

General FA

1. What is "Supported Living" at Nextsmartstep?

Supported living is a service designed to help adults live as independently as possible. We provide high-quality housing combined with personalized support to help you manage a tenancy, build life skills, and reintegrate into the community.

2. Do you provide personal care?

No. Nextsmartstep is a non-CQC registered provider. This means we do not provide "personal care" (such as help with washing, dressing, or medication administration). We focus on housing-related support and life skills.

3. Who can live at Nextsmartstep?

We support adults aged 18 and over who are navigating transitions toward independence. This includes individuals experiencing homelessness, those transitioning from the justice system, or those in stable recovery from substance misuse.

For Potential Residents

4. What will my room be like?

Every tenant has their own private, well-decorated bedroom. You are encouraged to personalize your space to make it feel like home. All our houses meet high HMO (House in Multiple Occupation) safety and comfort standards.

5. Is there Wi-Fi and laundry?

Yes. All our properties have unlimited high-speed Wi-Fi, communal lounge areas with a TV, fully equipped kitchens, and laundry facilities (washers, irons, and ironing boards).

6. Can I have visitors?

We want you to maintain healthy relationships. We have a guest policy in place to ensure the safety and quiet enjoyment of all residents in the house. Your support worker will explain these guidelines during your induction.

7. How long can I stay?

Our goal is to help you "step up" to your own permanent, independent tenancy. The length of stay depends on your individual progress and support plan, but we usually work toward a 6-to-24 month transition period.

For Professional Partners & Families

8. How do I make a referral?

Professional partners (Social Workers, Probation Officers, or Housing Officers) can refer a client by clicking the "Refer Someone" button on our website or by calling us directly at 01375 802990.

9. How is the service funded?

In most cases, the housing element is funded through Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. There may be a small, non-eligible "Personal Service Charge" for utilities (gas, electric, water) which the resident pays from their personal benefits.

10. How do you ensure the safety of residents?

Safety is our priority. We conduct regular health and safety checks, fire risk assessments, and maintain a rigorous safeguarding framework. We also use the "Freedom to Speak Up" principle, ensuring residents and staff feel safe to report any concerns immediately.

Behavior & House Rules

1. Are there house rules I need to follow?

Yes. To ensure everyone feels safe and respected, we have a "Living Together Agreement." This includes rules on noise levels, keeping communal areas clean, and a strictly no-drug/no-violence policy. Following these rules is a key part of proving you are ready for your own independent tenancy.

2. Can I smoke in my room?

No. All our properties are strictly non-smoking indoors to comply with fire safety regulations and to keep the environment fresh for all residents. There are designated smoking areas outside in the garden or courtyard.

3. What happens if I don't get along with another resident?

Living with others can be a challenge. We encourage "Restorative Practice," where your support worker helps mediate conversations to resolve issues. If there is a serious conflict, we will step in to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in the house.

Money & Employment

4. Can I work while living at Nextsmartstep?

Absolutely! We strongly encourage employment, volunteering, or training. If you start working, your Housing Benefit might change, but our team will help you calculate your new rent contributions so you are never worse off by working.

5. What is a "Personal Service Charge"?

While Housing Benefit usually covers your rent, it does not cover personal utilities like your shared gas, electricity, and water. Residents pay a small weekly "Service Charge" (usually from their personal allowance) to cover these costs. We will clearly explain this amount before you move in.

Independence & Moving On

6. Do I have a key to the front door?

Yes. This is your home. You will have your own key to your private bedroom and the front door, allowing you to come and go as you please—though we encourage residents to be mindful of their housemates if returning late at night.

7. How do you help me find my own flat?

As you progress, we help you register with local housing lists (like Thurrock Choice Homes), search the private rented sector, and prepare for viewings. We can also help you apply for "settling-in grants" for furniture when you finally get your own place.

Safety & Emergencies

8. Is there staff on-site 24/7?

Our staff are usually on-site during core daytime hours to provide support. While we do not provide 24-hour "eyes-on" supervision (as we promote independence), we provide an Emergency On-Call Number that residents can call at any time, day or night.

9. What happens if I "relapse" or have a setback?

We understand that recovery and resettlement aren't always a straight line. If you have a setback, we won't just ask you to leave. We will work with you, your GP, or your Substance Misuse worker to review your support plan and help you get back on track provided the house remains safe for everyone.

On-Site Life & Logistics

1. Do I have to share a bedroom?

No. At Nextsmartstep, we believe privacy is essential for dignity and growth. Every resident has their own private, lockable bedroom. You only share communal areas like the kitchen, lounge, and bathrooms.

2. Can I bring my own furniture?

Our rooms come fully furnished with a bed, wardrobe, and chest of drawers to make your move-in easy. If you have a small item of furniture that is important to you, please

let us know during your assessment. We just need to ensure it meets fire safety standards (look for the fire safety label).

3. Who cleans the house?

Part of building independence is learning to maintain a home. Residents are responsible for keeping their own rooms clean and tidy. For communal areas (kitchen, lounge, hallways), residents work together on a simple "Cleaning Rota" to ensure the house stays a pleasant place for everyone.

Support & Accountability

4. How often will I see my Support Worker?

This depends on your individual Support Plan. Usually, you will have at least one formal 1-to-1 keyworking session per week to discuss your goals, but our team is on-site throughout the week for informal chats and quick questions.

5. What happens if I miss my support sessions?

Our service is built on "encouragement and enablement." If you consistently miss sessions, we will sit down with you to understand why. Engagement is a condition of your stay, as we want to ensure you are making progress toward your own permanent home.

6. Do you report to my Probation Officer or Social Worker?

We work as part of a multi-agency team. This means we provide regular Progress Reports to your professional referrers. We celebrate your successes with them, but we are also honest if there are challenges, so we can all support you better.

Policies & Fairness

7. Can I keep a pet?

Unfortunately, to ensure the comfort and safety of all residents (and due to allergies or phobias), we generally cannot allow pets in our shared houses.

8. What is your "Notice Period" if I want to move out?

Once you have secured your own permanent housing or wish to move on, we usually ask for 2 to 4 weeks' notice. This allows us to help you with your "Move-On" checklist and prepare the room for the next person who needs our support.

9. How do you handle "Anti-Social Behaviour" (ASB)?

We have a zero-tolerance policy toward violence, harassment, or illegal activity. If ASB occurs, we follow a clear "Warnings and Appeals" process. Our priority is the safety of the whole house, and we will act quickly to protect our residents.

The "Step-Up" Process

10. Do you provide a reference when I move to my own flat?

Yes! One of the biggest benefits of staying at Nextsmartstep is that if you maintain your room well and pay your service charges on time, we will provide a Positive Landlord Reference. This is often the "missing key" that helps residents get accepted for private rented or social housing.