



Know, What, When Guide



Your guide
to the first
few weeks
in care.



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Introduction

This guide has been made by Durham Children in Care Council members to help you understand what your first few weeks in care could be like.



"Coming into care can be scary but you don't need to be scared, even though you are not living at home anymore you don't need to be worried, you have got this!"

Alanah Aged 9

How you might be feeling

When coming into care for the first time it can be really scary, but this is completely normal.

This guide has been developed to let you know that there are people who will be there for you to help you with this difficult time.



For example, any adult that will be part of your care experience such as:

- Your foster family
- Your social worker
- Someone at school, like your favourite teacher
- Your family/brothers and sisters

Fostering families

When you first come into care you will live with a foster family. You might have a lot of questions and feel scared and confused.

Your social worker will be there to answer any questions.

Sometimes you might have to move from one foster family to another. A social worker should provide you with a family booklet with lots of information to help you understand. Below is what we think you need to know about the different foster families:

- **Long Term Foster Families** are when foster families will look after a young person until they reach adulthood.
- **Short term Foster Families** are when foster families will look after a young person anywhere between 6 months and 2 years.
- **Connected Care Families** also known as kinship care are when your family members will be assessed as to whether they can look after you.
- **Children's Homes** - Some children are cared for in children's homes by staff members who are part of a team that look after children.



Seeing your family

Durham County Council should always promote positive relationships between you and your family. If for any reason you can't see your family, your social worker will give you a reason as to why you can't.

You will also get to do activities with your foster family, but it's important to remember that you will get the chance to do activities with your family, supported by your social worker.

Sometimes after seeing your family you can feel worried and upset as to why you can't go home with them. Your foster family and social worker will be there to talk with you about these feelings.



Support for you

When you come into care there are lots of different people who can help you have a voice and feel listened to. These are the ones which we think are important:

- Your social worker
- Support Workers
- An Advocate
- Counselling services e.g. Full Circle, which your social worker can tell you more about
- Your Foster Family
- Children in Care Council
- Teachers at school
- Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)



Health and education

Within the first 3 weeks when you come into care there needs to be a plan put into place around your health and education.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

A pep meeting should include your social worker, your foster family and a teacher from the school. It is important to know that these meetings are about YOU so you can make choices!

In this meeting you will talk about what is going well at school, what isn't going as well and how the school can be made better for you. For example, if you are finding maths hard you can come up with a plan so that things can be put into place, like getting a tutor or extra books.



Health Review/Plan

This can take place in a comfortable and safe space of your choice where you will get a chance to talk alongside your Nurse/Doctor and can also choose to have your foster family there for support.

You can also talk about things like seeing the dentist, your emotional health, exercise, healthy lifestyle and diet. You can talk about your relationships with others at home and school.

Your rights

All young people have the right to:



Have somewhere to live



Be treated as an individual



Have an education



Be listened to and have a say about decisions in their life



Be safe

All rights are outlined in United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Young people in care also have the right to:



See people who are important to them (unless there's a good reason not to)



Make a complaint/ give feedback



Ask to see their file



Have pocket money

What is the Children in Care Council?

We are a group of young people who are in care and work alongside different adults from Durham County Council and Investing In Children who run the Children in Care Council to make changes for the better.

The children in care council are made up of two groups. These are known as the younger CICC which is 13 and below and the Older CICC group which is aged 13 and above. Each group meets up every month. We wanted to include the Children in Care Council because we think it is important for children and young people to know about.

If you are interested in becoming part of the Children in Care Council you can look at our website, this will include the relevant information you need to contact us about coming along to one of the meetings.

www.durhamcicc.co.uk 

Useful information/contacts

If you are not happy with anything or don't agree with something then you can speak to your Independent Reviewing Officer who has responsibility for making sure that your Care Plan is reviewed, that your plan is still working for you and that your views are listened to. A review is usually a small meeting and because it is all about you, it is important that you are there to have your say. Your IRO can talk to you about your review when they meet you.



Mind Of My Own One is an app that helps young people communicate their views in a way that suits them. Young people create their own account, which can be used on any device at any time. This means that young people can use the app to say how they are feeling, what support they need and tell their worker about things that are important to them.

You can download it from the **App Store or Google Play Store** or online here: one.mindofmyown.org.uk



Childline is a free private and confidential service. You can ring them and talk to them about any issue you may be going through.

Tel no: **0800 11 11** Website: childline.org.uk



The Children's Commissioner has a duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England with a particular focus on Children & Young People with difficulties or challenges in their life.

Name: Rachel De Souza

Address: The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Email(s): advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk / help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Telephone number: 0800 528 0731



National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS):

Will listen to you, support you and offer advice to make sure your views, wishes and feelings are respected and your voice is heard when decisions are being made about you.

Telephone number: 0808 808 1001

NSPCC NSPCC 24-hour helpline

If you need help/advice or you are worried that you/another child may be at risk.

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Telephone number: 0808 800 50000

A special thank you!

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