing independence, which is more suitable at the time they present for services than alternative options such as hostels or independent tenancies or other joint supported accommodation projects.

**Development of Standards**

These standards have been developed in consultation with the HSCB, HSC Trusts, NIHE, RQIA, Council for the Homeless NI, Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) and Fostering Network.

The standards have been developed taking account of the Quality Assessment Framework administered by NIHE and The Supported Lodgings Good Practice Guide (Four Agency Supported Lodgings Project 2011), The Standards for Young Adults Supported Accommodation Projects in Northern Ireland 2012 and the National Minimum Fostering Standards (England and Wales) 2011.

**Monitoring of Compliance with the Standards**

Under Article 35 of the HPSS Order 2003, where RQIA is exercising its review and reporting function, it has the power to inspect and report on a Supported Lodgings Service.

Each Supported Lodgings Service Provider must comply with these standards. They must also ensure they remain compliant with the requirements of the Quality Assessment Framework administered by NIHE.

**Action required**

The Standards should be cascaded down through your organisation to all those involved in Leaving Care, Supported Accommodation and Looked After Children provision to assist them to deliver a high quality Supported Lodgings Service.



**Eilís McDaniel**

**Director of Family and Children’s Policy Directorate**