



Young Person's Guide



Welcome aboard!

This booklet is your guide to the houses and will answer some of your questions you might want to know when you come here, and during your stay.

I am Emmah the Registered Service Manager at Hitchin House and Fairfield Lodge. I have worked with children and young people as a teacher, Lecturer and Assessor for more than

twenty years. I have looked after young people in supported accommodation for almost 2 years. I will always do my best to support you. You will see me here Monday to Fridays and some weekends. I work with other staff members, including a senior support worker and support workers.

The team are all friendly and helpful and are at the home 24 hours a day.

The team work on a rota basis and there will always be night staff to support you, should you need support.

We know you might feel a bit overwhelmed in your first few days here. We have put together this guide to answer some of your questions. We have also included what you can expect during your time here and what we expect from you.

It is important that you feel supported during your time here. From day one, you will have a key worker to support you. A key worker is a member of staff who will help you settle into the unit and get you familiar with how things work.

If you feel you need more help and support, we can arrange for you to have an advocate. An advocate is someone independent who can help and support you to have your voice heard and support you at meetings or when you are making life-changing decisions.

Key workers/Staff



You will find a list of all the staff with their pictures on the digital noticeboard. All staff members are here to offer you support.

The staff team can help you with different things. Some staff will support you with independence skills like cooking and shopping, there are staff to support you with activities indoors and outdoors, and staff who help you specifically with things to do with your health like the psychologist.

You can speak to any staff member who works here, but when you arrive at the home, you will be allocated a key worker. Your key worker is there to support you in making positive choices in all aspects of your support and care. These may include family and friends, education, attending a local club, places of worship or arranging special foods, bedtime routines and all your likes and dislikes, as well as your health care. They will take you through Brighter Stays' Statement of Purpose and give you your induction.

Your key worker is your first point of contact if you have any questions around your plan of support. - i.e., education, health, activities, and contact.

The key worker is the link between all other people that are involved in your life including the house team.

Keyworkers will help you prepare for and attend your meetings and reviews, where it is important that your views and thoughts are heard.

You will have weekly meetings with your key worker to talk about anything you would like to discuss and to reflect on your week with you. You and your key worker will complete the support plan together with the professionals working with you. The plan will include the details of the things you are working

toward, education or work and appointments you need to keep. Your key worker will also help you set goals in your plan and help you achieve those goals that we call outcomes.

If your key worker is away, they will arrange for another member of staff to support you.

Your key worker is your KEY to help unlocking your full potential whilst at Brighter Stays. Your key worker will also do some work sessions with you to help plan for your future and independence.

Our homes are for young people aged 16-18+. You will be sharing the house with two other young people. All young people who live here have their own story and their own reasons for being here. Some young people might be care leavers coming from children's homes, foster homes, adoptive parents, or residential schools. For others, this might be their first time away from home. Some young people have had difficulties in their life and need extra support through this challenging time. We aim to make your time with us a happy time where you can enjoy your own space and learn about being independent and getting ready for adult life.

We support all young people who come to stay with us to prepare for the next stage of their journey. For some young people, this will be about being supported to return home or move on to work, college, university, and fully independent living. We will help you plan and prepare for whatever you intend to do in a calm and welcoming environment where you can get the support you need.

We have a team of experienced staff at the unit to help you get the most from your stay with us. Even if you have had difficulties in the past, our team will work with you to help you achieve your goals. The staff team is here to support you to succeed even if you have had a rocky ride so far.



All young people who come to live here have a support plan. The plan tells us what you need while you live here. It will tell us about your employment, training or education, your health and well-being and the support you might need to stay safe. We will ensure you have input into the plan during your stay here. We will ask you to be involved in creating this because we want you to understand and be involved in all aspects of your support.

We believe in being active and involved. All

young people who come here agree to be involved in and work with their key workers on their individual plans. This means you will have a plan to be involved in the unit while you are here. Your plans are private. They won't be shared with anyone else.

During your time with us, you have the right to be protected and kept safe. We will always try to uphold this right and ask that you help keep yourself safe. We will agree on your financial contribution to the unit, if any, with your social worker, and we will help you open a bank account if you haven't already got one.

During your stay with us, we will support you to access work or education investigate housing options and what support you will need for the future. We will support you in understanding how to manage money, tenancies, routes to education, training or employment and, where necessary, any criminal proceedings you might face or probationary conditions you are subject to. You will

be treated with dignity and respect and have access to a team that values you as a person and welcomes your contribution.

Hitchin House, and Fairfield Lodge are close to many amenities, such as parks, shops, libraries, cinemas, leisure centres and various youth groups and offers opportunities to learn new skills or participate in different activities. We also have great transport links to the town Centre. During the first few weeks, we will register you with a doctor, dentist and optician. A list of local GPs, dentists, Opticians, schools/specialists school, colleges/specialist colleges is available for you. Your keyworker will give this to you.

There will be a team of support workers and a Registered Service Manager

Our homes are loved by us all, providing a welcoming, safe, warm, and friendly atmosphere.
Upon your arrival you will be shown to your room and helped to unpack.

WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY

We love to welcome new people into our home. We hope you enjoy your time with us.

This guide is yours to keep. It has a lot of important information in it. A member of staff will support you go through it all.

You will also be given a photo album / memory book by your keyworker so that you can keep a pictorial record of your time with us when you leave.

Remember, if you have any more questions, the team will be more than happy to help you!

Let's have a quick tour

The Front Door



The houses aim to maintain a cosy and homely atmosphere where we have communal lounges, kitchens, bedrooms for our people, offices for the adults/team member's sleep in rooms, bathroom in each house. Fairfield Lodge and Hitchin House, each have an ensuite bedroom on the top floor. We also have large enclosed rear gardens for loads of fun, so any ideas you have let us know as it is always good to try new things and develop ourselves and our home as one big team.

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and one

Chill Out lounges



Your Bedroom

Time to decorate your bedroom – We will give you some money to help decorate your room- enjoy shopping!

This is your private space and for your safety and well-being, each room has a lock. Young people are not allowed into anyone else's bedroom. Staff within the home may sometimes need to come into your bedroom but we will try to protect your privacy. We will always knock and ask to come in. Your privacy in your bedroom will always be respected, however, if staff ask to come in, please let them in so that they can make sure you are safe and well. If you are not there and we need to enter your room, we will let you know before we enter. Regular health and safety checks will be carried out and prior notice will be given. A weekly £5 incentive will be given for keeping your room tidy and clean every day.

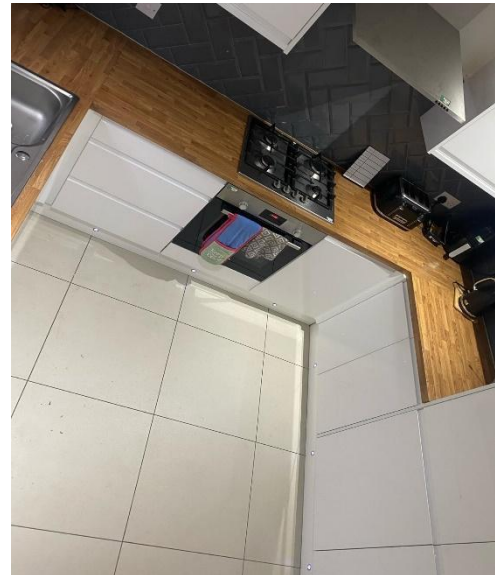
We encourage all young people to make their bedroom their own space, allowing you to be an individual in your own right, and to put your own mark and identity on your room. This includes your own chosen soft furnishings, bedding and putting up posters, pictures, and photos.

It is an expectation that you will try and keep your room tidy, but if you struggle with this then staff will offer support when and where needed.

The Bedrooms



The Kitchens



The Gardens



Activities & celebrations



A Time
to
Celebrate

Our young people are encouraged to take part in activities which will reflect their diversity on race, sexuality, LGBTQ+, culture, religion, language, and abilities.

You will be asked when you arrive what activities you would like to take part in. We like all our young people to be engaged in hobbies or activities. We will support young people to be able to complete an activity sheet for the week on activities they are interested in.

Birthdays, cultural and religious festivals are celebrated with regular different themes for evening meals, as appropriate.

If you would like to visit a particular place of worship let one of the adults know and this will be arranged.

Let us know if you are already attending a place of worship locally and we can help you to continue this, or we can help you find a local church, mosque, synagogue, or temple.

If you wish to have privacy during the day for prayer, please let us know so we can make sure this happens.

Should you wish to know more about your cultural background or that of family or friends, staff will do all they can to find the information.

You may wish to express your cultural identity or religion in your own bedroom, and we can assist you to access relevant books, posters, and house's memorabilia, will always expect you to show mutual respect for everyone's culture and beliefs. Community Agreement

We have House Agreements to help keep you and the other young people safe when you are with us. You will have private space in your bedroom, the rest of the house is shared. We have set some rules together, so we all agree to them.

House agreements are needed to allow us all to thrive in our home whilst feeling safe, happy, respected, and listened to. You along with other young people will be asked your opinions and views about the rules and how best we can work with them, if you want to discuss the rules, add to them, or have any other suggestions then please mention this to your key worker, or the services manager.

We will always respond to your thoughts, wishes and feelings.

You are very much part of our home and community, we value your opinions, suggestions, and ideas, it is so important to feel you are participating in your home environment. Let's work together to make this an environment where you can come home, relax, chill out, feel safe, and have fun!!

We would like to thoroughly plan your stay with us, which involves input from you, your family, Social Worker, and any other people who are important to you working together.

Your views, feelings and input into the support plan are invaluable to us so we can help you to make the right choices about your future.

As you start to settle in you will have lots of questions and issues you will want to raise. Don't hold back! Feel free to express to team members your views and thoughts around your life, whether you feel unwell? How is education going? Can we support you with this, or find someone who could help? When can you see loved ones and friends? How are your contacts going to take place? We will also have daily and weekly meetings with everyone in the house so we can discuss things openly with each other.

Visits



We allow visitors but have specific visiting times, which we expect everyone to adhere to. We will make sure that in your support plan the arrangements for contacts with loved ones and friends have been discussed and agreed. We know that seeing important people in your life is important to you and where it is suitable, we encourage them to be involved in making decisions with your care and keep them regularly updated about how you are doing.

If you want to have friends or visitors, come to the home, talk this through with your key worker or social worker.

Depending on who you want to visit, this can take a bit of planning, so just ask.

If your friends are visiting, be mindful and respectful of others, and we do ask that you leave the door open in the communal areas. We will ask for identification from your family and friends.

Depending on the situation, telephone contact and visits from your loved ones may be agreed on by all concerned, including yourself and reminders given.

Sometimes visits are arranged to see important people in the community, and on other occasions they can visit you at the house. If you need access to a phone, this can be arranged. You can also by agreement have contact with your friends by phone, letter, and email or by visits to the home. Contacts may be supervised or not, we will need to have this agreed on by everyone working with you.

We encourage positive, respectful, and polite behaviour from all in the community and young people around visitors to the home.

Staff will take you through the Visitors policy and explain it all to you.



Your Social Worker

Your social worker will be involved in decisions made about your care. They will be kept fully informed by your key worker or other staff members. It is expected that they will visit you at

least once every 6 weeks and talk about how things are going, and you can also telephone them Monday – Friday between 9am – 5pm.
Outside that time there is a duty social worker available.



Savings/Money

Before your stay, your finances will be agreed upon with your social worker. A set amount should be available to you, but we will support you to apply for any benefits or financial support where this is not the case. We don't provide pocket money or finances while you are here.
As a way of preparing you for adulthood, we will encourage and support you to save a small amount from your weekly living allowance or job if you are employed. We will do this by encouraging and supporting you to open a savings account.



Entitlements

You might be able to apply for grants to help with your education, training, and employment. The council may also give you an allowance for necessities like accommodation, food, transport, and clothing.
Your social worker and keyworker will support you to have access to what you are entitled to. You will be supported to know other entitlements for when you leave care.



Food



You are encouraged to have three main mealtimes per day, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. We will always respect any dietary or religious requirements, so feel free to be open with us.

As we live together as a family, we encourage young people sit down together and have a meal. We encourage a positive, sociable atmosphere, where we show respect for each other and encourage everyone to get to know each other and build relationships naturally.

All young people will participate in the weekend menu plan as we offer breakfast on Saturday or a dinner on Sundays. Staff will be there to support this. We encourage young people to cook using fresh foods and enjoy a healthy diet in our home. There is an expectation, you will help with setting, clearing the table and washing up on these days.

On weekends, you are expected to help with some household chores to help keep our homes clean and tidy.

Health & Fitness



Your social worker will have informed us of any health issues you have prior to you moving in with us. For example, if you have any allergies, suffer from asthma or are currently taking any medication. The team will ensure that all your health needs are being met. Staff will be

proactive in making sure that everything you need relating to your health is available to you and any professional help that you require will also be supported. Staff will encourage you to take part in regular keep-fit and outdoor activities, taking into consideration your level of fitness.

You will also be asked to help in writing up your health action plan which will be written up with the support of your key worker looking at all your health needs. Following your arrival, you will be registered with the local Doctor, Dentist and Optician and you will be taken to initial appointments for a basic health check, dental checkup, and eye test. You will also be supported to access mental health support if you need it.

If you are feeling unwell at any time, please let us know and if needed we will arrange for you to see the local Doctor.

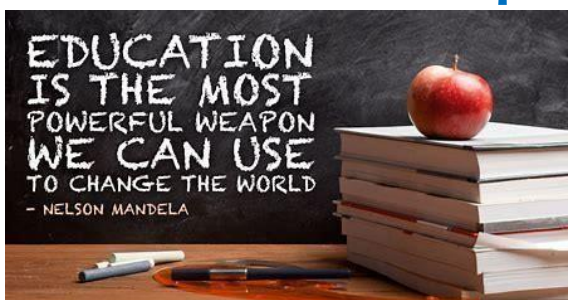
If you have any concerns or questions about your personal health, please speak to your key worker or any team members.

We can provide you with lots of useful information including sexual health, alcohol/drug misuse, healthy weight, and exercise or support you in accessing specialist services.

Hitchin House and Fairfield Lodge ARE A NO SMOKING AND VAPING ZONE. It is illegal to buy cigarettes or vapes under the age of 18, and smoking will seriously impact your health.



Education and Employment



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education, training or be seeking employment.

If you are already going to a school/college and it is within a reasonable distance, then plans will be made for you to continue at the same school/college. This may include being taken by a team member or travelling on the bus, train or in a taxi.

If you need space to study, you can use your room, or the dining area, and we can assist you with access to computer/ laptops and getting online.

If you need help with your homework or need special items for school, please ask your keyworker or a team member who will help you.

If you have completed your exams, you will be supported to attend college, to enrol on an apprenticeship, find employment or work towards a career choice through voluntary work. Just ask us and we will help find any resource you are interested in.

We are also keen to support you in any school/college activities or clubs that you may be interested in. If you do not have a school/college already to attend, we will advocate on your behalf; your views, wishes and feelings around your education plan working alongside your social worker and others to find you the very best school, college or learning provision. Our mission is to support you to achieve the best outcomes you can, whether in education, training or employment, and to support you to achieve any goals that you are working toward and overcome any barriers you might face.

Support Plan

Your social worker will have created a Pathway Plan which tells us the goals you hope to achieve during your stay here. We use those goals to develop a support plan which shows how we will achieve those goals. Your key worker will explain this in more detail during your stay. You will be expected to help your key worker put together your support plan. The most important thing to remember about any plan is that it is about you, and you should agree on whatever goes into the plan.

The plan will outline what will happen in future and the steps we need to take to get there. It will outline any help and support you need, what you want to happen, and anything that needs to change to help support you, like risks or behaviour.

Going Missing

We have a priority to keep you safe. You will have the phone number for the home on your mobile, and you can call at any time you get lost or are not going to be returning. You will be free to come and go at the home, but it may be that we will have agreements with you on how to stay safe, and with this in mind, there might be conditions on the times you return to the home. If we are concerned that you have not returned when agreed or you have not been seen when you should have been, or your social worker requires, then we may have to report you missing. The police will categorise you and, where possible, return you to the unit. We will work with you to become safe and stay safe.

Leisure Activities



All our young people have access to local facilities such as, parks, leisure centres and additional outdoor activities.

We are lucky as we have a large field to the side of our homes, and we will encourage our young individuals to take regular exercise in a creative and fun way and this will be included in the activity planners.

You are encouraged strongly to continue with any activities you may be involved in and to try new things. The homes have an activity timetable/planner in place to give everyone the opportunity to experience something different together as a team and as an individual.

Staff will create this monthly timetable with everyone and will ask for your input.

We do many things around the home like arts and crafts, cooking, gardening, football, dancing, watching movies, playing board games, and listening to music.

We also go on day trips, to theme parks and visit other attractions and may go away on a holiday.

Your ideas and thoughts around this helping to plan holidays would be great!

There are many different activities and clubs to do and join around the houses and surrounding areas of Stotfold such as swimming, bowling, dancing, youth club, crazy golf, wall climbing, roller skating, ice skating, etc.

Staff will be happy to help you learn and experience new things such as mountain walking, rock climbing, canoeing, paddles boarding and mountain biking or any other activity, or hobby you may have an interest in, just ask!

The important thing is for you to get stuck in and try something which will challenge you and give you a sense of achievement.

Social Media

You can access social media, but we encourage you to stay safe online and refrain from cyberbullying. Your keyworker will have sessions with you on E-safety. Our internet has filters that will stop you from browsing sites that are not safe for you and above your age limit.

Personal Property

You are encouraged to keep your own personal belongings in your room. Each young person will have a safe in their room where they can keep their personal items away.

We do not encourage you to lend or borrow any belongings, as we cannot be held responsible for any breakages, damage, or loss to your personal belongings.

Self-Care

In your room, there is a welcome pack of goodies ready for you, so you do not have to worry about toothbrushes, toothpaste, and toiletries. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure they maintain good personal and oral hygiene.



Community Group Living-House meetings/Feedback

To make life pleasant in the home, we expect everyone to show respect and consideration to each other, at all times.

A house meeting will be held monthly for staff and young people where you will be able to talk about anything you need to or would like to include, problems.

This will also be an opportunity for all young people to tell us if there is anything you think needs to change or improve.

You will have plenty of opportunities to give feedback in key work sessions, feedback forms and other forums. We will encourage you to positively bring your thoughts and wishes into the community to make it thrive and improve. Your feedback is essential because this is your home when you are here. We need to hear from you about how we can make the unit a good and welcoming place to stay.

We want everyone to have an input, be heard and share their own views and opinions. We allow everyone to have their say and encourage everyone to stand up and be counted. If you feel you need to say something but don't feel comfortable enough to do so in the group, then ask a team member to bring up your thoughts for you.

Incentives

On a weekly basis, you will be given £5 for keeping your room tidy and another £5 for attending house meetings.

There are many other opportunities to earn incentives.

Rights & Responsibilities

Whilst we recognise that you have rights. These rights come with responsibilities.

We expect you to abide by the following rules, which all young people agree to.

1. **Equality** – We agree that all people have equal status, rights and freedoms, whether male or female. Discriminatory, abusive, dismissive or disrespectful behaviour is not tolerated.
2. **Behaviours** - The following behaviours are not acceptable:
 - Fighting, violence and aggression; Swearing at and/or insulting each other or staff.
 - Bullying; Physical, sexual or verbal assault; Racial/religious abuse.
 - Stealing – taking anything which belongs to someone else.
 - The use and/or distribution of illegal drugs and alcohol
 - Smoking in the house or premises
 - Inciting others to such behaviours
3. **Religious Observance** - Everyone has the right to practice their religion, free from persecution and discrimination. We do our best to enable and support your religious practice.
4. **Staff Offices** – You may not enter staff offices and rooms without permission. Please knock and wait for a staff member to respond.
5. **Cleanliness** - To ensure the health, comfort and well-being of everyone, you are expected to keep yourself, your room and communal areas, such as the lounge, kitchen and corridors, clean and tidy, and treat the house with consideration and respect. You will participate in a communal rota to keep the place clean and tidy.
6. **T.V.** – The television in the lounge is for everyone to enjoy. Or you may choose to watch the T.V. in your room if this is available. Where this is not available, we will be able to provide a tv for your room.
7. **Education, Training or Employment** - You are expected to participate in your education, training or employment programme as agreed at the beginning of your tenancy.

8. **Consequences** – We know that everyone messes up sometimes, but there are consequences for breaking house rules and agreements, and these will be agreed upon with you as part of your plan.
9. **Protecting You** – If any staff member becomes concerned that your behaviour suggests you may need protection or may present a risk of harm to other young people, they will follow our safeguarding procedures. This will involve contacting your social worker and others involved with your support. If safeguarding procedures are necessary, we will talk this through with you and discuss what we will do together to help keep you safe.
10. **Drugs and Alcohol** – Drugs and alcohol are not permitted on the premises. If you are found to have drugs or alcohol on the premises this will be regarded as a breach of your agreement and will be dealt with under our disciplinary procedure. It may also be necessary for the police to be involved where drugs are brought into the premises.
11. **Criminal Behaviour** – The staff team will not accept any criminal behaviour from young people or visitors on the premises. The police will usually be contacted for behaviour that is not terminated at the request of staff and is deemed to be putting you, someone else or the property at risk of harm or damage.
12. **What happens if you decide to break your agreement?** – Your agreement is part of our process for making sure everyone who lives here receives the support they need. If you break your agreement, we will discuss this with you and allow you to put things right. We will work with you to plan how you can behave differently with support from the staff team.
13. **Agreement** – You will need to sign up to an agreement while staying at Brighter Stays. The tenancy agreement defines the expectations of the tenancy and circumstances under which it might be terminated. Your key worker will go through this with you in depth on the day of your admission.

A copy of the UN Children's Rights is available for you on the house noticeboard that will be linked to your mobile phone.

Your Feedback

We want to hear what you have to say. We have an opportunity for all residents to meet with staff **once a week** where you can tell us if there is anything you think needs to change or improve. You will have plenty of opportunities to give feedback in key work sessions, feedback forms and other forums. We will encourage you to positively bring your thoughts and wishes into the community to make it thrive and improve. Your feedback is essential because this is your home when you are here. We need to hear from you about how we can make the unit a good and welcoming place to stay.

Information

The team will keep records whilst you reside at Brighter Stays, this will have information about you. You can view this if you wish by asking in a key work session. Your key worker will inform the services manager what it is you are wishing to see and information that you are able to view the manager will look at with you. You will look at your key work sessions, risk assessments and support plans through key work session as and when is required.



Advocacy

You are able to have an advocate support you if you have an area you would like them to support your rights in. If you have one, they may attend meetings, if you don't and you would like one to speak to your key worker and this will be applied for you.



Complaints

If you have a complaint, please see a member of staff or refer to the Statement of Purpose. We want you to feel happy and safe, encourage you to complain where there is just cause. We can all learn from complaints, and we welcome your views and ideas in moving forward for the best outcomes for everyone.

ALL COMPLAINTS WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

FIRE

This home is fitted with fire alarms, which are tested weekly. You will be informed of when the test is due to take place by staff.

We will also do fire drills monthly or when a new young person staff come. It is very important that you know the routine in the event of a fire which is why we practice.

If you **hear fire alarms** at any other time other than the time for the fire drill, you must:

- Exit the building immediately through the nearest available exit.
- You must remain calm and follow any instructions given by staff
- You must not stop to take any of your personal possessions.
- Go to the fire assembly point, bus stop to the right side of the house, or rear of the garden if exiting from the rear of the house by the rear gate.

You can help us keep everyone at our home safe by:

- Not smoking in the home

- Not playing with matches/lighters in the home
- Not burning candles in the home
- Not messing around with electrical equipment

**TEAM MEMBERS WILL CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE AND THE POLICE MAY ALSO ATTEND
YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED BACK INTO THE BUILDING UNTIL YOU ARE GIVEN PERMISSION.
THIS IS TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY**



USEFUL CONTACTS

Registered Service Manager: Emmah Nyakurerwa -07763780434

Nominated Individual: Jess George -07476136627

Address: /161C/161D Hitchin Road, Stotfold SG5 4JH

Office Number: 01462658912/ 07763780434

My Phone No.

My Key Worker:

My Social Worker:

Independent Reviewing Officer:

Mindline- 01823 276892

Childline- 0800 1111

Papyrus- 0800 0684141

Children's Rights Director - 0800 528 0731

National Youth Advocacy Service 0808 800 5792

Children's Legal Centre - 020 7713 0089

Mind- youth matters- 01935 474875

Samaritans- 116 123

CAHMS Crisis 01234 893337

Children's Commissioner: Dame Rachel de Souza

[020 7783 88330](tel:020778388330)/cco.communications@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

You can call them on: 0300 300 8585



OFSTED

Brighter Stays is visited by an inspector from Ofsted at least once a year.

Ofsted is a big company who sends someone out to look around where you live and make sure you are safe and being looked after properly. If you are unhappy about your care or something that is happening at Willow Lodge or may be not happening then they will listen to you.

You can contact them on: 0300 123 1231.



NSPCC

The National Society for the prevention of cruelty to children (NSPCC) is a large charity. Its mission is to work for a better society where all children are loved, valued and cared for in order to fulfil their potential.

You can access their website at www.NSPCC.org.uk or contact them on their 24-hour help line by calling: 0808 800 5000.

Monitoring and Review
