

## **Children's Services**

### **Planning for Children and Young People looked after by Children's Services - A Guide for Children & Young People**



### **Introduction**

This booklet is for children and young people who are being looked after by Children's Services.

It tells you what you can expect and answers some of the basic questions you may have.

We have tried to keep this booklet simple and straightforward.

If you want to know more - ask!

### **What does it mean to be looked after?**

Under the Children Act, 1989, the Local Authority has a duty to provide help for children in need. Usually this means supporting children and young people in their own families. Sometimes, this is not enough and children and young people need to be looked after somewhere else.

For most children and young people, this is agreed with you and your family, and your parents can decide to take you back at any time. This is called providing accommodation.

Some children and young people are in the care of the County Council. This means that a Court has decided they are likely to suffer harm unless Children's Services are given the power to help take care of them.

### **How long does it last?**

This will depend on the plan that is made for you. Some children and young people need to be looked after for a few days or weeks whilst things are sorted out at home. In other cases it may be for much longer. If you leave accommodation or care after your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Local Authority has to provide help and advice until you are 21 if you want it (or later if you are in full time education). If the Court has made a Care Order, this will last until you are 18 unless the Court is asked to end it sooner.

### **How is the plan made?**

There has to be a written Care Plan for every child and young person who is looked after. This plan must be based on an understanding of your needs. We will talk with you about what goes into the plan. We will also talk with your family and anyone else whose views are important. This usually happens at a planning or review meeting and the plan is written down afterwards. We will give you a copy of your Care Plan.

### **What is the plan?**

- What your needs are (including any special needs you have)
- How we can best provide for your needs
- Where you are going to live, and for how long
- How you are going to keep in contact with your family
- How your health and education needs will be met
- Who will be there to help and support you
- What happens if things go wrong

The plan must include your views. It should say whether it is what you want, and if not, why not.

### **Where can I live?**

We will choose the best placement we can for you. Where possible, this will be with relatives or friends. If you have a brother or sister who is being looked after, we will try to keep you together unless this would be wrong for you. We will not place you a long way from your home area unless there are special reasons.

### **What about foster homes?**

Most children and young people are looked after in foster homes. Foster carers are people who have been specially chosen to care for other peoples' children in their own homes. They have special training and will care for you as if you were a member of their family. They will also make sure that you stay in touch with your own family. There may be other children and young people in the foster home.

### **What about children's homes?**

A children's home is a large house where several children and young people can stay. A Team of Social Workers work in shifts to provide care and supervision at all times. Each child and young person has a special member of staff called a keyworker. Children and young people go to ordinary schools and colleges.

### **What if I have special needs?**

If you have special needs, you will live in a foster home or children's home like any other child and young person. We have to make sure that the place where you stay is suitable for you.

### **What about my cultural and ethnic background?**

We have to consider every child and young person's background in deciding how to look after them. Going to live with someone else is always a bit strange. We will try to make sure that you are with people from the same background as you. If this is not possible, we will try to place you with people who understand your family's way of life, even if they do not share it. If you do not think you are being understood, or treated properly, you can say so.

### **Will there be rules?**

All families have rules. We will make sure that they are fair and that you know what they are. We will also make sure that you know what you can expect from the adults who are looking after you. For instance, no-one has the right to hit you.

**What about the reviews?**

We review how things are going at least every six months. This means talking together about how you are getting on at home, at school and in your health. It means making sure your needs are being met, and making sure that we have made the right plan for you.

You will be invited to review meetings, as well as your parents, and anyone else who is responsible for your welfare. You will be asked for your views, and it may help if you write these down in a consultation leaflet, which your Social Worker or carer will give you. You can choose someone to help you with this, and can also choose someone to be with you at the meeting to help you speak for yourself. If you do not want to come, you can ask someone to take your consultation leaflet for you.

Either way, it is your review and you should have a say in what happens at it. There is a separate booklet about reviews which your Social Worker or carer will give you. If you have not seen it, ask!

**Will I have to have medicals?**

We have to make sure that your health is taken care of properly. We will make sure that you are registered with a doctor. We have to arrange for you to have a health check when we first look after you, and every year after that. You have the right to refuse this if you are over 16, or if the doctor considers that you are able to make this decision.

**Who makes sure that things are okay?**

Children's homes are visited from time to time by our independent inspectors to make sure they are giving good care. We also review all of our foster carers regularly.

Your Social Worker should visit you regularly, at least every three months, and usually more often. He or she must see you, privately if necessary, so that you can explain if you are worried or unhappy about anything. Your Social Worker should also see or visit you at any time if you ask for this.

## **What will happen when I leave?**

As soon as you become looked after, we will be thinking ahead to a time when you leave, and involving you in making plans for the future.

## **WHAT CAN I DO IF THINGS DO NOT SEEM RIGHT?**

TALK to someone you trust:

- The people who look after you
- Your Social Worker
- The Team Manager, or chairperson of your review
- A member of your family
- Your teacher

If things are still not sorted out, or there is nobody you want to talk with, then you can contact the Consumer Relations Officer. Your Social Worker should already have given you the leaflet "Comments, Compliments and Complaints" which tells you how to do this.

If not, ask!

## **Is there anyone else I can talk to?**

There are many groups of people which help children and young people who are looked after. We have listed some of them here:

**Worcestershire CARS (Children's Advice & Representation Service) NSPCC**  
**01905 617975**

**FREEPHONE - 0800 233 311**

Independent Advocacy - if you want someone to speak on your behalf or to talk to independently about a concern you have

Independent Visitor - if you do not see much of your family, and you would like someone to visit you to support you and advise you or just sometimes to be there for you

NSPCC is independent of Children's Services. You have a right to have your say. Please ask your Social Worker for a leaflet if you would like to find out more

## **Integrated Services for Looked After Children (ISL)**

ISL support the people who care for the children who are looked after. They can also provide support in school. For more information ask your Social Worker or carer.

**Childline - 0800 1111**

24 hour helpline - your call is free and the telephone number will not appear on telephone bills.

**Children's Legal Centre - 01206 873 820**

**A National Voice - 0161 237 5577**

**If you need help communicating in English, please contact:**

**Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121**

**Albanian**

Në qoftë se keni nevojë për të komunikuar në anglisht, kontaktoni:

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Arabic**

إذا أردت مساعدة للتخاطب باللغة الإنجليزية يرجى الاتصال بـ:

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Bengali**

যদি আপনার স্পঞ্জরাজি কথা বলতে/বুঝতে সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় তবে কৃপা

করে যোগাযোগ করুন। Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Chinese**

假如你需要別人幫助你用英語交流，請聯絡：

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Farsi**

اگر احتیاج به مترجم انگلیسی دارید لطفاً تماس بگیرید:

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Italian**

Se avete bisogno di aiuto per comunicare in inglese, rivolgetevi a:

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Japanese**

英語で助けがお入用の際には、こちらへご連絡ください。

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Polish**

Jeśli potrzebujesz pomocy w zakresie porozumiewania się w języku angielskim, skontaktuj się z: Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Portuguese**

Se precisar de ajuda em comunicar em inglês, por favor contacte:

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Punjabi**

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ 'ਚ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ:

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Russian**

Если Вам необходима помощь, чтобы общаться на английском, пожалуйста, свяжитесь с: Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Turkish**

İngilizce iletişim kurmak için yardım isterseniz, lütfen bizimle temasa geçiniz: Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Ukranian**

Якщо Вам необхідна допомога для спілкування англійською, будь даска, зв'яжіться з: Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121

**Urdu**

انگریزی میں تبادلہ خیال کرنے کے لیے اگر آپ کو مدد درکار ہو تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل سہے پر رابطہ کریں۔

Ethnic Access Link: Tel: 01905 25121