

**Your  
guide to  
being in  
care**



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

[young.hillingdon.gov.uk](http://young.hillingdon.gov.uk)

# This is a guide for you

It will help you to understand what being in care is all about and what living with another family or a children's home will be like.

There are many young people like you who can't stay with their parents.

When this happens, it is our job to make sure you have the right carer to look after you.

This can be an upsetting and confusing time for you, please do ask about anything you are not sure about and remember there are no silly questions!



# Your foster carer(s)

You will be living with foster carers.

They are people who are able to care for young people who are not able to stay with their mum or dad.

My foster carer's name is

We can't tell you how long you will stay with your carer(s). For some young people, this might be a little while; for others, it will be longer



# About my foster family

Every foster family is different. Carers might be a couple or just one person. They could have children themselves or might even have a pet.

Are there any pets? What are their names?

What hobbies do my foster family have?

Are there any other young people living in the home?

What are the important rules I need to know?

# What will my carers do for me?

Be  
friendly

Keep  
you safe

Look  
after you

Help  
you to choose  
and cook what  
you like  
to eat

Help  
you see and  
speak with your  
family and  
friends

Support  
you to attend  
groups and  
clubs you are  
interested in

Be  
there if you  
are having any  
worries

**Support  
you going to  
school and help  
you with your  
homework**

**Let you keep  
the light on in  
your bedroom  
if you want to**

**Help  
you find  
your special  
talent**

**Spend  
time with you  
having fun**

**Help  
you prepare  
for your  
independence**



**What about  
my stuff like my  
money, clothes  
and things?**



You can bring your own clothes, toothbrush and other things with you to your new home. Your carers will make sure you have a safe place to put them or will look after anything special for you.

Your carers are given money from the Children's Service to make sure you are well looked after. They will help you buy new clothes and things when you need them and give you regular pocket money. They will also help you save up.



# Social worker

Every young person in care must have a social worker.

Your social worker makes sure you are safe and happy. You can talk with your social worker about anything you want.

My social worker's name is

My social worker's phone number is



# Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

There is another important person whose job is to check we are getting things right for you. They are the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), who chair your Review Meetings.

My IRO's name is

My IRO's phone number is



**Will I see my family?**



We know that you may miss being with your family when you move into care. If you have brothers and sisters, they may come into care with you. Most young people will continue to be in regular contact with their families if it is safe, unless there is a good reason this cannot happen.

You may be able to see your family, phone or write to them. Your social worker will talk to you about what is the best way for you to be in contact with different members of your family.



# Fun things and holidays

You can keep doing the things you enjoy, like dancing, football, swimming and art, and you might find new hobbies too!

Your carers will make sure you don't miss out on fun times, like going on holiday or day trips, either with them, your school, your family or friends, if safe!



# What about my friends?

We know that your friends may be very special to you, so your carers will do all they can to help you to stay in touch with your friends and help you make new friends.



**Do I get a say  
in things?**



When you are in care, there are a lot of meetings to make sure we are getting it right for you.

You will be a part of these meetings and will be asked to share your views and feelings. If you don't want to go to a meeting, you can talk to your social worker, foster carer or advocate and they can then share what you want to say with the people at the meeting.



# Placement Agreement Meeting

This happens at the start of each new placement, to agree who is responsible for doing what, in the home where you are living.



# Looked After Child (LAC) Review Meeting

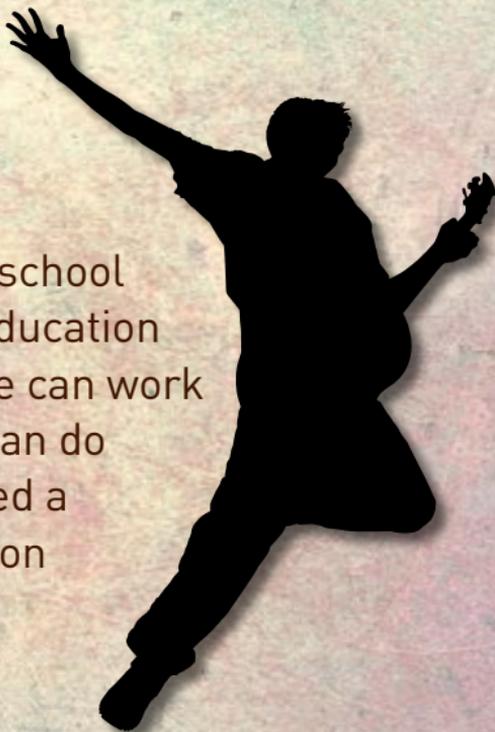
This meeting is where all the workers, carers and parents (if appropriate) and you get together to check out how things are going and to make plans for your future.



# Will I go to the same school?

Most young people will continue to go to the same school. Your teacher will know you are in care and will meet with your social worker and you to make a plan to help you do well at school.

There will be a regular meeting with you, your carer, your social worker and your school to discuss your education and how everyone can work together so you can do well. This is called a Personal Education Plan (PEP).



# Virtual School

The Hillingdon Virtual School are a team of workers with a Head Teacher whose job it is to make sure children and young people in care receive a good education and are given the support and opportunities needed to help you to achieve the best qualifications or learning experiences.

They work with your social worker, school, carers, parents and others to ensure that you have the right support, attend a good school, help you to plan for your future and what needs to be put in place in your PEP meeting to help you achieve.

Your education is very important as this can lead to great opportunities in the future. If you have any queries or concerns about your education, you can contact us on  01895 277 359.

**What about  
my health?**



Your health is really important. When you first come into care, you will see a doctor for a health check up.

Your carer(s) will help you to stay well and take you to the doctor, dentist and optician for regular checkups.

If you are worried or want information about your health in any way, please talk to your carer(s), social worker, school nurse or teacher.



# Care

## *The Write Kids group*

If Care was a dance move  
she would be swift and soft,

An aeroplane that will never land,

Or a police car that will chase all the  
other cars out of the way.

If Care was a drink it would be sour apple  
juice from Sainsbury's,

A Marvel superhero costume,  
And a car that would go over the speed limit.

In her spare time Care likes to cook dinner  
but also to worry and get worked up.

She will come on a horse ride with me.

Care likes to dress up.

Care is a blanket –  
a charcoal blanket covering the sky.

If you were blindfold,  
Care would feel strong like a table.

Care is like a koala bear –  
always carrying her young people.

Care smells of fish and chips.  
And fear. But also of flowers.

If Care was weather  
it would be a hurricane or a tornado.

Care is spaghetti bolognese...  
delicious but messy.

Care is like rain  
because it is cloudy and refreshing.

Care is helping people.

Care called me on the phone and said,  
'Where are you?'

Care is a family.

'Let's go shopping,' she said.

Care is Dora the Explorer,  
Going to new places you never expected to go.

# What if I am unhappy?

If you have any concerns or worries, then we want to know. We hope you can tell your carer(s), social worker or another trusted adult like your teacher. If you are still worried or want to talk to someone else, you can contact the following people.

## Children's Rights Service

The workers in this service work with looked after young people like yourself – either in groups or individually – supporting you to get your voices heard in decisions that affect you.

 01895 277182

 [childrensrights@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:childrensrights@hillingdon.gov.uk)

# NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

These workers are independent from Hillingdon and their role is to support you when you are unhappy about the way you are being treated and to make sure adults hear your concerns and act upon them.

 0808 808 1001

 help@nyas.net

 www.nyas.net

They won't tell anyone else what you say unless you agree or they are worried about you being at risk.

# Making a complaint

If you are unhappy about something and feel it is not being sorted out, you can make a complaint by getting in touch with Hillingdon's Complaints Officer.

 01895 277335

 [complaintsmailbox@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:complaintsmailbox@hillington.gov.uk)



# Other useful contacts

## Childline

If you want to talk to someone at any time about something that is frightening or worrying you.

 0800 1111 (free)

## Children's Rights Commissioner

Contact us for advice or help.

 0800 528 0731 (free)

 [advice.team@young-peoples-commissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:advice.team@young-peoples-commissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

## Voice

A national charity that speaks up for you and other young people and supports you in improving your life.

 0808 800 5792

 info@voiceyp.org

 [www.voiceyp.org/young-peoples-zone](http://www.voiceyp.org/young-peoples-zone)

## Ofsted

Ofsted's main job is to inspect and to make sure social workers, their managers and the fostering service are all working together to make sure we are getting it right for young people and keeping you safe.

 0300 123 1231

 [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## **KISS (Keep It Safe 'n' Sorted)**

A confidential sexual health drop-in service for 13-19 year olds in Hillingdon. Talk with a trained worker about relationships, peer pressure and safe sex. Free condoms, pregnancy testing and Chlamydia testing are also available.

Fountain's Mill Young People's Centre  
81 High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1JR  
Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays,  
3.30pm to 6pm

 01895 250721

## **SORTED**

A confidential support and treatment drop-in service for 12-21 year olds in Hillingdon who are experiencing a drug or alcohol related problem.

Fountain's Mill Young People's Centre  
 01895 250721

## LINK

A counselling and information service for 14-25 year olds in Hillingdon who are depressed, anxious or unhappy and want to talk, in confidence, to someone outside of their family and friends about their life and situation.

Fountain's Mill Young People's Centre  
81 High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1JR

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and  
Fridays, 10.30am to 7.30pm

Wednesdays, 1.30pm to 7.30pm

 01895 277222



# This welcome pack was brought to you by



Step Up is one of our Children in Care councils for 12-15 year olds. We also have Stepping Out for young people aged 16+. They meet once a month to talk about how things can be made better for the lives of young people in care at Hillingdon.

Whether you live with a foster carer or in a children's home, your ideas can make a big difference!

If you want to join Step Up or Stepping Out, please contact Hillingdon's Children's Rights and Participation Service.

@ [childrensrights@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:childrensrights@hillingdon.gov.uk)

☎ 01895 277182



Produced by the London Borough of Hillingdon

March 2015  
12039