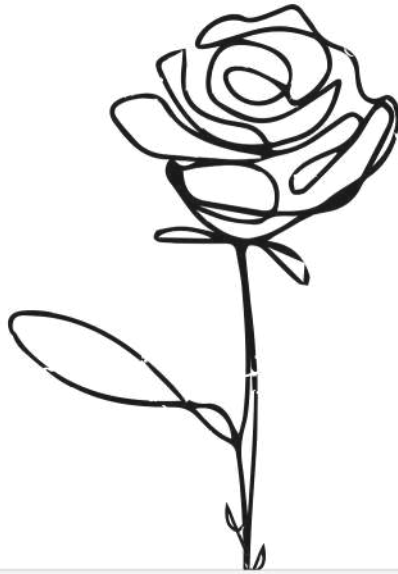




**Ever since I have
moved in with my
hosts, everything
began to get
easier”**



“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 (CIC) 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 vulnerability. 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:



123,934 young people experienced, or were at risk of, homelessness in 2024-25



The East of England saw the largest absolute and percentage increase between 2021/22 and 2022/23, increasing by 14% to 15,100 young people



1 in 3 care leavers are homeless within 2 years of leaving care



Young care leavers in England aged 18 to 24 face a death rate four times higher than the general population, with 112 deaths notified to the Department for Education in 2025



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 (16–23) 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:

- **Host support package:**

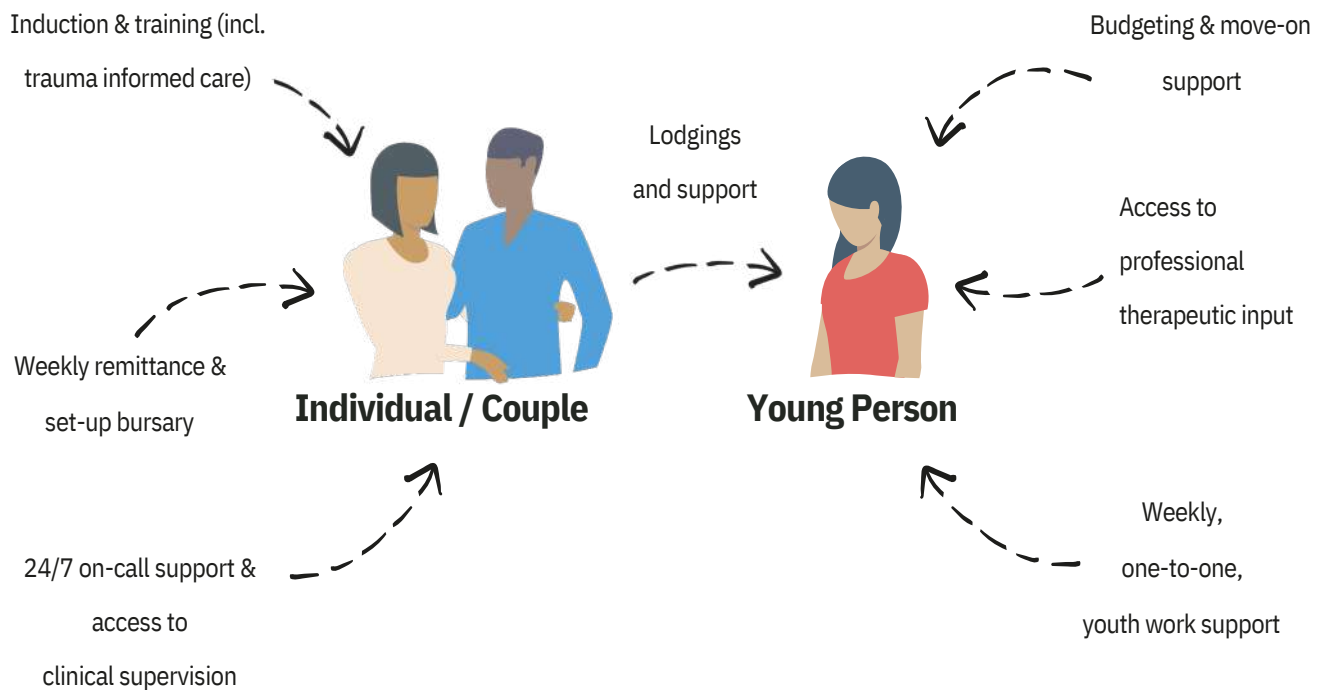
- *Training and induction:* As a part of the induction process hosts receive training in our therapeutic approach, and particularly trauma-informed care and an introduction to the policies and procedures of Concrete Rose. Hosts are also able to access additional training, including first-aid, without cost.
- *Financial remittance:* Hosts receive a weekly remittance to cover the additional costs of hosting a young person. This is between £500–800 per month (depending on location) with young people paying an additional top-up towards food. 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 support package:**

- *Youth work/mentoring support:* Each young person receives weekly, one-to-one, support from a youth worker and/or mentor. 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.
- *Budgeting support:* Young people are supported to effectively manage their money including, where appropriate, applying for their benefit entitlement(s).
- *Peer support:* Young people are encouraged to build connections with their peers in Concrete Rose through regular trips and social gatherings.

Similar, and successful, models of ‘Room to spare’ operate throughout the UK. 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 hosts who are willing to open up their home to a young person. Hosts provide a bedroom, a safe environment and love, tolerance, support and guidance but can continue with their own daily routines including working, socialising, hobbies, holidays and weekends away etc. It's more of a guide than a parent and gives 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 open your home and apply to become a Concrete Rose host please get in touch using the contact details on the final page.

**"It's not easy all the time
but it's definitely been
rewarding"**

Liz, host

The Application Process

Becoming a host is straightforward and hugely rewarding. The steps involved in becoming a host are 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 time to chat and 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 you can give us a virtual tour of your home so we can 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 a chance to share more about yourself and the reasons you would like to become a host. We will also ask for, and take up, personal and professional references for you and, if relevant, your partner. We also do DBS checks on all members of your family who live at home and are aged 18 and over.



Step 4: Home visit

The second home visit is in person. We will talk through your application form, find out a little more about you and your household and identify your preferences when it comes to hosting. This ensures we place the right young person with you when it comes to the pairing stage (step 8).



Step 5: Home assessment

We also look over your home 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 characteristics 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. The majority of this training is available online.





Step 7: Approvals panel

Hosts are approved at a panel meeting comprising a Concrete Rose staff member, a member of our Advisory Board, an independent professional and an experienced host.



Step 8: Pairing

As an 'approved host' you're ready 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
- The location of the host home and its suitability for the young person

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 mutual expectations and a sharing 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 living 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 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 live in the property 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.

A photograph of a young man and a young woman smiling and hugging each other. The man is on the left, wearing a grey hoodie, and the woman is on the right, wearing glasses and a grey hoodie. They are both looking towards the camera.

**“Although it was
daunting at first it’s
been one of the best
things I’ve ever done”**

Dalibor, host



How much money will I receive?

Hosts will receive a rental remittance and a contribution towards food and bills. This usually amounts to somewhere between £600–£800 per month. We completely understand that many hosts will need this money to cover costs but if you are in the position to share part of the income with Concrete Rose as a voluntary donation, this can be done via [LocalGiving.com](https://www.localgiving.com) and uplifted with GiftAid. Our Supported Lodgings programme relies on one-off grant applications so any additional support will help make the programme more sustainable for the future.

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 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?

Matching is a collaborative process. Concrete Rose will review the referral and assess suitability. If a young person seems suitable, we will share the information with you and seek your views. If you think they may be a good fit, we will interview them in depth about their circumstances and background, then update you. If everyone wishes to proceed, we will arrange at least two home visits so you and the young person can decide whether the match feels right. The first is usually a brief drink and house tour; the second may involve dinner or a dog walk. If you both want to continue, we will agree a move-in date. Sometimes, a third visit with an overnight stay may be arranged to give the young person a more realistic sense of living with a new host.

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 18 will be asked to complete an enhanced DBS check.

Can I be a host if I have pets?

Yes; we will 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.





“I've had an absolutely wonderful experience of the reality of the situation.”

Georgina, host

What are the house rules?

We put a 'Living Agreement' in place for each young person which includes specific house rules. 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.

What might be the risk factors?

Where young people are a high risk to themselves or others (e.g. they have very strong suicidal ideation or are currently involved in serious crime) they will not pass the initial triage of being suitable for supported lodgings. Nevertheless, all young people do have trauma histories and have faced huge difficulties in their life. This may result in some mild-moderate mental health needs.

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 or adult mentor who will particularly help them in the fields of education and work.

What support do hosts get?

Hosts get 24/7 on-call support, weekly check-ins (by phone), monthly supervision, and quarterly pastoral supervision.

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 meeting 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.

Who provides food for the young person?

The young person may choose to eat with hosts or to buy and cook their own food. We are happy for hosts and their lodgers to make arrangements that best suit their circumstances.

What are the age limits for hosts? Our minimum age requirement is 21 years old and there is no maximum age restriction.



"She adds lots of joy to my life and the people around her." Dawn, host



Can supported lodgings go beyond 23?

We usually look to transition young people into more independent living options by 23. 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 23.

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.

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) 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:

mike@concreterose.co.uk // 07881926728

www.concreterose.co.uk

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