



# St. Michael's House

## HOME SHARING POLICY

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## **DEFINITIONS**

### **The Person or the Guest**

For the purposes of this document, the person refers to any child or adult with an intellectual disability availing of a Home Sharing placement.

### **Intellectual Disability**

A disability is a substantial, restriction in the capacity of the person to participate in economic, social or cultural life.

### **The Scheme**

The Scheme refers to Schemes that are members of the National Home Sharing and Short Break Networks.

### **Placement**

The placement is the arrangement between the Scheme, the person and/or parent/guardian and the Host Family. It also describes where the person stays for short break/residential basis.

### **Respite/Short Breaks**

Respite/short break care are provided to a child or adult in order to support the child/adult, his parent(s)/guardian/main carer by providing a break for the child/adult and his/her primary caregivers. Short breaks/respites refers to regular breaks away from home but not more than 104 nights per annum. A respite/short break placement may be provided in a group or centre based setting or with a family as in Home Share care.

### **Residential Care**

Residential care refers to the provision of supported accommodation and care away from the person's home for more than 104 nights per year. A person may be provided with full time or part time residential care and represents a permanent long term arrangement for the person. A residential placement may be provided in a group or centre-based setting or with a family as in Shared Living Contract Family arrangement.

### **Host Family Care**

While the NHSN is referred to, generally, as the "National Home Sharing & Short Breaks Network", schemes nationally has developed a number of different strands in response to growing demand and change. In line with current national terminology, all placements are collectively referred as "Host Family" placements or "Home Sharing" placements. A Host Family refers to any household which is providing breaks to a person in their own home. While a "Host Family" may very well be a single-person household, the term also implies that the person's extended family may be involved in creating a positive experience for the person coming to stay. Also extended family may be a source of practical support for the Host Family, as will be agreed at the early stages of the placement.

### **Home Sharing (Short Breaks)**

Home Sharing involves a family in the community agreeing to offer a placement to a person with an intellectual disability in their home for short breaks and caring for that person as a member of their family. Home Sharing arrangements are based on the family's availability around work and other caring commitments as this is not generally the family's primary occupation. An allowance is usually paid per session provided. All Host Families commence hosting on a home sharing basis initially.

### **Contract Family**

The physical, behavioural or healthcare needs of some children/adults with an intellectual disability are complex and more challenging. In recognition of this, some schemes recruit a number of contract families (specialist carers) from the pool of approved Host Families. A contract family is contracted by the service and offers regular short breaks to children and adults. They are expected to be available for a substantial number of nights such as (10, 16 or 20) per month. With this option, their room is rented by the scheme and an allowance is paid per session provided.

### **Shared Living**

An approved Host Family may be assessed and approved for Shared Living. By doing so, they make their home available to a person with an intellectual disability to share their home on a full time basis as a member of their family. The person may spend some time during the month with their own family or with another Host Family but their main residence is with the Shared Living Family. With this option, their room is rented by the person/scheme and an allowance is paid per month to the host family.

## **SECTION 1 – THE PERSON USING THE SERVICE (GUEST)**

### **Standards**

All Irish residential services for children, including fostering and those for adults are governed by standards set by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) (Health Information and Quality Authority 2011). These standards are compatible with the ethos of the National Home Sharing and Short Breaks Network. As a participant (Home Sharing Guest), a person shall expect:

### **Quality of Life**

- To be supported to exercise choice and control in his/her life and over his/her contribution to his/her community (e.g. choices regarding the placement, before, during and at the end).
- To have his/her privacy respected.
- To have his/her daily live structured according to his/her needs and preferences.
- To be supported to develop and maintain personal relationships.
- To be supported to develop and maintain links with the community according to his/her wishes.

### **Support**

- To receive personalised and sensitive support in accordance with his/her wishes.
- To receive adequate support from suitable people.

### **Protection**

- To be safe and protected from abuse.
- Support to manage his/her behaviour.
- To have appropriate supports to control his/her own finances.

### **Development and Health**

- To partake in the planning of his/her personal life
- To have the best possible health, support to live a healthy life and access to healthcare as required.

### **Citizenship Rights**

- To have information which is accessible, understandable and help he/she to make decisions.
- To have his/her right to make decisions respected and their informed consent sought in accordance with legislation and best practice.
- To be facilitated and supported to exercise his/her civil and political rights as citizen.
- To have their application to Home Sharing be considered on the basis of fair and transparency criteria and they are party to a clear placement agreement.
- To be facilitated to make a complaint, to be listened to and to have the complaint acted upon quickly.

## **Environment**

- To stay/live in a place which is homely and accessible with people who are respectful.
- To be allowed to live a good quality life in a healthy and safe environment.

## **Governance**

- To be involved in a scheme which is governed and managed properly and focussed on promoting and developing person centred services.
- To be involved in a scheme that is clear about its purpose and function.
- To have appropriate records kept about his/her placement for the purpose of ensuring his/her placement in a good placement which is properly supported and supervised.

## **Promoting Quality Services**

The National Disability Authority (NDA) in Person Centred Planning in the Provision of Services for People with Disabilities in Ireland defines “Person centred planning” as a way of discovering how a person wants to live their life and what is required to make that possible. Each organisation uses similar models to ensure that quality services are promoted and maintained.

St Michaels House uses person centred planning to ensure that the person’s needs and goals are the central focus to the development of his/her service.

## **Key Worker**

St. Michael’s House use a key worker system to ensure that the person’s individual needs are met consistent with his/her wishes. A key worker is usually a member of staff within the organisation who supports him/her in the development of his/her personal plan. The key worker with the support of his/her manager endeavours to ensure that the services are tailor-made to meet the person’s needs according to his/her personal plan.

The key worker may be located within the person’s day or residential service. The key worker is familiar with all facets of the person’s life and has an understanding of the person’s wishes likes and dislikes and goals for the future.

The key worker plays an intrinsic part in ensuring that the service is catered to the person according to his/her wishes and that the person has a good quality of life in whatever manner the service is provided. The key worker will use established systems to communicate the person’s needs and personal goals to management and liaise with multi disciplinary staff as required.

## **Social Worker**

Social Workers offer a range of therapeutic interventions to assist people to have choices and make informed decisions in their lives. They are often the first point of contact to the organisation of individuals, and families in particular. Social Workers within services work with individuals and their families to find solutions when experiencing difficulties in their lives. While client protection is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation Social Workers play an important role in ensuring that individuals are protected from abuse.

Social Workers also support people by linking them with appropriate agencies in the community and ancillary services within the respective organisation including respite, centre-based and family-based and family support services. Social Worker plays a key role in advocating for such services for individuals and prioritising services for those who need it most. To help ensure an appropriate Host Family placement for the person (guest), it is important that the person's Social Worker and/or key worker is in a position to support the person in the application and planning of the placement and continues contact with the person to ensure that the placement continues to meet his/her needs according to his/her wishes. The Social Worker and/or key worker will be expected to support the person in the respite placement review process by supporting the person to give feedback about the placement to the Scheme.

### **The Host Family Link Social Worker**

The Host Family Link Social Worker is linked to the Host Family. He/she has a specific role in supporting and supervising the Host Family with the primary aim to ensure the continuity of quality placements that meet each person's needs. The role of the link Social Worker is described fully in Section 2 (support to Host Families).

## **PLANNING FOR PLACEMENT**

### **The Application Process**

Applications are received for children and adults with a diagnosis of moderate, severe and profound intellectual disability, in receipt of St Michaels House services.

- Children (0 – 5) with a diagnosis of intellectual disability may be referred through the Early Intervention Service.
- Older children (6 – 18) with a diagnosis of intellectual disability may be referred through the children's school age teams in St Michaels House.
- A child's parents can apply for a Host Family placement with the support of the child's Social Worker.
- An adult can apply with the support of his/her Social Worker or Key Worker or on their own.
- In cases where an individual or family make an application directly, the application will be referred back to the relevant team. The team's Social Worker may be asked to make an assessment of the person's support needs, and respite needs, in particular.
- All applications must be submitted on the standard suggested application template (**SEE APPENDIX A**) used by the scheme. The Person's Social Worker/Key worker may submit an application on their behalf once the person and/or his/her family have been consulted and in favour of the application for a Host Family Placement.
- Applications are considered once they have been formally accepted as a suitable referral. The scheme should aim to acknowledge receipt of the application.
- Waiting times may vary depending on the availability of a suitable match for the person.
- Applications are considered by the family Home Sharing team in consultation with host family approvals panel. Each application is considered in terms of the Hardiker Prioritisation model (**SEE APPENDIX B**)
  - i. Urgency of placement need.
  - ii. Availability of current Host families
  - iii. Suitability of available Host families
  - iv. Funding.

## Record Keeping

- Basic details (Name, D.O.B. area, ability level, type of support required, environmental considerations)) are entered onto the waiting list database.
- The information contained in the application may be shared with a prospective Host Family as a preliminary to the setting up of a suitable placement.
- Information pertaining to a person and their host family placement is contained on a person's clinic file. Such information includes, letter of offer of host family placement, placement agreement, service user information file, intimate care plan and any other relevant clinical information provided to host family.

The Host Family must have their own separate file (See section 2 The Host Family).

## The Matching Panel

### 1) Purpose

To provide a structure and criteria for matching guests with suitable hosts.

### 2) Objectives

- 2.1) To ensure a good match between guest (and his/her family) and the Hosts.
- 2.2) To ensure that the guests whose needs are considered to be greatest are given priority.
- 2.3) To ensure that the Social Work Team Leader agrees each match with the Principal Social Worker.
- 2.4) To ensure that professional judgment is guided by set of relevant criteria.

### 3) Procedure

3.1) The Home Sharing Team should ensure that consideration is given to the following areas when arriving at a suitable match:-

- a) *Practical*  
Type of accommodation/facilities/safety/location/distance from guest's home and day placement/practical constraints such as availability of equipment/transport to and from accommodation.
- b) *Skills*  
Skills, experience and knowledge of host family.
- c) *Commitment/Requirement for Breaks*  
The amount of breaks that the Host family can offer, the duration of breaks the guest's (and his/her family's requirements) and the likely availability of the host family.
- d) *Emotional/Psychological*  
Type of relationship guest requires/wants and Host family can offer. Host family's motivation/concerns/doubts/expectations. Special consideration should be given to the preferences of host family for an individual guest and equally to the preferences of the guest where these have been elicited.



- e) *Activities*  
There should be a range of activities on offer and whether the guest is interested and how beneficial they are likely to be having regard to the guest's hobbies and interests.
- f) *Spiritual Needs.*  
The host family should be willing to respect the guest's religious beliefs and to support any associated requirements.
- g) *Racial and Cultural Factors*  
Whether the guest requires a Host family with the same racial and cultural background. If not would the host family be willing to learn about and respect the cultural traditions of the guests.
- h) *Health/Safety*  
Any special treatments needed and are services available to carry these out at the required frequency? Disabilities, epilepsy etc and the host family's confidence/experience to manage these. Guest's sense of danger. An assessment of the risks is involved.
- i) *Socio-economic Factors*  
Would there be any problem in linking the guest and the host family that have a more or less affluent lifestyle?
- j) *Educational and Developmental Considerations.*  
Are there any programmes essential to maintain the guest's welfare and development, which should be upheld during the break(s)?
- k) *The Personalities Involved*  
The compatibility of guest and host family. It is important to find out any behaviour and personality traits, which might give, rise to conflict. What are the opportunities for the host family to make informal contact with the guest's family?
- l) *Lifestyles*  
Is a difficulty in lifestyle likely to constitute a problem? Bedtimes, smoking socialising, etc.
- m) *Other Family Members and Close friends*  
The importance of the attitudes of these people close to the guest and the host family. The composition of the guest's household.
- n) *Priority*  
Guests should be allocated a priority weighing according to their needs.

3.2) Using the Hardiker Model (SEE APPENDIX B) the scheme should;

3.2.1 Waitlist all the guests according to their needs priority.

3.2.2 Record whether a match between each guest and each host family is considered "suitable" or "unsuitable".

3.3) The needs of the guest with the highest priority should then be considered having regard to the most suitable host family available.

- 3.4) This procedure should be repeated for the guest with the next highest priority rating until each guest has either been matched with host family or been considered and found to not have a suitable match.
- 3.5) The team should then review the potential matches and how they might impact on each other (some guests may be potentially matched with the same host family) before deciding to confirm them.
- 3.6) These procedures should be interpreted with due regard to the professional judgement (discretion) and opinion based on the de facto information available to them.

#### **4) Reference Material That Panel Refer To:**

- Hosts application form.
- Suggested Application Template - Appendix A
- Assessment Interview form.
- Feedback from training on host families
- Consult experience staff/professionals that are au-fait with guests needs.
- Clinical reports (where available).

## **PLACEMENTS: INTRODUCTIONS AND ESTABLISHMENT OF PLACEMENT**

The Host Family is appointed a Link Social Worker on their first placement match.

If possible a match is agreed by the Matching Panel, this option is explored further with the person or the person's parent/guardian/family representative. The person's Social Worker is contacted and they make contact with the person. Basic information about the potential Host Family is shared with the person.

Once the person/person's family are happy to proceed, the Link Social Worker meets with the Host Family to discuss the possibility of a match for their family. Some relevant information as contained in the placement application, including a pen picture and photo of the person if available, is shared with the potential Host Family with a view to setting up an introduction.

A process of information exchange occurs between the Link Social Worker and the person's Social Worker/Key worker in preparing both families for their first introduction.

An introductory meeting occurs, normally in host family's home and where required with the support of the Link Social Worker. The person's key worker/social worker should also be present to support the placement. A series of visits may occur until the person is comfortable to stay without the support of their family member/key worker.

Once it is found that this is a worthwhile option for the person, the Host Family will need to receive any necessary instruction from the relevant medical (see below) and/or multi-disciplinary team. Before the person stays alone with the Host Family, a Placement Agreement is drawn up, outlining the plan for placement and signed by all three parties, the person, and/or his/her parent/guardian family representative, the Host Family and the Scheme. A review date is set (within six months to one year). Further reviews are at intervals as agreed by all parties (not more than three years) (see below).

### **The Placement Agreement**

Once it is established that the proposed host family is a good match for the person, the details of the placement are discussed and a placement agreement is drawn up in according to the person's wishes and goals. In planning breaks for children and/or vulnerable adults the person together with their parents/guardians will be central to the development of the placement plan.

### **Frequency and Duration**

Home Sharing breaks are planned in advance according to the person's need and wishes. It may be decided to commence with short sessions before proceeding to overnights. The dates are arranged in advance. Special requests for extra placements can be directed through the person's Social Worker/key worker to the scheme and not to the Host Family directly. However, in case of emergencies, the Host Family may agree to accommodate a special request at short notice. In these circumstances, the Host Family is obliged to notify the scheme of such unplanned sessions.

### **Cancellations**

Should the person be unable to avail of their Home Sharing break, every effort should be made to reschedule the placement, however, if the Host Family are not give 24 hours notice, it may not be possible to reschedule, in turn the Host Family are expected to give as much notice as possible of a cancellation to the person and his/her family and Home Sharing Co-Ordinator and to offer an alternative date

## **Transport**

It is expected that the person will have his/her own transport to/from placement at the agreed times. The person may be in a position to use public transport. If not he/she is supported by the person's parent/guardian/family to get to /from the Host Family residence. For children availing of school transport, it may be possible for a child to be facilitated by their school transport should the Host Family reside on the child's normal bus route. The person's day service may also be in a position to facilitate transport to/from placement. This is usually agreed or organised on an individual basis.

## **Accommodation**

The Host Family's accommodation will be of an acceptable standard for a family home and all efforts will be made to address general safety hazards. However, during the introductions, the person, together with his/her parents and/or social worker will be asked to make a specific assessment of the home for potential hazards for the person and whether these can be addressed to ensure the person's safety without imposing undue restrictions.

In case of serious risk of harm for person and/or family members, it may be necessary to follow the risk assessment procedure of the relevant organisation to ensure all appropriate measures are taken to limit risk while allowing the person to lead a fulfilling life.

It may be necessary for the Host Family to attend for specific training in order to be fully prepared to support the person's physical or emotional needs.

The person will have their own room unless an alternative arrangement is preferable and more appropriate for the person. The person's privacy and space requirements will be discussed as part of the placement plan.

## **Support Needs**

It is important that the Host family is fully briefed on the person's support needs. The person may require support with some or all aspects of daily life in the home and out in the community. The service user information plan, intimate care plan and any other relevant information/guidelines should outline the level of support the person requires.

## **Managing Money**

The person will be expected to have their own spending money for community and social outings and for any personal purchases while on placement.

A clear agreement is made as to how the person is supported to manage his/her own money while ensuring his/her money and personal assets are protected, in keeping with the policy of the organisation

## **Confidentiality**

Any information written or verbal will be treated with the utmost respect at all times. Host families may become aware of private information relating to the person and/or his/her family and vice versa. While it may be necessary for the person/family member/host family member to discuss such information with a Social Worker or the person's key worker, it is important that any private information is not discussed publicly. Any sharing of information outside of this is only acceptable, if this is part of the agreed plan concerning the child/adult and if there is a parental consent i.e. the event of an emergency.

The right to confidentiality may be overridden in circumstances of suspected abuse or neglect or where there is evidence of child/adult self harming or harming others.

## **Emergencies**

A protocol will be agreed in the event of emergency e.g. bereavement or accident in the Host Family's home while the person is on a placement. A contact list (Social Workers, Nurse Manger on Call) and contact details of the person's parents/guardian and an emergency contact are provided on the service user information form.

It is the responsibility of the Host Family to contact the person's parent(s)/guardian/next of kin and the Scheme to inform them of any emergency and any alternative arrangements made, however, temporary.

In an emergency situation the Host Family may have to request the person's parent(s)/guardian/next of kin to collect the person from Host Family Home.

Should the person become ill or sustain an injury during his/her time with the Host Family, the person's parent(s)/guardian/next of kin must be informed and appropriate medical attention sought for the person from his/her Host Family G.P., own G.P. or out of hours service. Nurse manger on Call must also be informed.

Host families are permitted to seek medical attention for the person only in cases of emergency and for children with prior written consent from his/her parents.

In case of an accident/incident involving or affecting the person, the Host Family must inform the scheme. An incident report from must be completed and returned to the Scheme.

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

The Scheme is guided by Children's First, the Client Protection policies and procedures of the support Organisation (see Section 3).

All Host Families should have participated in Client Protection training as part of their Home Sharing Training Course. They will also be expected to take part in specific Client Protection Training every three years thereafter.

It is important in the planning stage of the placement that the person, his/her family and the Host Family understand what to do if they have a concern about the person's safety.

All involved in the setting up of a placement shall have access to a named Social Worker should they have a concern about the person's safety or wellbeing and each person involved has the responsibility to share their concerns promptly. The contact numbers of the appropriate Social Worker(s) will be listed on the person's contact list. In cases of immediate risk of harm to the person, it may be necessary to contact the emergency services, including TUSLA (formerly the HSE Social Work Department) and/or the Gardai.

## **Complaints**

It is important to outline at the placement planning stage how and to whom the person may make a complaint about the placement. This will be recorded on the Placement Agreement form together with the relevant contact numbers. See St. Michael's House Complaints Policy.

## **Termination of Placement**

Placements may come to an end of various reasons and these will be outlined at the placement agreement stage:

- The placement may be agreed for a fixed period or fixed purpose after which the placement will come to an end.

- During review of the placement, it becomes apparent that the placement no longer meets the person's needs and all parties agree to bring the placement to a close.
- Withdrawal of the Host Family from the Scheme (see Section 2 – withdrawal from the Scheme).
- The Scheme's Approval's Panel may deem it in the person's best interests to terminate the placement.
- In the event of immediate risk of harm, the person/persons' parents authorise the Scheme to remove the person from the home and to make alternative arrangements for the person.
- While every effort is made to sustain quality placements for individuals, placements may be reduced or terminated as a result of a reduced funding.
- The Scheme shall give three months notice to the person, the person's family and the relevant Sector Manager or Respite Manager of any plans to terminate a placement for this reason.

## **Insurance**

All persons availing of Home Sharing placements are covered by the public liability insurance of the relevant organisation. Host Family Carers are treated by agencies in a similar manner to volunteers and staff, who are covered as such under the insurance policies of the agency.

It is essential that the Host Carer has the necessary training and equipment to support the person in their home and in their car and that all necessary risk assessments have been conducted.

Host families are advised to inform their home and motor insurance providers in their involvement with Home Sharing with their respective agency, describing the nature of their involvement and the use of their own vehicle.

All Host Families are required to have public liability insurance on their home insurance.

Written confirmation from the Motor Insurance Company and Home Insurance Company may be sought by the scheme administrator. The Host Family are responsible for ensuring that they are adequately insured.

Up to date guidance on insurance issues is available on the [www.nhsn.ie](http://www.nhsn.ie) under the "information" section.

## **Host Family Placement Reviews**

- The placement is reviewed formally 1 year from the commencement date of placement and every 3 years thereafter.
- The Host Family Scheme Social Worker usually initiates this process.
- At the initiation of the review, all efforts shall be made to seek feedback on the placement from the guest, his/her parent(s), Host family.
- Each party is consulted prior to review; this is usually by way of a telephone call. Either the guest's social worker or scheme's social worker can seek feedback from the person and his/her natural family.
- In the course of the review the scheme shall have regard to the views and information provided by each party.
- The scheme shall consider, in particular, the feedback from the Person (guest) and/or parent(s)
- The scheme shall consider feedback from the person's (guests) school/day service if appropriate.
- The scheme will consider feedback from the person's multi-disciplinary team if appropriate.

## Other Relevant Information

- Review meetings are usually held in the host family's home. The review is normally facilitated by the Link Social Worker and attended by the host family. Some reviews may be undertaken as part of the person's well being review/annual person centred plan review should this be deemed appropriate.
- Information for placement reviews may be gathered by phone by the person's or scheme's Social Worker.
- If there are ongoing challenges with a placement, it is advisable for everyone, (if possible) to meet.
- All aspects of the placement will be reviewed. In particular, the person's record of medical/special care needs will be checked for continuing accuracy and relevance.
- A placement review with Guest form (**See appendix G**) / host family review form (**See appendix C**) is completed.

## Administering of Medication

- All medications administered to an individual must be prescribed by a medical doctor, consultant or dentist
- Only medication written on Medication Administration Sheet (**MAS**) can be administered to an individual for the systemic relief of minor ailment
- Medications should not be administered by host family unless they are written on MAS and in the container in which they were dispensed by the pharmacist or doctor and has the dispensing label on the container.
- Before administering the drug, host family/carer should check the following:
  1. Name of drug on the container
  2. Name of the individual
  3. Dose to be administered
  4. Time & frequency of administration
  5. Expiry date.
- When administering an oral drug the host family/carer should ensure that the drug has been swallowed by the individual
- The host family must record administration of drug, time and dosage.
- If an individual experiences an adverse reaction to a drug e.g. develops a rash, swelling around the mouth or difficulty in breathing, medical assistance should be sought immediately by contacting Nurse Manager on Call on 07610 62205

## Storage

- All medications that are brought to the Host Family's home must be stored safely, some guidelines for the safe storage of medicines would be:
- Medicines must be kept out of reach of children & vulnerable adults. Medications are not to be stored in the service users bedrooms
- All medicines must be stored in a cool, dry place out of direct sunlight (not above radiators/heat sources)
- The bathroom is **NOT** a suitable place to store medicines
- The caps and lids must always be securely closed
- The expiry dates must be checked
- The medicines must be stored in original containers

### **Disposal**

Any spoiled or dropped medication should be collected in a small marked container and the host family must return this to their local pharmacy for disposal. Medication should NOT be disposed of as domestic waste

### **Supports**

Please contact Nurse Manager on Call if needed for advice & support especially if drug errors or incidences occur.

### **Drug Error**

A drug error is defined as the administration of incorrect medication, incorrect dosages, unauthorised drugs, incorrect preparation and omission of prescribed medication. This must be reported to NMOC and recorded.



## SECTION 2 - THE HOST FAMILY

As relationships are often the key to the success of any placement or support service, the scheme does not seek any particular “type” of person or family for the purpose of Home Sharing. In fact, the variety of household arrangements and experiences that Host Families offer allows the scheme to find suitable matches for individuals based on their personalities and interests and thus enriching the experience for the person and the Host Family.

Any individual/family may become a “Host Family” once they have satisfied the scheme that they are suitable for the role of Host Family. Before being approved as a Host Family those interested must first go through the following pre-placement procedures:

- Application
- Preliminary Screening.
- Attend Home Sharing Training
- Social Work Assessment
- Approval
- Matching

Applicants must be formally approved by the Scheme’s Approval Panel prior to any child or adult being placed with them.

Following approval, it is desirable that Host Family carers attend refresher training in Positive Behaviour Support Management, Client Protection and Children First. The Scheme should prioritise Host Family carers for places on training days based on the Guest’s needs.

Following approval Host families must adhere to the policies and procedures of the scheme and participate in regular reviews.

### Applying to become a Host Family

- Enquiries may be made to the Team Leader
- Enquiries will be recorded on a database
- An application form together with a brochure of the scheme may be forwarded at this stage.

Applicants must submit their applications on the standard scheme application form. The application form must be completed fully to include:

- Basic details of all household members.
- Reasons for application
- List three suitable referees who know the applicant(s) for at least three years and in a position to comment on their suitability.

### Record keeping and Files

Information relating to Host family applicants may be held on file. It is necessary for the scheme to record contact with members of the community who express an interest in hosting a person with an intellectual disability for a number of reasons:

- To plan Home Sharing assessments according to priority.
- To ensure that only suitable Host families are approved for Home Sharing.
- To track progress of individual Host families
- To plan and track attendance at training
- To plan the development of services into the future

The Scheme holds confidential information in a safe place and for as long as it is will be required to include:

- Contact details of those who enquire are recorded on a data base. Application forms are sent out. Returned application forms are kept on file until a preliminary screening is carried out.
- Those who submit an application form are asked to sign consent to having information kept on file as part of their application form.
- If following preliminary screening, applicants do not proceed to the assessment stage; their names remain on the register under “on hold” or “not proceeding.
- All information relating to assessments including all background documents received are kept on file for applicants who commence the assessment process whether or not they proceed to the approvals stage. Inactive files can be held by the scheme for up to eight years
- All information relating to an assessment is the responsibility of the assessing Social Worker until the applicant has been approved.
- All information relating to approvals is kept on the applicant’s file. For applicants not approved, the reasons are recorded on the file. The details are kept on file for a period of eight years.
- On approval, the working file will be converted to a permanent Host family file.

The applicants file is usually held in the offices of the Assessing Social Worker, who will be responsible for gathering the information required for presentation to the Approval’s Panel and the secure storage of the file.

Once a Host family is approved, the file is held in the offices of the Home Sharing Scheme, who will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the file and the secure storage of the file.

It is the responsibility of the Home Sharing Team to manage their caseload and keep their Home Sharing records up to date.

When Host families withdraw from the scheme, either prior to or post approval, the reasons are clearly documented on the file and dated.

### **Home Sharing Training Course**

- All Home Sharing applicants should attend all sessions of Home Sharing training.
- In the case of a joint application (i.e. more than one applicant per household) ideally both applicants must attend all session.

Through a combination of presentations and group participation, the training session aim to cover the following areas:

- Introduction to the Home Sharing scheme.
- Awareness of impact disability on individuals/labelling.
- Skills and responsibilities of caring.
- Understanding and coping with difficult behaviour.
- Client protection awareness and procedures.
- Confidentiality
- Health and Safety
- Family rules and self care.
- Out of Hours support
- Recording.

1. Those who attend training are asked to sign the attendance log at each training session. Attendance is tracked as this is a minimum requirement.
2. Attendance at the Home Sharing training course is also required beforehand unless alternative arrangements are agreed by panel.

## **Home Sharing Social Work Assessments**

### **Prioritising Host Family Assessments**

The decision to proceed with an assessment of a potential Home Sharing Family is taken by the Home Sharing Team and based on the following conditions.

- Receipt of a completed application form.
- Expressed readiness by applicant(s) to proceed with assessment process.
- Availability of an assessing Social Worker.
- In the event of restricted availability of Social Work time, assessments will be prioritised based on the need of the service user waitlisted.

### **The purpose of a Home Sharing Assessment:**

- To ascertain the suitability of applicant(s) for Home Sharing
- To ascertain the potential of applicant(s)
- To establish motivation of applicants(s) and their predisposition to the role of Home Sharer
- To find out about attitudes to childcare and/or supporting a disabled person and working with families.
- To establish skills, knowledge, and experience of applicant(s)
- To find out about family lifestyle, including background, hobbies, and interests of household members.
- To ascertain family availability for Home Sharing
- To guide the scheme in matching applicant(s) with a prospective host person.
- To share information with potential Home Sharing families and to answer questions.

### **Requirements of a Home Sharing Assessment**

- All assessment meetings will be conducted in the applicant (s)' home by a professionally qualified Social Worker.
- The Social Worker makes contact with the family and arranges an initial visit with a view to commencing the assessment process. During the initial visit, the process is outlined for the family and there is a preliminary screening of their motivation, suitability and expectations. During this meeting, the Social Worker clarifies with the family that the chosen referees are in a position to comment on their suitability to host children and adults in their home. Follow up assessment visits are scheduled to suit the family. This may involve evening and weekend assessment visits.

During the first visit: nominated referees will be checked with applicant(s) to confirm suitability i.e. that they know both applicants in the case of a joint application, have known them for at least three years, and have spent time in the home.

Additional employer references may be sought if the applicant's employment is thought to be directly relevant to the role of Home Sharer.

At least three visits will be arranged and depending on the number of household members and the matters raised up to 5 or 6 home visits may be scheduled.

Assessment meetings are scheduled to cover the following areas.

- Personal profile of the applicant(s)
- Personal history and experience of applicant(s)
- Current circumstances motivation and attitude to home sharing and the assessment process.
- The applicant's expectations of home sharing the applicant lifestyle
- Previous experience and skills availability
- Accommodation and local facilities the likely support needs.

In case of an application by couple the assessments meetings are planned to include:

- At least one session with both applications together.
- At least one session with each applicant alone if applicable, one session or part of a session with applicant's children.

It is recommended that during the first assessment visit, Garda Clearance forms are completed and applicants are asked to bring their medicals to their own GP who is a position to comment on their suitability. A cover letter accompanies the medical report from explaining the reasons for the medical report.

The medical report is reviewed with each applicant before submitting to the approval's panel. Applicants must be deemed by their G.P. to have a sufficient level of physical and mental health to allow them to carry out the role of Host Family carer.

The assessing Social Worker makes contact with referee by letter as needed. Child Protection enquiry form is sent to local offices of TUSLA Child and Family Agency.

### **Presenting to the Approval's Panel**

The Social Worker compiles a report which outlines the Social Work Assessment of the family, including suitability for Home Sharing and recommendations.

The Social Worker may seek direction from the Approval's panel before this stage if there are questions regarding an applicant's suitability.

All documentation must be presented for approval to the Approval's Panel. The Approval's Panel is final. There is an appeals process (**See Appendix D for more detail**).

### **New / Updated Assessment reports on existing Host Families**

New/updated assessment reports on existing approved hosts are required in the following circumstances.

- 1) There has been significant change to the Host Carer(s) circumstances.
- 2) Where a host is in a new permanent relationship a top up assessment must be undertaken and a new assessment and checks must be done i.e. Garda clearance, LHO checks, references, medicals.
- 3) Previously approved home sharers who wish to be considered for as “contract families” must apply to become a contract family, participate in an assessment and attend contract family training as soon as it can be arranged by the scheme.
- 4) For those returning to the scheme after an absence/period of leave one year, the original assessment report plus an addendum will be accepted by the panel for consideration. Garda clearances for all adult family members and regular overnight visitors must be submitted if more than three years have elapsed since first obtained. New medicals should be submitted if more than two years have elapsed or if any prolonged absence from the scheme/change in circumstance is health related. Three new written references are required.

### **Supports to Host Family**

The Scheme supports Host families by providing structure to the supporting relationship. While the success of placements relies on the success of the relationship between the person and his/her family with the Host family, the Scheme is ultimately responsible for the management of the placement. The placement agreement form, signed by the person and his/her family, the Host Family and the scheme signifies the beginning of a formal agreement between the three parties even if the two families are on familiar terms before becoming involved in the Home Sharing Scheme. The agreement outlines the responsibilities of each party including the overall responsibility of St. Michael's House through the scheme, to fund, and manage the operation of the placement.

### **The Scheme supports Host families by:**

- Assessment – preliminary screening and full assessment – assessing the suitability of the family before hosting
- Approval – approving the family for the appropriate level of hosting
- Information – induction pack, standards, forms, contacts, relevant policy documents, referring to NHSN website for guidance information.
- Training – initial Home Sharing training/induction and ongoing training- mandatory and relevant to placement
- Matching Process- finding a suitable match for their family based on the assessment
- Appointing Home Sharing Scheme Social Worker at the outset of first placement
- Clear information and support through the process to first placement
- A clear placement agreement for each placement
- Expenses- paying expenses to families regularly and on time.
- Reviewing the family's ability to continue hosting
- Reviewing each placement one year from date of commencement and three yearly thereafter unless specific issues arise which indicate more frequent reviews.

## **Operation of the Home Sharing Scheme**

The scheme is operated by a Social Work Team Leader and Social Worker with the support of administrative personnel.

During their time Home Sharing, a host family will be supported in some form, directly or indirectly, by the administration staff, Social Work staff and Team Leader.

## **Administrative Supports: Co- Ordinator / Manager**

While each family has a social worker, a considerable amount of the support to Host Families is administrative. This support is generally provided by administrative staff and/or a Home Sharing coordinator.

It is important to the functioning of a Home Sharing scheme that both bring to a Scheme a Social Care background and knowledge of the service. Often a first point of contact to Host Families and natural families, they are both an important position to engage with families and to offer practical support. They are often familiar with the needs of persons availing of placements and those seeking the service.

The administrator/coordinator usually works very closely with social worker(s) as part of a team.

In addition, the following administrative supports are provided.

- Accessible: Administrative staff based in the office and contactable by Host Families.
- Coordinate support to Host Families – liaising regularly.
- Coordinate installation and servicing of equipment.
- Liaise with the person's multi disciplinary team.
- Tracking required background documents for assessments and reviews.
- Training – facilitate training, organise mandatory training, log training needs, liaise with the relevant training department.
- Instigating promotion and recruitment campaigns for the scheme.
- Scheduling. Log breaks on CIS
- Processing payments.
- Budgets – prepare and present budgets on an annual basis. Planning new placements in order of priority.
- Preparing costings for proposed placements.

## **Social Work Support to Host Families**

The paramount responsibility of the scheme is to the safety and wellbeing of the person placed. As such, the Scheme must be satisfied that the placement continues to be a quality placement for the person and that the Host Family has the continuing capacity to provide a quality placement to the person. Therefore ongoing Social Work support and supervision for host families is imperative.

The Home Sharing Scheme Social Worker's are responsible for facilitating ongoing effective communication between the Host Family and the scheme and are the first point of contact should any difficulties arise for the Host family and/or person placed. The Guest's Social Worker plays a key role in the setting up of the placement and introductions while the Home Sharing Scheme Social Worker's are responsible for the ongoing management and review thereafter.

## Recommended Caseloads for Home Sharing Link Social Workers

The HSE Report of the National Experts Group on Home Sharing 2016 outline staff resources required for the functioning of Home Sharing Schemes. It recommends for every 50 Home Sharing placements that there is 1 WTE Social Work, 0.5 WTE Co-ordinator and 0.5 WTE Admin Assistant. In addition for every 25 Contract Family placements, it recommends 1WTE Social Work, 0.5 WTE Co-ordinator and 0.5 WTE Admin Assistant.

## Purpose of Social Work Supervision of Host Families/Contract Families

Each Host/Contract is appointed a suitably qualified Home Sharing Social Worker prior to their first placement. It is important that the Host Family/Contract Family see the role of the Social Worker as twofold – namely, to give support through the provision of advice and advocacy and to supervise the Host/Contract Family in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

The Social Worker has the responsibility to ensure the Host/Contract family is equipped – emotionally and practically – for the responsibilities of Host/Contract Family care and to make appropriate plans to meet their support and training needs as identified on a regular basis.

The supervision process is crucial in helping Host/Contract Families to achieve the standards of care and practice required. It is achieved through the Home Sharing Social Worker's own observations, but also by garnering the views of the child/adult placed, his/her parents, the Host/Contract Family members, together with the views of the person's Social Worker and other professionals involved.

Supervision is essentially a supportive and enabling two way process to:

- Ensure the Host/Contract family understands how they contribute to the person's overall service and quality of their life.
- Ensure they are aware of the need to notify the scheme of any significant events relating to the care and protection of any person placed, as required by the Scheme's Client Protection Procedure.
- Enable Host Families to contribute effectively to the Placement Agreement and the ongoing quality of the placement for the home sharing guest.
- Provide appropriate monitoring and feedback on the Host Family Carer's work to ensure they are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities and have the necessary means and supports to fulfil these.
- Create opportunities for carers to speak about their own personal and family life and that of family members while making exploratory links to the impact of personal and family life on their Host Family commitments. These may also be linked to training needs. Relevant aspects of personal and family life will be included in the Host Family's review.
- Support Host Family Carers by providing advice or making this available from elsewhere as appropriate and providing the names and addresses, of any support groups and out of hours support.
- Give Host Family members an opportunity to raise any problems and make sure they are addressed appropriately.
- Help Host Family Carers cope with the stresses which may be entailed in hosting a person with a disability in their own home.
- Recognise and address any difficulties the children in the Host family may be experiencing.
- Assist Host Family carers to work in an anti discriminatory way that respects and promotes individual differences.
- The Home Sharing Social Worker is the first point of contact for any client protection concerns relating to the placement.

- The Home Sharing Social Worker initiates the review process of each placement, ensuring that feedback is sought from all parties.
- The Link Social Worker conducts full Host Family reviews as required, at intervals no longer than three years where possible. The guest and family must be consulted to inform feedback. The scheduling of full host Family reviews is resource dependent.

### **Level of Social Work Contact**

The Guest's Social Worker will facilitate the initial introductions and make a plan for introductory visits during the subsequent weeks. The Guest's Social Worker informs the Family Based respite Team Leader about schedule of introductory visits.

A member of the Family Based Respite team will follow up with the Host Family by phone following initial visits.

Regular contact will be maintained through the initial stages until the first review and as required thereafter.

### **MINIMUM GUIDE FOR ESTABLISHING PLACEMENTS**

The Host Family and Social Worker will agree a programme of supervision which will be guided by the support needs and communication style of the Host Family.

The level of contact will be determined by the number of placements, together with the frequency and complexities of each placement, i.e. the support needs of the person and the person's family.

The Host Family Placement, as laid down by the Placement Agreement will consist of a planned number of sessions per year, usually on a monthly basis, but sometimes on a weekly basis. Sessions may be day breaks, overnight breaks or weekend breaks.

Contact with the Home Sharing Social Worker will be by means of home visits, announced and unannounced, arranged visits away from the home, phone conversations, emails and text messages.

For Host Families offering an intensive placement (over six sessions per month) – Home visits will be arranged at intervals not more than three months, depending on the complexities of the placement and the support needs of the Host Family at a given time. All Host Family reviews should take place in the family home.

This contact may be supplemented by phone contact or additional meetings specific to the placement(s).

For Contract Families (10-20 sessions), the Home Sharing Social Worker will meet with the host Family on a monthly or two monthly basis with additional phone/direct contact as required for the purpose of supporting the Contract Family generally or around particular placements.

The Social Worker may nominate another member of the scheme to offer a level of ongoing support. The Link Social Worker has the responsibility to ensure that the Host Family continues to receive adequate support.

The Social Worker may offer a rationale for a lower level of support to the Host Family from that outlined should he/she be satisfied that the Host Family are receiving sufficient supports from other sources and that the placement continues to meet the person's needs.

All reviews should be conducted as outlined below.



## **Host Family Reviews**

All Host Family Reviews are carried out to determine the Host Family's continuing capacity to provide high quality care and to help identify gaps in the Home Sharing Scheme. Feedback to the Host Family's ability to provide positive experiences will be a significant factor in the outcome of the Host Family's review.

In particular, the following standards should be considered as part of any Host Family review.

- Is the Host Family aware of any specific physical, social, emotional or cultural needs of the person they support and have the capabilities to meet them?
- Does the Host Family enable people to make choices and decisions with support from advocates if necessary?
- Does the Host Family understand and challenge prejudice, discrimination and oppression?

## **Scheduling of Reviews**

A formal review may be scheduled at any point should changes in the Host Family's circumstances warrant a review.

Formal Host Family reviews should ideally take place at intervals not longer than three years.

- Updates of Garda Checks for all adult family members and regular overnight visitors are sought every three years.
- Tusla Child Protection checks are sought every three years.
- Host Families may be asked to attend a medical if health matters have arisen which may affect their ability to provide a safe quality placement.
- The Host Family and Home Sharing Scheme Social Worker complete a Host family review form.
- The Home Sharing Social Worker schedules a Home Visit at a time which permits a meeting with all family members (if possible). He/She will consider the family's experience of hosting and how the Host family can be facilitated to continue hosting.
- During the review the Host family's overall capacity to continue their Host family Commitments. The following are considered:
  - Significant changes in their circumstances, and their impact on hosting.
  - Health of family members including extended family.
  - The adequacy of the supports and training provided by the Scheme.
  - Hopes and expectations of the host family for the future
  - The overall performance of placements
  - Training requirements of host family members
- Reviews should record training undertaken and outline actions to be taken by the host family and the scheme including training and support in the period up to the next review.
- The Home Sharing Social Worker completes the final section of the review form referring to the findings of placement reviews, providing a brief summary of his/her findings and recommendations.
- The Link Social Worker may approach the Approval's Panel for guidance should unforeseen matters warrant panel consideration of the Host Family status.
- All documentation relating to the Host family's review is kept on the host family's file. The scheduling of reviews is noted on the scheme's database.
- Following assessments and/or investigations of abuse or neglect, serious complaints, the Home Sharing Team Leader will seek advice from the Head Social Worker and Designated Officer about the appropriateness of holding a review.

## **Contract Family and Shared Living Reviews**

A formal review may be scheduled at any point should changes in the Contract Family's circumstances warrant a review.

- Contract Family reviews follow the same procedure as for all Host Families.
- Formal Contract Family reviews take place every three years.
- Specific Contract Family review forms are used for this process.
- Additional reviews are held following assessments and/or investigations of abuse or neglect, serious complaints, or in other circumstances, construction by the Head of Social Work Department.
- Updates of Garda checks and HSE Clearance are sought every three years.
- Contract Families are asked to go for medicals if health matters have arisen in the meantime in which case a medical may be sought.
- The team schedules a home visit at a time which permits a meeting with all family members. He/she with the Contract Family will consider the family's experience of hosting and how the family can be facilitated to continue their contract family commitments.

During a review of the contract family's overall capacity to continue their contract family commitments, the following are considered:

- Significant changes in circumstances, and how these impact on hosting.
- Health of family members including extended family.
- The adequacy of the supports and training provided by the scheme.
- Hopes and expectations of the contract family for the future.
- The overall performance of placements including the continuing suitability of each match.
- Training requirements of contract family members.
- Availability for the coming year.
- Reviews should record training undertaken and outline actions to be taken by the Contract family and the scheme including training and support in the period up to the next review. In review will be findings and recommendations.
- Contracts for Contract Families are agreed and signed depending on provision and frequency of support.
- All documentation relating to the Contract Family's review is kept on the Contract Family's file and noted on the Scheme's database.

## **Duties of the Host Family**

**All Host families must engage in the required review process:**

- Full Host Family and Contract Family reviews should be conducted at least every three years.
- During the full Host Family review process, Garda clearance will be sought every three years, Tusla enquiry every three years and medical reports if required.
- Medical reports may be requested following serious illness/injury.
- Mandatory training.

## **Health and Safety**

All members of the scheme should be familiar with the contents of "Safe and Healthy" and "Safe and Sound" (Short Breaks Network 2001). All host families should regularly check the NHSN website for up to date information on Health and Safety.

- Ensure that the home is safe and that it complies with the health and safety requirements of the scheme.

- Provide suitable and comfortable accommodation, including a private bedroom. SMH recommends that Host Families provide proof of
  - (a) Home insurance including Public Liability and that the insurance company has been notified of the household's involvement with the scheme.
  - (b) Car insurance (if the car is being used during Home Sharing breaks) and that the insurance company has notified of a carer being used to carry Home Sharing guests (please refer to the NHSN for up to date guidance on insurance issues).
- To engage in the risk assessment process of the relevant organisation as deemed necessary and appropriate by the scheme,
- Equipment.
  - (a) To ensure that all necessary adaptations and equipment are in place before placement in cooperation with the host person, their family/support team and the scheme.
  - (b) To ensure that they are confident in safe use of all equipment and participate in any necessary training.
  - (c) To liaise with the scheme regarding the servicing and maintenance and repair of equipment and sign equipment loan agreement form.
- Self care is an important responsibility of each host family. The host family is expected to:
  - (a) Share concerns with their link social worker.
  - (b) Make sure to understand the home sharing guest's needs (ask questions).
  - (c) Actively seek appropriate training.
  - (d) Actively seek appropriate equipment.
  - (e) Communicate with the scheme about tailoring home sharing arrangements to suit personal and family life. In some cases, it may be necessary to take extra healthcare precautions, e.g. vaccinations, protective clothing, if this is warranted by the home sharing guest's health status.
  - (f) Share with the scheme the level of nature of personal, family and work commitments.
  - (g) Ensure sufficient leisure time e.g. at least one full weekend per month free from home sharing or work commitments. The level of work and family commitments will be considered more stringently by the scheme for contract families/carers (see guideline)
  - (h) Promptly cancel placements, either in person or through the scheme in the event of sickness or injury and request that the host person be collected if on placement. or certificate of fitness to resume work.
  - (i) Host family needs to inform team leader if they are on sick leave. Medical certificate or certificate of fitness to resume work may be required.

### **Communication: Maintain Communication with the Scheme**

- Maintain regular contact with the Home Sharing team.
- To liaise with the scheme on the scheduling of home Sharing breaks
- Inform the scheme of any change in their circumstances which might affect their ability to Host.
- Give the scheme notice of planned holidays or prolonged absences from the scheme.
- Give at least one months notice of intention to change residence or living arrangements.
- Give proper notice of planned absences from home with or without the host person which is likely to affect the placement.
- Inform the scheme of any emergency requests made by the home sharing guest's family.

- Refrain from making arrangements directly with Home sharing guest or their family which are outside the agreed allocation. Advise the host person/carer to make contact with their social worker or the scheme regarding special requests.
- Advise the parents/carer of any emergencies/illness that affects the host person during placement
  - Promptly notify the scheme of any emergencies/illness that affects the host person during placement.
  - Promptly report any accidents/incidents to the Home Sharing Team Leader and record on the schemes incident report form.
  - Incident reports must be sent to the office immediately or to Nurse Manger on Call if outside hours.
  - Record a brief account of guests stay on feedback sheet
  - Record the presence of overnight visitors or anything out of the ordinary during placement
  - The social Worker may ask to see this from time to time.

## **Welfare**

- To take all reasonable measures to promote the person's health, development and welfare.
- To treat the person with dignity and respect at all times.
- Act as "prudent caregivers".
- Work in partnership with parent/main carer and the scheme to facilitate placement and host persons overall well being.
- To take all reasonable measures to promote the person's independence and right to make individual choices.
- Ensure that the person participates in activities that promote social inclusion and community participation.
- Ensure that the personal needs of the person are attended to at all times.
- Ensure that the privacy of the person being supported shall be respected.
- Ensure that the dress and personal hygiene of the service user is maintained to the highest possible standard and in keeping with the dignity and age appropriateness of the service user. Intimate care must be carried out as per the policy guideline of the agency. To participate in planning meetings/reviews in relation to host person if requested and to assist with the implementation of the person's person centred care plan/care plan specific to his/her placement.
- Adhere to risk assessment of home environment.
- Inform scheme of any significant event affecting child/adult host person.
- Mandatory reporting of any concerns/incidents to link social worker/scheme office immediately.
- Permit social worker/authorised person to visit host person while on placement by appointment and prior agreement with person/main carer.
- To participate in placement reviews with parent/main carer and other individuals with a role to play in enhancing the persons' life (see review process).
- Maintain the person's confidentiality.
- Keep in a safe place a contact list for the person include:
  - (a) The name, surname, address, date of birth, marital status and religious denomination of the person being supported.
  - (b) The name, address and telephone number of the person's parent(s)/guardian/family members or other important individuals in the person's life who may be nominated by the person/parent/guardian to assist in the event of an emergency.
  - (c) The name and address and telephone number of the person's medical practitioner, and the name, office address and telephone number of the designated officer to be contacted in the event of an emergency.

(d) The contact details of all key support staff multidisciplinary team, day service/school transport team.

- To follow the person's medical care instructions (see scheme's medical procedures).
- Comply with all the relevant policies and procedures related to the Home Sharing as outline in training such as complaints handling, incident reporting, adult and children's protection policies, (Children's First and Client Protection), intimate care guidelines, drug administration etc.

## **Contract Families**

Contract Families are assessed and approved as contract carers and commit to a number of overnight breaks per month for individuals with high support needs. Contract families are contracted for five- twenty sessions per month for eleven months per year (allowing six weeks break over the course of a twelve month period). Contract Families are expected to register as self employed and manage their own finances and tax affairs.

Contract Families are expected to attend Contract Family review meetings on a three yearly basis.

## **Shared Living**

Host families involved in shared living are assessed and approved as a shared living family with a view to sharing their home with a person on a full time basis. As such, the shared living family will be responsible as the main carer(s) and support for the person.

## **Availability**

All Host Family placements are arranged around the availability of Host carers. Work commitments etc are taken into account when setting up placements. Availability is a very important factor for families considering Contract care or Shared Living.

The Scheme requires that at least one adult is available on a full time basis as there needs to be flexibility of working hours to accommodate the person's needs and also to be available to attend reviews, training and supervision, as well as training and support of other carers as appropriate and required.

## **Cancellations**

In the event of a cancellation the following shall apply in each scheme.

## **Home Sharing (Respite)**

Every effort should be made to give the other party as much notice as possible and to reschedule the placement should either party find themselves unable to avail/offer the session as planned. If the notice by the natural family/home sharing guest is less than 24 hours the full payment will be paid. It may not be possible to offer an alternative session.

## **Shared Living**

Rescheduling may differ because of the nature of a placement as it is a Monday – Sunday at a minimum of 21 nights per month.

When the person is availing of the placement is ill and unable to be with host family, full payment will be made for the 1<sup>st</sup> two weeks of the illness. Thereafter 50% payments will be made for the next four weeks. During this period the placement/availability shall be reviewed as to its future direction.

## Contract Family

Cancellations are covered by the contract. Every effort should be made to reschedule the session.

If a placement has to close temporarily or otherwise due to circumstances preventing the person from availing to the placement, e.g. illness, the sessions may be offered as cancellations to another person linked to the family. Should the placement to be held open for the person, the retainer will continue to be paid to the Contract Family at the level to include the person's session.

In the event of a permanent closure of the placement, the scheme will endeavour to find a suitable match for the contract family as soon as possible. The existing retainer will be paid for two months after which time the retainer will be paid to match the level of sessions being provided in the third month irrespective of the contract family's availability.

## Illness within the Host Family.

It may arise that a member of the Host Family becomes ill. The social worker will make an assessment of the impact of the illness on the family and the capacity of other family members to continue to fulfil the placement agreement(s). Should the family member who usually assumes the main caring role become ill, it will be responsibility of the social worker to assess the ability of other approved family members to assume the care of the person during this time. It may be necessary for the social worker/team leader to forward a copy of his/her assessment findings to the Finance and HR Department to ensure payment continues, especially if the main carer is a staff member on sick leave from employment. It may be necessary to have the contract family allowance made payable to another approved family member.

If a member of contract family becomes ill and this prevents the contract family from providing placements the retainer will be paid for a minimum 2 months. The length of time the retainer is paid will be at the discretion of the scheme. During this period the placement/availability will be reviewed.

## Withdrawal from the Scheme

Host/Contract families are expected to give at least two month's notice of their intention to withdraw from the scheme or a reduction in their availability. ***Where there has been a period of 6 months without communication from a host family, the Home Sharing Scheme has the right to terminate the arrangement.***

In turn, the Scheme will endeavour to give Host Families as much notice as possible to Host/Contract families and to the person's affected should it be forced to withdraw a Host family from the Scheme. However, should client protection concerns arise; placements will be suspended immediately pending a full investigation.

## SECTION 3 - THE SCHEME

St. Michael's House is responsible for the delivery of services for people with an intellectual disability. The Home Sharing Scheme is operated by the social work department within St. Michael's House. While policies and procedures have been developed to cater specifically for Host Family placements, the Scheme is ultimately governed by St. Michael's House. As such the scheme is obliged to adhere to the Policies and Procedures set by the organisation.

- The Scheme accepts applications for Home Sharing Placements and enters basic details on the Home Sharing database for consideration by the matching panel
- The Scheme maintains a register of all children and adults availing of home sharing placements.
- The scheme maintains a database of all applicants who submit an enquiry form.
- The approval and subsequent registration of Host families and the operation of the scheme is governed by the Home Sharing Scheme.
- Host Families are informed of training as soon as possible following approval.
- The scheme maintains a register of all approved Host/Contract Families

### APPROVAL'S PANEL

#### Purpose

The purpose of the Approval's Panel is to make recommendations and appropriate approvals regarding all Host Family applications and assessments.

The Approval's Panel shall be referred hereafter as "The Panel". The Panel's Terms of Reference should be:

- To act in the best interest of children and adults placed with Host families
- To comply with relevant legislation.
- To employ consistent and transparent criteria in the execution of its duties
- To promote best practice in the approval of all Host Families
- To use evidence based practice to inform their working decisions
- To undertake to respect and uphold confidentiality pertaining to all matters involved in the work of the Panel.

#### Functions of the Panel

- Ensure the Panel membership and functions adhere to the National Standards and local Standards to the scheme.
- Provide a consultative service to staff through consideration of interim reports on issues pertaining to applications/assessments.
- Consider completed assessment reports for Host/Contract Families.
- Quality assure reports presented to Panel
- Employ consistent standardised criteria for approval or refusal of assessments.
- Applicants advised in writing if refused approval.
- Applicants not approved shall be advised of their right to appeal
- To make recommendations in response to appeals (please see **appendix D** Appeals mechanism).
- Access, when required, specialist advice to clarify any aspect of an assessment, or placement of a child or adult.

## **Maintain Records**

The minute taker will record

- Substance of panel discussions
- Exact recommendations, concerns/reservations expressed by panel members
- The reasons and the basis for final decision of the approvals panel should also be clearly documented and kept on the prospective host family's file.
- The record of recommendations, decisions, minutes are forwarded to the Home Sharing Scheme Team Leader.

## **Panel Membership**

- Panel Members are nominated by the Home Sharing Scheme Team Leader.
- The panel must comprise of individuals with an expertise in Client Welfare and Safeguarding.
- The panel must include members who have significant experience of Host /Contract families/foster care.
- Panel membership is rotated.

## **Membership may be drawn from the following:**

- Senior Social Work staff in St. Michael's House
- Team Leader or Social Worker working within the Home Sharing Service.
- Manager/Coordinator of Respite Services
- Foster Care Manager/Social Worker with Tusla
- An adult member of a Host Family
- An adult Home Sharing recipient/guest availing of Home Sharing placement.
- Other Multidisciplinary/Professional outside of Social Work.
- Other Professionals from within or outside the services with a specific interest in the development of Home Sharing and related programmes.

## **The Chairperson**

The Chairperson shall be an established member of the Panel with knowledge and experience of Client safeguarding and Home Sharing/Foster care. The Chairperson is a rotating role. The note taker shall be nominated for each panel meeting.

## **Minimum Attendance**

The minimum attendance for a meeting to proceed is three members.

## **Frequency of Panel Meetings**

Meetings will be convened as required at the request of the Scheme Team Leader when completed assessments for new Host/Contract Families are ready for presentation to the Panel.



## Decision Process

Decisions will be made on the basis of the majority view of the panel members present. There are three possible outcomes for new assessment presentations:

- 1) Application approved. The applicant is informed by assessing Social Worker.
- 2) The assessing Social Worker is asked to provide more information. Further contact with the applicant may be required to seek clarification.
- 3) Applicant is not approved.
  - The applicant is informed in writing.
  - The applicant is invited to make written representation to the panel seeking an appeal hearing.
  - The Home Sharing Scheme Team Leader will acknowledge any correspondence from the applicant and invite them to meet a representative group of panel members to explain the panels concerns.
  - The applicant is given the opportunity to make their own representations.
  - Additional consultation outside this forum may also occur in the event of the need for expert opinion or additional information.
  - The outcome of this meeting together with any additional information is reported back to the Approvals panel.
  - Following further deliberations by the Panel, the applicant is notified of the Panel's decision. The rationale is also outlined.
  - Where the Approvals Panel is equally divided in its recommendation the Chairperson will have the casting vote. The Chairperson has the right to seek expert opinion to inform the final decision.
  - Minority views where applicable will be recorded in the minutes.

Minutes must accurately reflect the discussion which takes place in relation to each report presented to The Panel and the final decision. The final decision on a particular applicant will also be recorded on the applicants file (panel form).

## Appeals Committee

From time to time it may be agreed that the Chairperson together with one or more Panel members shall convene a separate meeting with the applicant or relevant personnel outside the Panel to resolve issues, organisational or other, relating to a final decision.

The final decision regarding approval of an applicant will ultimately lie with the approvals panel.

## Safeguarding and Client Protection Procedure

The Home Sharing Scheme is guided by the Client Protection procedures of St. Michael's House, which in turn are guided by national policy documents including "Trust in Care", "Our Duty to Care" and "Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children" and "Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults".

**Child:** Any person under the age of eighteen

**Vulnerable adult:** A person aged 18 years or over who is unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation, who is unable to take care of him or herself, or who is in need of extra care due to an intellectual or physical disability or a mental or physical illness.

The Home Sharing Scheme is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and vulnerable adults by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional harm. The scheme has adopted preventative and procedural measures to ensure that those availing of Host/Contract Family placements are safe.

**Preventative Measures include;**

- Assessment of all Host Families, including background checks (character references, Garda vetting, Tusla Child Protection check)
- Approval's Panel
- Training of Host Families on an ongoing basis
- Specific service user safeguarding training before they begin hosting.
- The Scheme's expectations of Host families are clearly outlined.
- Social Work supervision (depending on needs of placement) of the Host Family and placement(s).
- Regular reviews of Host Families including 3 yearly background checks.
- Matching process: finding a match which works well and facilitates positive relationships between people and their host families.
- A detailed care plan and all relevant guidelines for guest including intimate care guidelines.
- Actively seeking feedback from the person about the placement.
- Support of Social Worker/Key worker for person on placement
- Host Families and persons availing of the service have access to a named Social Worker and Nurse Manger On Call for out of hours.

**Safeguarding:****Responsibilities of the Host/Contract Family**

- The primary role of the Host Family is to keep the person safe and protected from abuse.
- The Host Family is obliged to contact the Scheme's Team leader/Social Worker if they have a concern regarding the person's safety or wellbeing.
- While it is not appropriate to share concerns with members of the general public, including friends and family, it is a breach of the Scheme's confidentiality and Client Protection procedures to keep any personal or family information which may affect the safety or wellbeing of the person placed with them by the Home Sharing Scheme.
- The Host Family is obliged to promptly share information about their own family which may impact on their capacity to host a child or vulnerable adult in their home.
- Garda clearance is required for all adult family members and any regular overnight guests. Review Garda clearance will be sought every three years.
- The Host Family is expected to record the following which will be reviewed by the Scheme's social worker's:
  - Dates and times of the person's arrival and departure
  - Any overnight visitors to the home during that time
  - Brief information on guests stay.
  - Any unusual behaviour or incidents during the person's stay.

## Client Protection Procedure

### WHAT THE HOST FAMILY MUST DO IF THEY HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT THE PERSON'S WELFARE OR IMMEDIATE SAFETY

(See Appendix E Safeguarding Chart)

It is the Host Families primary responsibility to ensure the person's immediate safety.

The Host family may seek medical attention for the person in cases of emergency, as the Host Family have signed consent from the parent/guardian to do so. The family should also be informed.

*IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THE HOST FAMILY TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION FOR A CHILD OR VULNERABLE ADULT FOR NON-URGENT MATTERS UNLESS THIS HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY ARRANGED WITH THE PERSON AND/OR HIS/HER GUARDIAN.*

The Host Family is obliged to promptly inform the scheme's Team Leader or social worker of any accident, incident or concern by phoning the office and giving a verbal report. The person and /or his /her family should be informed that the scheme is being contacted. Any accident, incident or concern should be recorded by the Host Family on the Scheme's Incident report Form as soon as possible after the event (within 24 hours) and forwarded directly to the Scheme.

Any injury / bruising on the person's body must be recorded by using the body chart.

Where a child appears to be at an IMMEDIATE and SERIOUS risk and in the exceptional circumstances that the named Social worker/Team Leader/Principal/Head Social worker/Designated person is not available the Host Family should contact Tusla, The Child and Family Agency responsible for child protection and Welfare (Duty Social Worker) during office hours (see [www.Tusla.ie](http://www.Tusla.ie) for information on who to contact). The person and/or his /her family should be informed of this referral.

If an incident occurs out of hours (between 5pm-9am), the Host Family should contact and inform Nurse Manager on call. **If the person (child/adult) appears to be at IMMEDIATE and SERIOUS risk of harm the Host family should contact the Gardai.**

## What the Home Sharing Social Worker will do:

### Role of Home Sharing Team Leader/Social Worker in Safeguarding

The Home Sharing Social Workers will follow St. Michael's House Policy and Procedures for the protection of Children/Adults from Abuse and Neglect.

- The Home Sharing Social Worker/Team Leader will liaise with the Head/Principal Social Worker and Designated Officer in St. Michael's House.
- The Designated Officer in consultation with key people will decide what actions to take.
- The Designated Officer/Home Sharing Social Worker will liaise with Tusla/Gardai where required.
- The Guest's social Worker will inform and support the family.
- The Host Family may be asked to complete a series of protection forms to record client protection concerns a Tusla Standard Report Form (for reporting Child Protection and Welfare Concerns) or (adults). The Host Family Scheme's Social Worker will support the Host family with the administration of this.
- If in the event that an allegation is being made against a Host Family then the role of the Home Sharing Social Worker is to support them through the investigation process.
- The Host Family Scheme Social Worker/Team Leader will document all follow up action on the original incident report form submitted by the Host family

## Complaints and Compliments Procedure

The procedure aims to identify problems (perceived by participants of the Scheme) as early as possible; to deal with these problems efficiently, and to provide a means of analysing the information gathered in the process in order to improve the service. The Scheme operates in accordance with St. Michael's House Complaints and Compliments Policy. (See Appendix F)

### Definition of a Complaint:

When someone tells St. Michael's House that something is wrong with the service or someone tells us they are not happy with the service. "A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction which requires a prompt and appropriate response".

### Definition of a Compliment:

A compliment is when someone tells St. Michael's House that something is good about the service or that they are really happy with the service.

### Policy:

St. Michael's House recognises that there are times when we do things well and we welcome compliments when this happens. Compliments will be recorded and reviewed so that we can learn about what we do well.

We also know that sometimes we could do things better and that Service Users, Family Members/representatives; Host Families have the right to complain if they are unhappy about something. It is the policy of St. Michael's House to deal with complaints in line with the procedures as set out in the St. Michael's House Complaints and Compliments Policy.

### Objectives of Policy

- Ensure Complaints are listened to, taken seriously, and are addressed in a fair, timely, confidential and transparent manner.
- Inform Complainants of the outcome of their complaint as quickly as possible.
- Learn and improve services by reviewing complaints regularly

### Who can make a Complaint?

**"Any person who has received or sought health or personal social service from the HSE or Service Provider (St. Michael's House is a Service Provider)".**

### How can a Complaint Be Made?

A complaint can be made using whatever method is most appropriate and accessible for the service user or his/her family e.g. verbal, written, using gesture and sign or through an aided device.

If the person themselves cannot write, family members, staff or an advocate will write the complaint with them using the MAKING A COMPLAINT Form, (Appendix F) if possible staff must make information accessible to the person so that the person, to the best of their ability, knows and understands what is being recorded.

**NB. If the issue involves possible abuse of a service user, it will be addressed through the St. Michael's House Client Protection policies.**

A complaint may be made verbally or in writing to any member of staff. Any matter directly relating to the Home Sharing Scheme should be referred to the Team Leader of the Scheme as soon as possible.

## **STAGES IN THE PROCESS FOR MANAGEMENT OF COMPLAINTS**

There are four stages in the process for the management of complaints. It is the aim of St. Michael's House that most complaints will be resolved at Stage 1 and that only those complex complaints resulting in serious outcomes for service users will be required to be escalated for further investigation and resolution.

The stages of the St. Michael's House process are as follows:

**Stage 1 (a)** Local resolution of verbal complaints at point of contact

### **Stage 1 (b)**

Local resolution of verbal complaints by Complaints Officer (i.e. Person in Charge, Team Leader, Head of Department)

### **Stage 2 (a)**

Preliminary investigation of written complaints and /or unresolved verbal complaints by Complaints Officer.

### **Stage 2 (b)**

Full investigations of written complaints and/or unresolved verbal complaints by Complaints Officer or Director of Services.

### **Stage 2 (c)**

Internal reviews through CEO's Office

### **Stage 3**

Review by the Health Service Executive (HSE).

### **Stage 4**

Independent Reviews (Ombudsman/Ombudsman for Children).

Complaints Officers will normally be the Person in Charge (PIC) of the centre, or Head of Department in case of Clinical Specialties. In relation to the Home Sharing Scheme; the Complaints Officer will usually be the Home Sharing Scheme Team Leader.

The person's social worker/ Host Family Social worker is usually in a position to support the person and their family/Host family throughout the process. It is the role of the Complaints Officer to keep complainants updated and informed of the process.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SUGGESTED APPLICATION TEMPLATE**

- 1) Name
- 2) Address
- 3) D.O.B.
- 4) School/Day Service
- 5) Background Information
- 6) Ability level .... Include medical needs, personal care, sleep pattern, specific dietary requirements, communication, likes, dislikes, personality, behavioural needs, equipment needs.
- 7) Reason for referral .... Include what support is required-quantify. Please advise if family have been informed of referral.
- 8) Transport - do family have transport? Would they be willing to share transport?
- 9) Hardiker Priority ... has this been agreed first with your principal social worker

**APPENDIX B:**

## Prioritisation System

**For All Support Services in St Michael's House – LINK, Daybreak, Respite and Residential Services.**

Name of Service User:: \_\_\_\_\_

By what threshold would you prioritise this service user/family having regard to the Hardiker et al (1991) model of 'levels of intervention'?

PLEASE TICK  
ONE BOX ONLY

<b>N E G L I G I B L E</b>	<p>1) This level identifies families whose needs can be addressed through universal services provided in the community. Universal community services could revert any needs developing at subsequent levels. <u>Status : Low Priority.</u></p> <p>2) This level identifies more vulnerable families whose needs may be addressed through specific community programmes e.g. MABS, parent and toddler groups. Families are enabled to use universal and community-based resources wherever possible. Planned support services such as Link and respite may be helpful. Advocacy may be key for these families. <u>Status : Medium Priority/Ongoing Need or Concerns.</u></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<b>M O D E R A T E</b>	<p>3) This level addresses early stresses and families in temporary crisis through short-term, task-centred interventions and resources. This can include times of bereavement or illness, behavioural issues, or times of transition e.g. school / unit holidays and Christmas. Link and respite may be necessary. The aim is to restore family functioning so that direct social work intervention is no longer required. <u>Status : Urgent/High Priority.</u></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<b>S E V E R E</b>	<p>4) This level identifies families with serious stresses severely impacting on the service user, including the risk of imminent family breakdown and entry into crisis respite care. Difficulties may be acute or well established. The aim is to mitigate the effects and to restore family functioning. <u>Status : At risk of Breakdown.</u></p> <p>5) This level covers immediate family breakdown, Service Users in crisis residential care, death of a caregiver, serious ill health of the caregiver, or where there are concerns that a service user is at serious risk. <u>Status : Out of Home.</u></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Social Worker)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal Social Worker)

**Social Work Department St. Michael's House**

**APPENDIX C**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>St. Michael's House</b> <b>Home Sharing Scheme Review Form</b></p>
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Home Sharing Scheme include the following

1. Host Families – Short Breaks
2. Contract Families
3. Shared Living Contract Families

**This form is to be completed at the Review and signed by the Host Carer.**

**Host Carer's Name(s):**

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**Address:**

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**Social Worker:**

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**Date of this Review:**

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## HOST FAMILY REVIEW

**Has there been any change in the Carer's household or circumstances that could impact on placements since the last review?**

**Has there been any feedback from Service Users or their family?**

**Are there any specific problems / difficulties arising from the placements?**

**Please comment on the relationship between the Host Carer & St Michael's House**

**Are there any further supports that St Michael's House could put in place to assist the Host?**

<b>Actions/Training needs</b>
<b>Any other comments?</b>
<b>Summary of Findings/Recommendation</b>

**Signatures of Host Family:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Social Worker:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date:**

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### **Guidelines and Procedures for Appeals Home Sharing Scheme St. Michael's House**

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#### **Procedures preceding appeal against Host Family Approvals Panel decision by Host Carer/Family**

Where applicants who are not recommended for inclusion on the Host Family/Carer Panel, are in disagreement with Host Family Approval Panel's decision, they should write to the chairperson who will invite them to meet the HFAP to clarify their situation.

#### **The committee to meet applications will be composed of:**

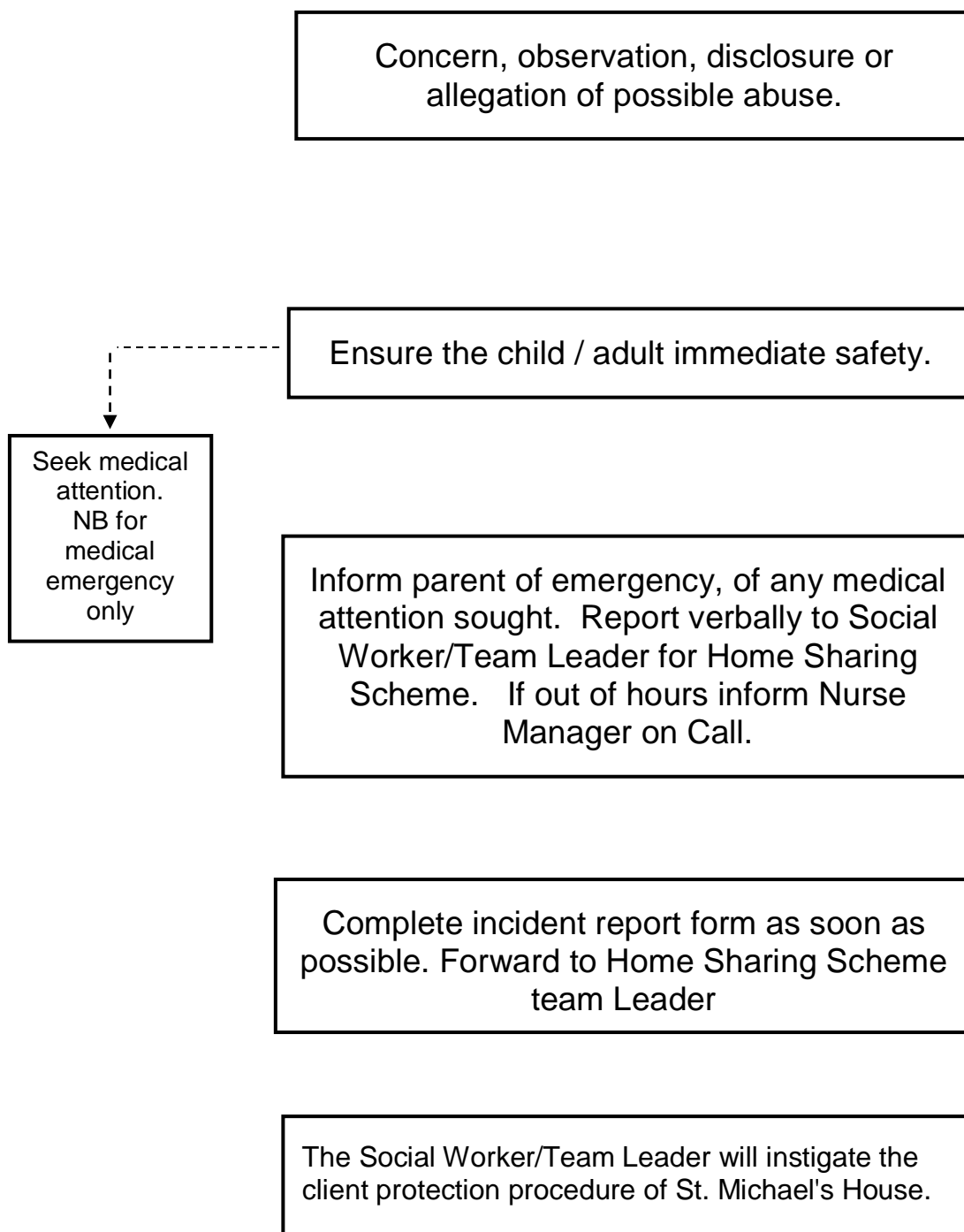
1. Chairperson
2. Principal Social Worker
3. One other committee member

#### **The procedures for this process are:**

- Applicants submit a brief letter to the chairperson requesting an appeal.
- The chairperson acknowledges receipt of the letter from the applicants
- Applicants are invited to meet a representative group of the committee to consider the matter
- Applicants are offered the option of submitting a report/letter to support their view to the committee in advance of this meeting
- Applicants are advised of their right to be accompanied by a support person at this meeting
- They are formally notified of the committee's decision on their presentation within 7 working days

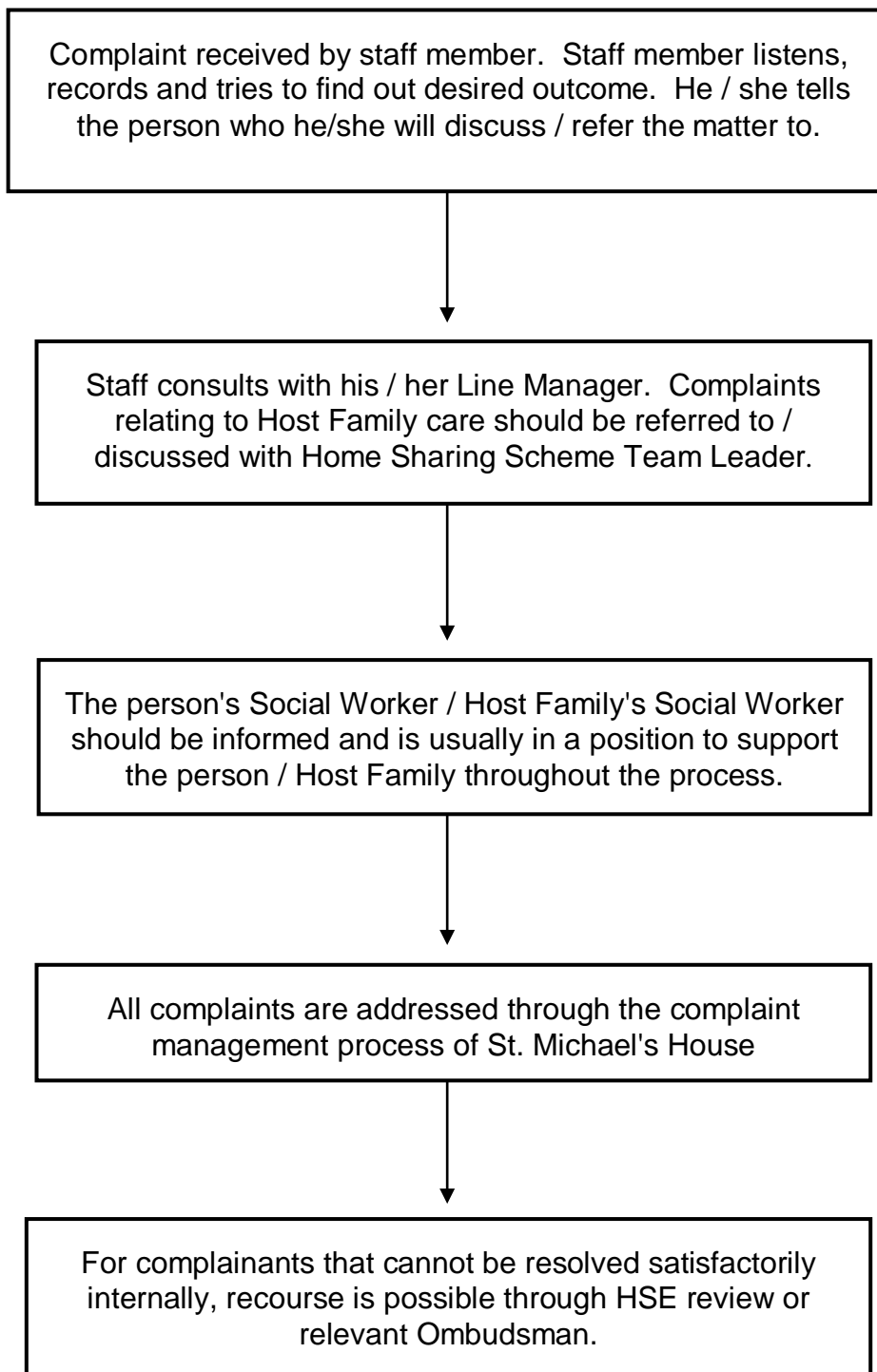
**APPENDIX E**

**SAFEGUARDING SERVICE USERS:**



**APPENDIX F**

**COMPLAINT'S PROCEDURE:**



**APPENDIX G**

**PLACEMENT REVIEW WITH GUEST**

**Formal Home Sharing Review – Person with Intellectual Disability.**

<b>Name of Service User</b>		<b>D.O.B.</b>	
<b>Home Address</b>			
<b>Tele No.</b>		<b>Mobile No.</b>	
<b>Name of Next of Kin</b>			
<b>Home Address</b>			
<b>Tele No.</b>		<b>Mobile No.</b>	
<b>Email</b>			

<b>Name of Home Sharing Family</b>			
<b>Home Address</b>			
<b>Tele No.</b>		<b>Mobile No.</b>	
<b>Email</b>			

### **Objectives of Family Placement**

How do you spend your time while being with your Home Sharing Family? Is there anything else you would like to do?

### **Social/Community Integration**

What social outings happen for you while you are staying / living with your Home Sharing family? Is there any other social activity you would like to get involved in?

Have you made friends with people in the local community of your Home Sharing family?

### **Physical Environment**

Do you like your bedroom? Is it nice and warm? Have you any difficulty with access, the stairs or with anything else in your host family home?

**Health and Medical**

**Have you ever had any concerns about your health while Staying with your Home Sharing family?**

**Yes**

**No**

If yes, How did the Home Sharing family assist you?

**Positive Aspects**

What do you like about staying with your Home Sharing Family?

**Placement Issues/Areas for Development.**

**Is there anything you would like to change in your Home Sharing family?**

**Yes**

**No**

If yes, please outline. We welcome any suggestions.

**Signed (Service User)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed (Parent/Advocate)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed (Social Worker)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Next Review Date** \_\_\_\_\_