



The **Benjamin** Foundation

Linden House

Accommodation for young people age 16–18
in Norwich

Young Persons Handbook

This handbook tells you about our Housing and Homelessness service, Linden House in Norwich.

It gives you information about how we will support you and what you should expect from our service.

If you have any questions about the service, please talk to anyone in the team – they will be happy to help. If you could help us improve this handbook, please let us know.

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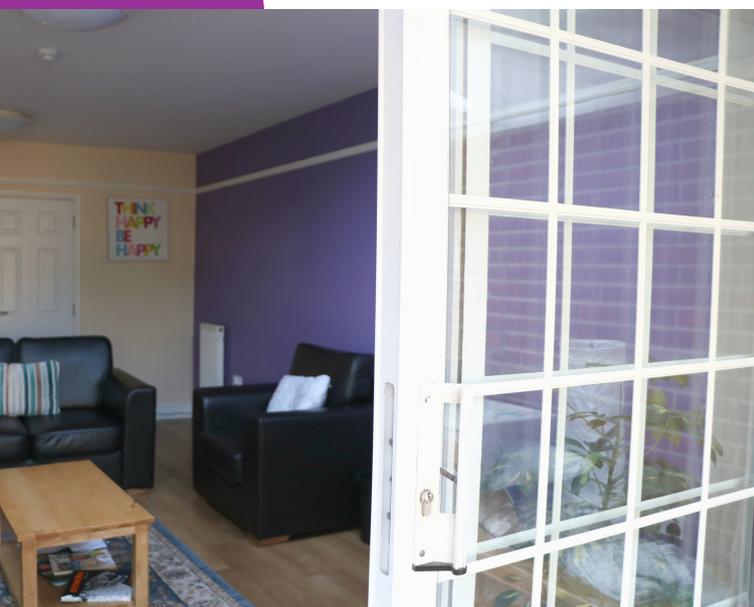
www.benjaminfoundation.co.uk

About The Benjamin Foundation and Linden House

The Benjamin Foundation is a local charity which helps people across Norfolk and Suffolk to deal with some of the challenges that life throws at them.

Whether it's the prevention of youth homelessness, helping families to build stronger relationships or providing positive activities for young people with limited opportunities in life, our work brings hope, opportunity, stability and independence to the people we support.

For more information about The Benjamin Foundation, please visit www.benjaminfoundation.co.uk



Linden House, which opened in 2015, is our accommodation centre in Norwich for young people aged 16 to 18.

Each young person has their own key worker – a qualified and experienced member of staff who will work with you and your Social Worker to agree and support you on the areas of your life you would like to focus on improving.

Staff are on duty 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to support you and to help you gain the skills you need, such as cooking, shopping and budgeting money, so you can leave us and forge an independent life.

Facilities at Linden House

Linden House provides a safe home and support for young people aged 16–18. There are four fully furnished bedrooms in the main house, each with their own bathroom. There is also a main kitchen, lounge and conservatory/dining room that everyone shares.

Next door to Linden House, there is a more independent flat attached to the main house where one young person at a time can live and prepare for their own independent place. This is designed to give you more responsibility than a room, so you can gain valuable skills in the day-to-day running of a flat to give you the experience needed for independent living.

Linden House is within easy reach of the city centre, making it a good base to get out and about in the community and have easy access to education, training and a social life – all important elements in becoming more independent and preparing for next stage of your life.

The Staff Team

Our staff team will work closely with you while you're here. You will be allocated a Support Worker, who will be here to help you on the path to becoming a confident young adult and to prepare you for independent life.

Settling In

Moving somewhere new can be a daunting prospect but don't worry! We create a safe and stable environment and our staff are welcoming, friendly and we're in the centre full time – so there's always somebody on site to support you.

You may only need a few weeks in a safe and stable environment but you can stay for up to two years – until you feel you have reached a stage where you feel you need less support, or you feel you can manage your own accommodation in the community.

If you need help with cooking or cleaning skills then please talk to your Support Worker, who will arrange to support you.

If you are in employment and need more flexibility with the curfew times that are at Linden House because of work rotas, then please talk to your Support Worker.



"I feel that I am listened to for the first time."

Before moving in, you will have a short interview and have the chance to look around and meet the staff and residents on site.

You will be given a copy of the house rules, which are largely based around respect for other people including fellow residents, staff and neighbours.

You will be asked to sign to say you understand and agree to them. If accepted and you move in, you will have an induction to explain things like fire regulations and procedures and you will also then be allocated a Support Worker. If you're not accepted, our staff will inform you how you can appeal.

Supporting You

Your Support Worker will work closely with you and existing professionals, such as Social Workers and other agencies who may be supporting you.

Initially, you will have weekly support sessions with your Support Worker and you can identify the areas you would like to get some help and make plans together to help you achieve your goals.

Above all, we want you to have great opportunities and consistent support while you are staying with us. Our principle aim is to give you the skills you need to live independently in the future.

You can request a support session at any time and we will do what we can to honour this. All support sessions are documented and agreed by you. All relevant staff can access your information.



"I settled in well. I now have new friends, a new home and I feel safe."



Outcomes Star

During your time with us, we will complete an 'Outcomes Star' with you. This helps us and you to see your progress during your time with us. The focus will be housing related support, but we will help you with all aspects of your life from education, health, wellbeing, self confidence and building social networks.

What you can expect from us

All staff have the skills, knowledge, experience and personal qualities to deliver a quality service. They receive an in-depth induction, training, management and regular supervisions, meaning that the service you receive will be reliable and consistent.

If you feel that any member of staff has not acted in this way or behaved inappropriately towards you, you may raise this directly with the worker involved, the Senior Support Worker, the Manager of the service, or you can ask for another representative. All concerns will be treated with respect and investigated. You will also be asked to provide regular feedback on your experience.

Rent, Service Charge, Making Payments

The rent at our supported accommodation centres will be covered by Housing Benefit if you are over 18 years old and if you are receiving benefits, or by Children's Services if you are under 18 years old.

Your Support Worker will help you complete the relevant paperwork to apply for Housing Benefit when you move in or help you understand rent if you are working.

Top-up rent is an amount of money that all young people have to pay each week. It covers things like gas, electric, water and TV licence. Again, your Support Worker will explain all this to you at your induction.

You can expect to be treated with respect and dignity at all times during your stay with us. We celebrate people's differences and will not discriminate and we expect you to do the same.

This means being polite, sticking to boundaries, keeping to appointments (or re-arranging them), and acting within the law. We will also provide you with our policies, such as confidentiality and our complaints procedure, which we will explain to you.



Respect and Dignity

Life Skills and the AQA Awards

While staying at our supported accommodation centre, you will have the opportunity to achieve awards through our Life Skills Scheme.

The scheme is not compulsory, but is in addition to your Outcome Star and gives you the opportunity to develop a record of achievement while you are staying with us.

The Ben's Life Skills Award Scheme consists of a number of different units, which aim to help you towards independent living. These include:

- Running a home
- Living on a budget
- Introduction to home safety
- Healthy eating
- Planning and preparing a meal
- Plus many more!



Drugs and Alcohol

The Benjamin Foundation has a zero tolerance policy regarding drugs and action will always be taken in the event of this policy not being followed.

The Benjamin Foundation does not allow drugs to be brought onto any of our premises and our charity does not condone or approve of drug use, possession or supply. We aim for all of our services to be drug-free.

However, we recognise that people may be currently using drugs or alcohol, therefore we aim to provide appropriate support to service users and not just exclude people who need support in this area. If this applies to you, please talk to your Support Worker.

A copy of our Drugs and Alcohol Policy will be given to you at your induction.

"The Benjamin Foundation have helped me gain independence, confidence, self-esteem and I have discovered more about myself."



Celebrating Diversity



We celebrate people's differences and do not discriminate.

An individual's lifestyle is usually based on their cultural values, beliefs and life experiences and these should not be dismissed just because we see a person as 'different.'

We ask our service users about their needs and wishes, their culture and how they like things to be done.

We respect different cultures and challenge those who do not. We offer activities and promote an environment that includes people from different backgrounds.

If you have any concerns, or if you need any information to meet your individual needs, please speak to your Support Worker.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

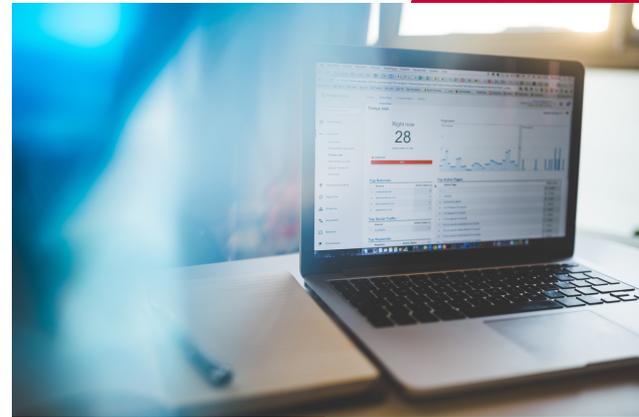
We're committed to providing a confidential service. You have a right to privacy and we want you to have trust and confidence in the service that is supporting you. This includes keeping your personal information safe and secure. We would only pass information to anyone outside of The Benjamin Foundation in very special circumstances:

- If you agree.
- In an emergency where you, staff or another person is at risk of harm.
- Where the law says information has to be provided.

Our first concern is YOU, the person using our service. Confidentiality prevents us from giving anyone information about you, even a close relative, unless we have your consent. We will go through this with you in detail – but feel free to ask us any questions about this. We will also provide you with a copy of our Confidentiality Policy at your induction.

We believe that bullying and harassment is unacceptable. If you think you are being bullied or harassed, tell us and we will support you.

If you would like more information about bullying, please speak to your Support Worker, the Manager of your service or visit www.childline.org.uk, or call 0800 1111 free, anytime.



Bullying and Harassment

Security, Health and Safety

We take Health and Safety very seriously and ensure that we comply with current Health and Safety legislation.

If there's anybody that you do not want to have any contact with, please make your Support Worker aware so we can ensure they're not allowed into the property.

In the event of an emergency, call the emergency services on 999.

If a Support Worker has an accident or becomes ill, the most important thing is **don't panic!** Remain calm and follow the procedure set out below:

1. Speak to the other member of staff on duty. Wake them if they are in bed.
2. They will ensure that help is sought as appropriate.

In the event of a fire:

Details of what to do if there is a fire in your building are displayed on the wall on the residents notice board near the front door. Please familiarise yourself with this procedure and talk to staff if you have any questions.

Emergency Procedures

Safeguarding Adults and Children

The protection of young people and children from abuse is recognised by The Benjamin Foundation as an absolute priority. By reporting any worries or concerns we protect ourselves and people we know from risk of abuse.

We will talk to you about this when we meet, but if you are worried or concerned that you are being abused in any way, contact your Support Worker, Manager of your service, Social Worker, Childline on 0800 1111, the Police on 101, or 999 in an emergency.

Whoever you talk to, they will take your concerns very seriously and will work with you and others to ensure that everyone is safe.

Getting involved

We're committed to getting you involved in our organisation. Your views and experience help us to improve the services we deliver, so if you have any thoughts, feedback, ideas or concerns, we would love to hear them.

You're invited to raise issues with staff whenever you wish – we will always listen and discuss what we will do with your feedback.

You are also best placed to tell us about the support and skills you need from our Support Workers so we aim to consult you about staff appointments, consultations, rules and feedback.

During your time at the accommodation centre, we will provide opportunities, which will help you engage more fully in the local community.

Young people are an important part of the community and bring special interests of their own. You will all become voters (all 18 year olds have the right to vote), leaders and decision makers of tomorrow!



Complaints

If you want to make a complaint please see the Complaints Policy displayed on the residents notice board. We value your feedback.