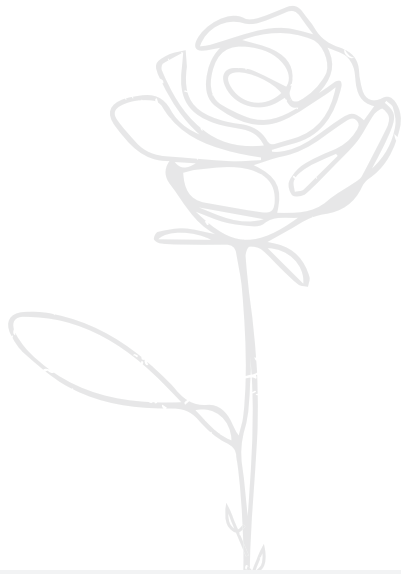




Information for Hosts

Version 1.3



"You see you wouldn't ask why the rose that grew from the concrete, had damaged petals. On the contrary, we would all celebrate its Tenacity."

Tupac Shakur

About Us

Concrete Rose Collective is a Community Interest Company (CIC¹) with a determination to both deliver and equip others to provide first-class care and support for the most vulnerable young people across the UK. This encompasses a desire to see a values-driven, therapeutic approach at the forefront of services for young people.

Mission Statement

To provide loving, therapeutic, homes and educational opportunities that empower young people to overcome challenging circumstances and flourish.

The Need

For many young people in the UK, and especially for care leavers and those without family support networks (including unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)), the transition to adulthood can be a time of fear, insecurity, and increased vulnerabilityⁱⁱ. This is accentuated by a lack of access to high-quality, supportive, semi-independent accommodation (SIA) options with significant, and detrimental, implications for young people:

- Last year 121,000 young people (16-25) in the UK approached their local authority as they were homeless or at risk of homelessnessⁱⁱⁱ (52% citing family and/or relationship breakdown as the main cause^{iv}).
- In 2019/20, 15% of accommodation placements for care leavers were considered unsuitable^v. One third of care leavers become homeless within the first three years of leaving care^{vi} and care leavers make up 25% of the homeless population^{vii}.
- Care leavers (19-21) are three times more likely to be Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)^{viii} and 25% of care leavers experience a mental health crisis after leaving care^{ix}. In addition, 40% of the UK's prison population are care leavers and over half (56%) of children in custody and receiving criminal sentences have a history of being in care – despite looked-after children making up only 1% of the total population^x.
- The number of UASC leaving care is rising^{xi}, with many requiring additional support^{xii}, and, in 2019, UASC were more likely to be placed in unregulated SIA settings^{xiii} with many placements deemed substandard^{xiv}.



Our Response - 'Room to spare'

To respond to these challenges our 'Room to spare' initiative looks to recruit, train and support individuals, couples and families to offer supported lodgings to young people (16-21) who are leaving home or care and are vulnerable. This enables young people to make a more gradual transition to adulthood and create a solid foundation for the future. We support hosts and young people in the following ways:

- **Hosts:**

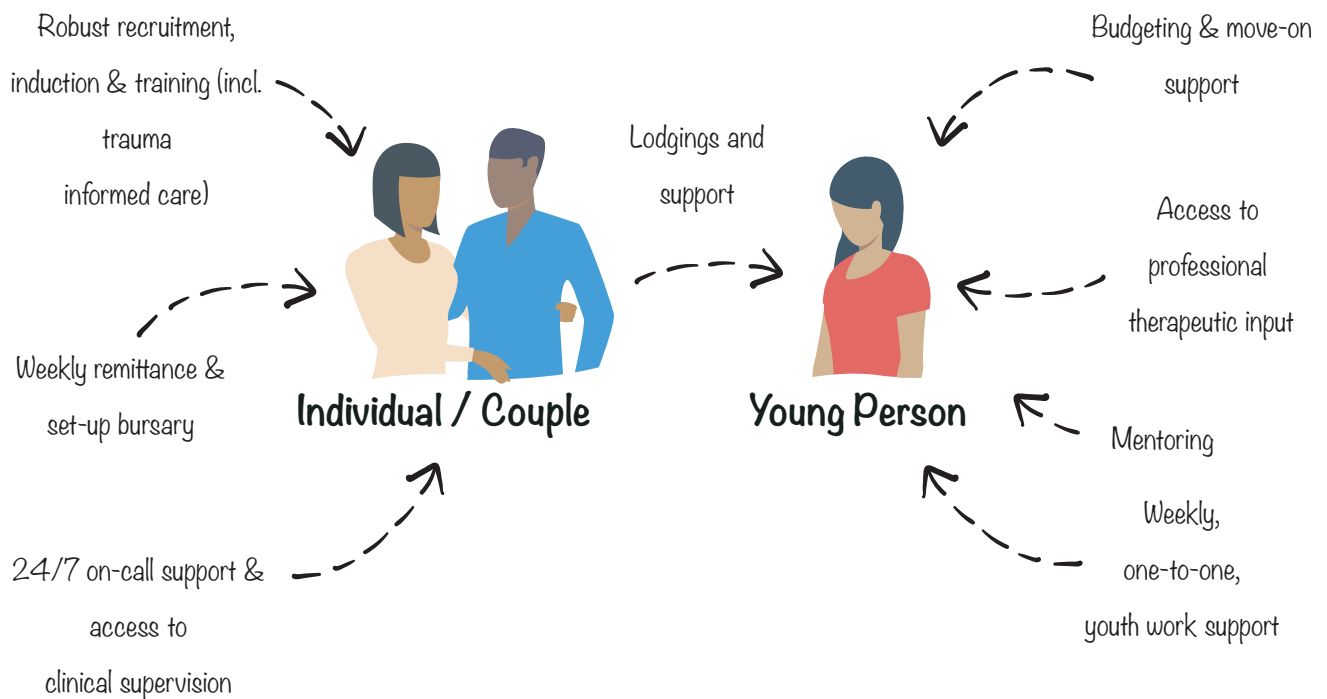
- *Training and induction:* As a part of the induction process hosts receive training in our therapeutic approach, and particularly trauma-informed care, as well as mediation and communication techniques and an introduction to the policies and procedures of Concrete Rose. Hosts are also able to access additional training, including first-aid, without cost.
- *Financial remittance:* Hosts receive a weekly remittance to cover the additional costs of hosting a young person. This is between £50-80 (depending on location). Hosts are also eligible to receive a start-up bursary to cover any additional costs associated with hosting including making a home compliant with health and safety requirements (e.g. installing smoke detectors).
- *On-call support:* Hosts are able to access on-call, 24/7, support from the Concrete Rose core team.
- *Host networks:* We create local networks of hosts to encourage mutual support as well as the opportunity to run joint gatherings, trips and celebration events.

- **Young people:**

- *Youth work support:* Each young person receives weekly, one-to-one, support from a professional youth worker. This long-term support helps young people identify and build on their abilities and skills, access education and employment, connect to wider support networks and, when appropriate, transition to independent living arrangements (at which point the support continues).
- *Therapeutic input:* Young people are able to access therapeutic interventions from a trauma-informed youth specialist.
- *'Adults who care' mentoring:* Young people are offered the opportunity to link in with an adult mentor who can provide advice, guidance and a listening ear.
- *Budgeting support:* Young people are supported to effectively manage their money including, where appropriate, applying for their benefit entitlement(s).

Similar, and successful, models of 'Room to spare' operate throughout the UK^{xv}. A diagram showing an overview of the 'Room to spare' initiative can be seen on the next page.

Overview - 'Room to spare'



Become A Host

The heartbeat of 'Room to spare' is a network of host individuals, couples and families who are willing to open their home to a young person. Hosts provide a bedroom, a safe environment and love, tolerance, support and guidance to a young person but are expected to continue with their own daily routines including working, socialising, hobbies, holidays and weekends away etc. In becoming a host you can give a young person the safety and security necessary to grow, flourish and successfully step into a brighter future.

In the sections below you will find an outline of the process involved in becoming a host and responses to some frequently asked questions. If you would like to pursue your interest and apply to become a Concrete Rose host please get in touch using the contact details on the final page.

The Application Process

The commitment required of a host is not insignificant and we want to take the time to ensure that it is the right decision for you, your family and the young people that you may support and that you feel properly equipped to undertake the role. Therefore, the process of becoming a host is thorough and involves a number of steps outlined below:



Step 1: Initial enquiry

Initial enquiries to become a host can be made via phone, e-mail or our website (contact details at the end of this document). We will then arrange a telephone call to outline the role of a host and answer any questions you have.



Step 2: Virtual home visit

We will arrange a virtual home visit at a mutually convenient time. As a part of this visit we will ask for a virtual tour of your home and to see the room that the young person would occupy. If a virtual home visit is more difficult for you we can do this step in person.



Step 3: Application form, references and DBS checks (Enhanced Disclosure)

The application form is detailed and asks for a lot of information about you, your family and the reasons you would like to become a host. At this point we will also ask for, and take up, personal and professional references for you and, if relevant, your partner. We also start the process of undertaking DBS checks on all members of your family who live at home and are aged 16 and over.



Step 4: Home visit and strengths assessment

The second home visit is undertaken in person. We will talk through your application form, and examine, in depth, the role of a host. We will also ask you to complete a skills assessment that helps identify your strengths, suitability for the role of a host and areas in which you may require further support. This ensures we place the right young person with you when it comes to the pairing stage (step 8).



Step 5: Home assessment

We conduct an assessment of your property both to ensure that it is safe but also that it is conducive to the potential sensory needs of young people. Often, we undertake this home visit with a representative of Concrete Rose who is care-experienced and is sensitive to the requirements of a trauma-informed environment.



Step 6: Induction and training

As well as a thorough overview of the ethos, values, policies and procedures of Concrete Rose (including safeguarding, equality and diversity, and support protocols) you will receive specialist training in our trauma-informed therapeutic approach, how to respond to challenging behaviour and mediation techniques. This training takes place in a number of distinct sessions and lasts approximately 12 hours in total.





Step 7: Approvals panel

To become a host you must be approved at a panel meeting comprising of a Concrete Rose staff member, a member of our Advisory Board, an independent professional and an experienced host. The panel assess all the information gathered to date and 'sign off' hosts as being ready to offer supported lodgings.



Step 8: Pairing

Once you have completed stage 7 you are an 'approved host' and available to be paired with a young person. Our pairing process includes a thorough assessment of the needs, risk and vulnerabilities of a young person and also takes into account:

- The beliefs, backgrounds, culture and heritage of the host and the young person.
- The experience of the host.
- The house/family dynamics including any implications on other children or adults in the host home.
- The location of the host home and its suitability for the young person in terms of access to education and support networks etc.

Once a suitable pairing has been identified we create an opportunity for hosts and the young person to meet (usually in the host's home). This includes a discussion of joint expectations and an articulation of 'house rules'. After this meeting we thoroughly debrief with the host and the young person and, if both parties agree, proceed with the placement. (At this point young people are asked to sign a licence agreement.)



Step 9: On-going training and support

Hosts receive on-call support, 24/7 from a designated member of the Concrete Rose core team. Young people are also supported on a weekly basis by a youth worker who will look to work alongside the host. Hosts are connected into a network of other, local, hosts for mutual support and are regularly able to access additional training opportunities, networking events and enrichment activities provided by Concrete Rose.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can become a supported lodgings host?

Anyone can apply to become a host and we encourage a diverse range of individuals, couples and families reflecting the diversity of the young people we support. Hosts should reside in the property full-time and need to be able to provide a bedroom, a safe environment, love, tolerance, support and guidance to a young person.

Do I need to own my own home?

You don't necessarily need to own your own home to become a host. However, we will need to obtain written consent from your landlord stating that they are happy for you to provide supported lodgings at the property. The landlord must also confirm that they hold current building insurance on the property and that they have informed their insurer that the property will be used for supported lodgings.

I live on my own, could I become a host?

Yes absolutely. We welcome individuals, couples and families to become hosts.

Can I host more than one young person at a time?

This is unusual but can happen especially if you have experience of previously providing supported lodgings for young people. If you have enough room you may consider housing young people who require additional space e.g. young parents.

Can I be a host and continue to work full-time?

Yes, in fact we would encourage you to continue to go about your usual routines including working, hobbies, holidays, weekends away etc.





How much money will I receive?

Supported lodgings will provide a small income for you to cover the additional costs of hosting a young person but hosts should be financially secure and not view this role as a source of additional income. Our weekly remittance is based on the benefits a young person receives and is usually between £50-£80 per week. Concrete Rose will pay this remittance directly into your account.

Will the financial support I receive from you affect my benefits?

The service functions under the Government 'Qualifying Care Relief', which allows you to be in receipt of £11,000 per annum before paying tax. However, some benefits may be affected and we advise you to contact your local benefits team and tax office if you have any queries.

Do I need to contact my mortgage lender and house insurer?

We certainly advise you to contact your mortgage lender and house insurer to let them know that you are providing supported lodgings.

Will I need to make adaptations to my home?

You may need to make some small adaptations to your home e.g. installing fire detectors in the bedroom of the young person. However, Concrete Rose will cover these additional 'set-up' costs in order that you can provide supported lodgings.

How much say do I have in the type of young person who lodges with me?

Our pairing process is rigorous as we want to give every placement the best opportunity to succeed. As a part of this process we take into account your personal and family dynamics including your thoughts as to the type of young person who will fit best into your home. Before any pairing process begins you will be given a full profile of the proposed young person to confirm you are happy to proceed. You will also get to meet the young person with both parties needing to agree for a placement to commence.

I don't have any experience of youth work or parenting; can I still become a host?

Yes, as well as your life experience we will provide you with comprehensive training, guidance and support before and during a young person's placement with you as a host. You can find details about this in the section entitled 'The Application Process' above.

Can I become a host if I have a criminal record?

We do not automatically rule people out of becoming hosts simply because of a criminal record. It depends on the nature of the offence and the time that has elapsed since it was committed. We advise you to raise this with us at the 'initial enquiry' stage of your application at which point we will be able to inform you as to whether you are eligible to apply to become a host.

What size does the bedroom for the young person need to be?

There is no specific size requirement. However, the room must contain a bed and some storage.

Can I be a host if I have children living at home?

We welcome applications from host families where there are children at home. As part of the application process we will work with you to ensure that becoming a host is a good fit for all your family. We will also take this into account when we consider a suitable young person to live in your home. All family members over the age of 16 will be asked to complete an enhanced DBS check.

Can I be a host if I have pets?

Yes, but we will need to include your pets in our home assessment and ensure that they are safe. We will also take this into account when we pair a young person with you to ensure they are happy to be around the pet that you own.

Do I have to have locks on the bathroom?

Yes, this is for the privacy of everyone in the house.





What are the house rules?

We don't have set rules but we do have some suggestions and will help you formalise your own rules as part of the induction process. The young person must then agree to these rules during the 'pairing' stage of the application process.

Will a health condition/impairment prevent me from becoming a host?

No. The key thing is that you can provide some basic support to a young person. As long as this is possible we would welcome your application to be a host and would simply ask that you inform us if your health changes or deteriorates.

What about if I have a mental illness?

We will assess this on an individual basis. It depends on the severity, frequency and duration of the illness and how it affects you in day-to-day life.

What if something changes and I can no longer host a young person?

We recognise that sometimes things change and unforeseen life circumstances can arise which compromise your ability to host a young person. We would ask you to give us as much time as possible to notify us of your intention to stop being a host – and preferably a minimum of 4 weeks – in order that we can put contingency plans in place and find another host for the young person whilst helping both parties through the transition process.

Why is the young person in need of supported lodgings?

There are a variety of reasons why a young person may be in need of supported lodgings including family breakdown and/or bereavement, or that a young person is leaving a foster or residential care placement.

Who provides food for the young person?

The young person is expected to buy their own food, cook for themselves and eat where they feel most comfortable. However, we are happy for hosts and their lodgers to make arrangements that best suit their circumstances.

What support will the young person need?

The idea of supported lodgings is to prepare young people for independent living. Therefore, the young person will probably need a little support and guidance in developing the necessary skills including washing, cooking, managing finances etc. However, each young person is also supported by a youth worker who will particularly help them in the fields of education and work. The Concrete Rose core team will help a young person, where relevant, set-up benefits and, if desired, each young person can access additional adult mentoring through our 'adults who care' scheme (see below).

What is the 'adults who care' scheme?

This is our volunteer mentoring scheme in which adults provide long-term encouragement, guidance and pastoral support to the young people who reside with hosts. These mentors are prepared to contribute relationally to enrich the lives of young people up until they are stable, settled and fully independent (recognising this may extend well beyond an arbitrary age of 18, 21 or even 25). Our 'adults who care' initiative carefully recruits, trains and supervises adults who may be willing to take on this role and matches these individuals to young people who would welcome the extra support.

What happens if there are problems with a young person?

Concrete Rose offers on-call, 24/7 support to host families from a core team who are specialists in behaviour management, de-escalation and mediation. Our preference is to avoid issues before they become serious problems and therefore we will check-in with you on a weekly basis to see how things are going and also hold regular review meetings with hosts and young people. In these meetings we will help you to mediate any problems and resolve any issues.

How long does a placement last?

Sometimes a young person just needs somewhere safe to stay for a few weeks, but normally placements last around 18 months whilst some last several years. As part of the application and assessment process we will ask you if you would consider offering emergency 'short-term' placements for young people which generally last less than two weeks.





Can supported lodgings go beyond 21?

We usually look to transition young people into more independent living options by 21. However, we recognise that independence does not simply happen at a set age and, where hosts and young people agree, placements can extend beyond the age of 21.

What happens if a young person goes missing?

We have clear protocols to follow if a young person goes missing or you are concerned for their safety. This includes informing the on-call Concrete Rose core team and together working alongside key partner agencies including the police.

Concrete Rose has a Christian ethos; do I have to be a Christian to offer supported lodgings?

No. We welcome hosts and young people of all faiths and none and never look to impose our beliefs on those we partner with and/or support.

Can I become a host if I drink alcohol?

We would ask hosts to model a healthy approach to alcohol but do not expect this to involve abstinence. We do not accept hosts who use illegal drugs.

Can I become a host if I smoke at home?

We will approach this on an individual basis. We prefer to place children in homes that have a least a part of the home that is 'smoke free'.

How much information is given to a host about the young person?

As part of the 'pairing process' we provide hosts with an extensive profile of the relevant young person. This includes, their strengths, mental and emotional health, any risk factors (including any offending history) and a self-assessment of areas in which they may need more support. We are always careful to match the needs of the young people to the skills and experience of each host.

What if I have any complaints about Concrete Rose staff, the on-call support or the youth worker?

We would ask you to follow our whistleblowing and complaints procedure (listed on our website and available at induction) and we will look to rectify the issue as soon as possible.

What is the difference between foster care and supported lodgings?

Although many of the processes, checks and support structures are similar to foster care, supported lodging placements, in general, support older young people who need a helping hand (rather than full-time care) to transition to independent living arrangements. With this in mind, hosts are expected to be able to continue their usual routines including working, socialising, holidays etc.

To what extent will my lodger be involved in my family life?

This depends on what you (the host) and the young person feel comfortable with. It is important that the young person feels at home and cared for but the degree to which they participate in family activities is likely to vary from host to host, from young person to young person, and from time to time. Certainly, both hosts and young people are encouraged to maintain and develop their own, independent, social activities, hobbies, and interests.

Do I have to live in a town or city?

Not necessarily. Sometimes it is helpful to live close to transport links in order that young people can get around easily but this is not essential and some young people prefer a more rural location.

What are the age limits for hosts?

Our minimum age requirement is 21 years old and there is no maximum age restriction.

Storing Information and GDPR

Concrete Rose is committed to protecting the data you provide in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into force on 25th May 2018. The personal details which you provide about yourself and your family will be collected, stored, processed and retained in accordance with the GDPR and will only be used for the purposes intended and namely in reference to your application to become a host. We will not disclose any of the personal information you provide to any other third party unless we are legally required to do so. We are legally obliged, upon request, to provide you with all the information we hold about you. You are entitled to request further information from us on how we use and store data about you and you can withdraw your consent for us to hold this information at any time.

Our People

Concrete Rose is led by Mike Farrington who has worked alongside 'at risk' young people and in leadership roles in a variety of settings (including the Prince's Trust, Pupil Referral Units and Romsey Mill^{xvi}) since 2003. Mike heads up a highly qualified team drawing in skills, experience and leadership in education, safeguarding, youth work and policy. The work of Concrete Rose is further informed by an in-house focus group of care-leavers with diverse backgrounds and care experiences. For more information on the team visit our website www.concreterose.co.uk

Contact

For more information and to apply to become a host please contact:

admin@concreterose.co.uk // 07881926728

www.concreterose.co.uk

ⁱA community interest company is a not-for-profit business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community.

ⁱⁱCentrepoint, 'From care to where?' Care leavers' access to accommodation', 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱCentrepoint Youth Homelessness Databank (<https://centrepoint.org.uk/databank/>).

^{iv}Centrepoint, 'Making homeless young people count: The scale of youth homelessness in the UK', 2019.

^vHouse of Commons Briefing Paper, 'Support for care leavers', 2020.

^{vi}Stein and Morris, 'Increasing the number of care leavers in settled, safe accommodation', 2010.

^{vii}National Audit Office, 'Care leavers' transition to adulthood', 2015.

^{viii}Department for Education, 'Children looked after in England including adoption: 2018 to 2019', 2019.

^{ix}Smith, N, 'Neglected Minds – A report on mental health support for young people leaving care', Barnardo's, 2017.

^xhttps://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/887644/assessing-needs-of-sentenced-children-youth-justice-system.pdf

^{xi}There were 4,660 unaccompanied asylum seeker children leaving care in 2016, which went up to 7,130 in 2018 (<https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-responds-uasc-funding-announcement>).

^{xii}Simmons and Merredew, 'The health needs of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and young people', 2010.

^{xiii}In 2019, a third of children placed in unregulated settings were UASC despite making up just four per cent of all children in care (Children's Commissioner report, 'Unregulated: Children in care living in semi-independent accommodation', 2020).

^{xiv}Ibid.

^{xv}For example see: <https://benjaminfoundation.co.uk/service/heart-and-home/>, <https://www.youngdevon.org/accommodation/supported-lodgings>, <https://stbasils.org.uk/projects/home2home-supported-lodgings/>

^{xvi}Romsey Mill is a Cambridge-based Christian charity, established in 1980 and supporting over 3,500 children, young people and families (for more information see www.romseymill.org).

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