

## **Julie's supported lodgings journey**

### **What is supported lodgings and what is unique about the role?**

Supported lodgings is about helping young people make that great leap into independence. For many of us from stable families, we had parents in the background for support. The teenagers we support don't generally have that and this is their opportunity to get things right in a safe environment - from cooking and budgeting, to managing their own front door and not letting themselves be taken advantage of.

### **What do you enjoy about being a supported lodgings provider?**

What I enjoy is seeing young people progressing and making the most of opportunities that present themselves. They don't always get it right and need that person who they can come to when there's something they need help with. It's so rewarding when they achieve personal goals, whether in education, work or successful relationships.

### **What is your greatest achievement with a young person?**

This is a difficult one but it would have to be a young lady placed with me at the age of 14 in a foster placement. She had average school grades, minimal family support, was angry and, in truth, alone in the world at that point. After sixth form, we continued to support via supported lodgings and saw her attain a first class honours degree. She has recently been headhunted by a major international company to a senior marketing position. I guess this is the dream outcome, however, we are just as delighted for another guy who tried university twice and failed, but has finally found his vocation in life as a chef.

### **What would you say to someone who is thinking of offering supported lodgings?**

Supported lodgings can be all things and, invariably, with each placement will come times of real frustration and euphoria. This is about letting teenagers find their feet in a safe environment - you need to be supportive but not controlling, and understand the challenges that young people face. Without doubt you will need patience, the ability to keep calm in any situation and above all a sense of humour. It is so rewarding and you get a great sense of personal achievement.

For more information about fostering with Herefordshire Council, call 01432 383240, email [fostering@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@herefordshire.gov.uk) or visit <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/fostering>



