



● **MODULE 7:**
UNDERSTANDING THE MOVE TO INDEPENDENCE

If you do not already know, this module will help you to:

1. Know the different accommodation options available to you;
2. Apply for properties in the area;
3. Access the Staffordshire Local Offer for Care Leavers and use the information within it;
4. Identify affordable properties that you are eligible for;
5. Understand where to go for support with upfront costs/deposits;
6. Understand that you can turn down a property if it is not appropriate for your needs;
7. Identify consequences of not managing a house move or maintaining a tenancy;
8. Understand the importance of keeping appointments and communicating with your housing provider.



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First off, let's see what you already know...

1. When looking for somewhere to live, there will be properties in the area you want to live in
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. As a Staffordshire Care Leaver you will have a link to all of the districts in Staffordshire, as well as the town you live in now. What are all of the districts?
 - a. Stafford, Cannock, Staffordshire Moorlands, Lichfield, Tamworth, Newcastle-under-Lyme, East Staffordshire, South Staffordshire
 - b. Lichfield, Newcastle, Stafford, Uttoxeter, Stoke-on-Trent, Leek, Tamworth, Cannock
 - c. Rugeley, Stafford, Tamworth, Burton-on-Trent, Lichfield, Hednesford, Leek, Cannock
3. What type of property could you apply for when you turn 18?
 - a. Private rented
 - b. Social housing
 - c. Both of the above
4. What are some of the things your landlord would expect from you?
 - a. To pay 1 weeks rent up front before you move in
 - b. To stick to the tenancy agreement
 - c. To fix anything that breaks in the property
 - d. To invite them to any parties you have in the property
 - e. To respect your neighbours
 - f. Keep up to date with all bills
 - g. To communicate with them and let them know if anything changes to your personal circumstances
5. When you are bidding for social housing, you can decline as many properties as you want until you find one you like.
 - a. True
 - b. False



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Inside the Wardrobe

Moving into independence is scary. You are about to embark on the exciting and nerve-wracking journey of moving out of your foster or residential home and into a property of your own.

You will know that there are lots of things to learn, and you will have a lot of new experiences.

Moving into your own home will often seem really cool to your friends or family and it can be, but there are also number of reasons that it is not so cool. Before you move out, it is important that you get the chance to speak to someone about the things that are worrying you, as well as the things that are exciting you!

On the next page is a wardrobe. When you look at a wardrobe, you will only see the front of it, unless you open it up. Sometimes, we are like wardrobes, we show the world what we think they want to see, and only tell them the things that worry or concern us when we open up to them.

Cut out the wardrobe and use it to express how you are feeling about the move to independence. You can write or draw or express yourself in any way you feel most comfortable.

On the outside you would express the feelings or experiences you are sharing with the world. On the inside, you can express the feelings and experiences you are having about moving into independence that you maybe wouldn't share with your friends or family. You could also write down any questions you have about moving into independence.

This will create a safe and open space for you to talk with someone close to you about any concerns you are having before you move into independence, as well as have questions answered where possible. No one can tell you what it will feel like living on your own or what your experience will be like, but it is nice to feel like someone has listened to you before the move.



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Accommodation Options

Being a Care Leaver there are number of decisions you can make about where you want to live when your turn 18, and some of these options even start before then. The first tenancy you have, especially if it before you turn 18 could be called a 'short term tenancy'. This just means that the tenancy is shorter in duration than usual and will need to be reviewed by your council or landlord more frequently.

It is really important that you know all of your options before making any decisions, because whatever you choose should be in your best interest. Below you will find a number of accommodation options please match them up with the descriptions on the next page, so you know what your options are:

1. STAYING PUT

2. SUPPORTED
ACCOMMODATION

3. SUPPORTED
LODGINGS

4. SOCIAL HOUSING

5. PRIVATE
RENTING

6. SHARED
HOUSING

7. UNIVERSITY
ACCOMMODATION



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Accommodation Options

A. You are eligible to bid on these council owned properties after your 18th birthday. Properties are offered to people on a priority basis, and you are likely to get offered a property that is available and suitable. You are encouraged not to decline a property that is offered to you but can do this if it does not meet your needs.

B. In this type of accommodation you would live in a property where a number of people, not related to you, also live. This may be a larger property, where each tenant has their own bedroom and often share a living space, including kitchen. Everyone would be for a portion of the rent and bills to make living in a bigger house more affordable.

C. You would live in this accommodation whilst studying. Usually these properties are only available in the term time; however, as a Care Experienced young person you may have the right to live in the property all year round. You would usually live with a group of people of a similar age, and have shared living spaces, including the kitchen.

D. You would remain living with your Foster Carers past the age of 18. You will be expected to write up a contract between yourself and your Foster Carer with the support of your Personal Advisor, which will be regularly reviewed. You will be able to move out and live independently at any point.

E. You would rent a room within a family home. You would be responsible for looking after yourself but would also be encouraged to join in with family life within the home. You would be expected to contribute a set amount of money each week that would cover your rent and bills and could stay in this arrangement for up to 2 years, by which point you would be ready to live on your own.

F. This is an opportunity to move out of the foster home before turning 18 and live independently with support. A Support Worker would offer a specified number of hours support to you per week to help you to learn how to live independently. This would usually be a short-term arrangement and you would move into your own tenancy once you turn 18.

G. This is an arrangement between you and a landlord. With this accommodation option there may be more of a variety of choice out there for you, but it may also be more expensive. To find a property you would need to search estate agents. You would be expected to name a guarantor (someone who would pay the rent should you not be able to), as well as pay a deposit and usually one month's rent up front before moving in.



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Pros and Cons

Now that you know about the different types of accommodation that will be available to you when you move into independence, it is important to know the pros and cons of each. Below are a number of statements, please think about which type of accommodation it is in relation to and whether it would be a good or a bad thing about living in this kind of property:

TOP TIP: Cut out the statements below so you can arrange them in piles. There may be some that fit into more than one category.

Offers you the chance to learn independence skills with a level of support based on your needs.

It is not unlikely for you to feel lonely living in this type of accommodation.

You may not have a choice about the people you live with.

You may have to move house again once you turn 18.

You would be guaranteed somewhere to live all year round, close to where you are studying.

You will have to follow a set of rules, and respect others living in the house.

You will have to share a kitchen and common areas with a group of people you may not know well.

You have more choice over where you would like to live.

This option means you could stay at home until you feel more ready to leave and live independently.

You will have one room within a family's home where you are likely to spend most of your time.

You will have to attend regular meetings with the people you live with and your Personal Advisor to review things.

This type of accommodation will give you the opportunity to live with other students.



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Pros and Cons

You would usually have to pay a deposit and one month's rent upfront before moving in.

You can organise viewings for several properties before you choose which one you want to move into.

Landlord can be difficult to get hold of to fix things that have broken.

If there are damages to the property when you move out, your landlord has the right to not return your deposit.

It is likely you will need someone to act as your guarantor; someone who can pay your rent if you are unable to.

The council must fix any problems in the property while you are living there.

Applying for this type of housing can be a lengthy process.

There are often not much choice of properties you would be eligible to move into.

No deposit is needed for this type of accommodation.

Properties are allocated to people in terms of priority, meaning that other people may get an offer before you.

You may be required to pay one week's rent up front before moving into this type of accommodation.

If you are claiming Universal Credit this will usually cover the full rent and service charges for this type of accommodation.

Rent may be cheaper as there will be others paying into them.

The house will often be decorated and furnished when you move in.

Household jobs can be split among everyone living in the house.

There is the opportunity to make friends with the people you live with.



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There may be a challenge if you do not get on with the people you live with.

You have to be at university to qualify for this type of accommodation.

It is usual for bills to be included in the amount you pay for rent, so it will be taken in one payment.

It is likely to be more expensive than living in a shared house.

You will be able to live in the home you know with the people you are close to.

You may have to follow some rules you do not have a say in.

Your Foster Carer will be able to encourage your independence but be there when you need them.

You will have a Support Worker who will spend a number of hours with you per week to support your independence.

This type of accommodation will give you the opportunity to live with other people.

It is likely you will have to move house again once you turn 18.

You will be able to have your own space.



MODULE 6:

RELATIONSHIPS AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

What do you think?

Now you have had a look at the different accommodation options that will be available to you when you move into independence, which ones do you like the look of? Are there any that you would want to avoid? Answer the questions below:

Which accommodation options do you like the look of?

- 1.
- 2.

Why do you think this would be a good option for you?

Which of these accommodation options would not be suitable for you?

- 1.
- 2.

Why do you think these would not be a good option for you?



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Where would you like to live?

When you start to think about moving into your own house, you also need to be thinking about where you would like this to be. Staffordshire is a big county and includes a lot of different areas and towns.

Have a look at the map of Staffordshire below and think about what areas you would like to live in and why as well as if there are any areas you do not think would be suitable for you:



Where would you like to live?

1.
Why?

2.
Why?

3.
Why?

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Useful links –

Info about the bidding processes in Staffordshire and a list of the housing providers available to you in Staffordshire:

- [Welcome to Stafford and Rural Homes - Stafford and Rural Homes \(sarh.co.uk\)](http://sarh.co.uk) – Stafford and Rural Homes
- [Homes to rent | Staffordshire and Cheshire | Aspire Housing](#) – Aspire

Where you can find advice about housing options in the area you live in:

- [Newcastle Housing Advice. Helping you find a home... \(nhaoptions.co.uk\)](http://nhaoptions.co.uk) – Newcastle Housing Advice
- Your Local Council
- If in doubt, ask your Personal Advisor!