

Introduction:

Sometimes you can't live at home with your family. When this happens you may need to come into the care of Staffordshire County Council. This is called "being in care" or "looked after". You might be worried or anxious about being in care. This folder will help you to understand the looked after system.

Some of the words in this leaflet may be new to you so we've put a list at the end that you may find helpful. Use this if there is something you don't understand.

You can always talk to your Social Worker, key worker or a carer if you don't understand any of the information in this folder.

Section 1: All About You!

Section 2: Being Looked After

Section 3: Living In Foster Care

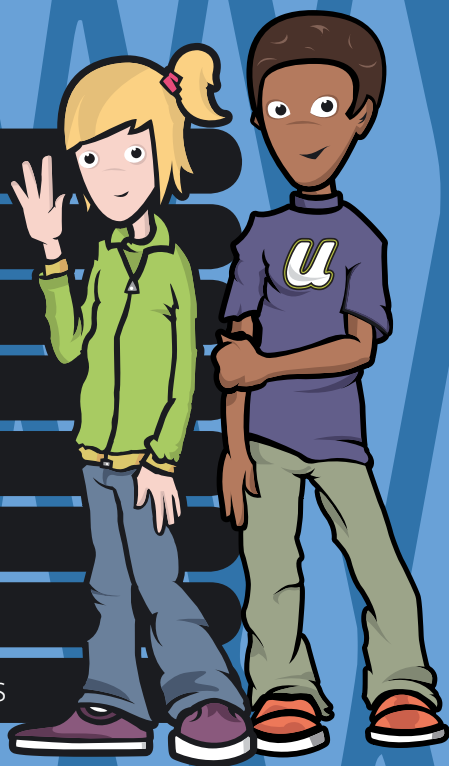
Section 4: Lifestyle

Section 5: Your Health

Section 6: Education

Section 7: Speaking Out

Section 8: Useful Links & Contacts



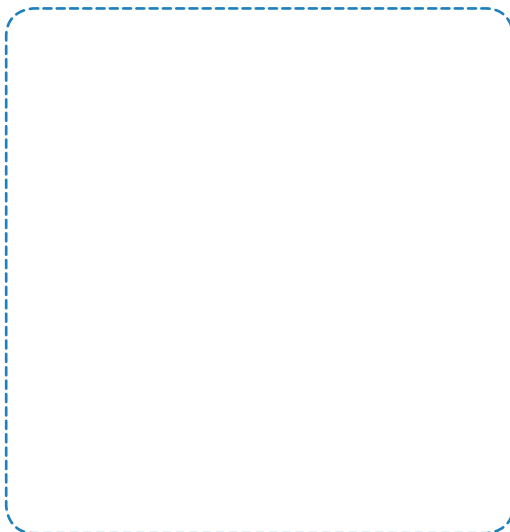


About Me:

Now why don't you draw a picture of what you look like. We have made a special place for you to draw it below:

A large, empty rectangular area with a dashed blue border, intended for a child to draw a picture of themselves. It occupies the majority of the lower half of the page.

About Me:



We have made this page of the folder for you to tell us all about you.

You could ask your foster carer or Social Worker to help you fill the profile in.

You can even draw another picture of yourself in the box or something you like doing. Have Fun!

My name is

My date of birth

My carers' names are

My address is

.....

My telephone number is

About My Family:

If it's ok with your Social Worker and they think it's safe, you may be able to stay in touch with members of your family and friends.

You could ask your Social Worker or foster carer to help you write their contact details down.

You could also draw a picture of their face or something that reminds you of them.



Family members name

Telephone number

Address

.....

.....



Family members name

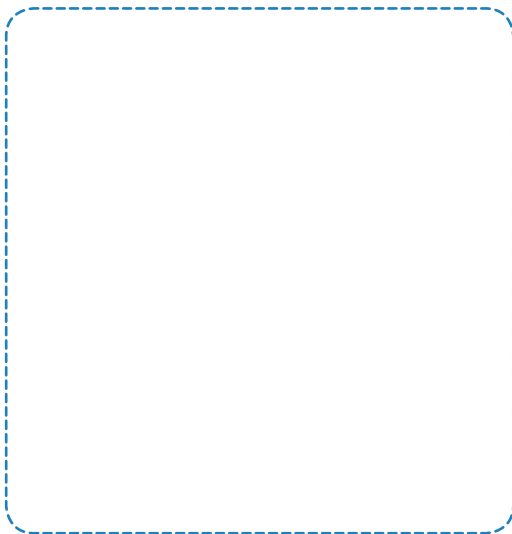
Telephone number

Address

.....

.....

My Social Worker:



You can find out more about your Social Worker later on in this folder.

Why don't you draw a picture of your Social Worker and write down how you would contact them.

My Social Worker is called

Telephone

Mobile

Email

Address

.....



My Independent Reviewing Officer

Name of my Independent Reviewing Officer:

.....

Telephone

Email

Office Address

.....

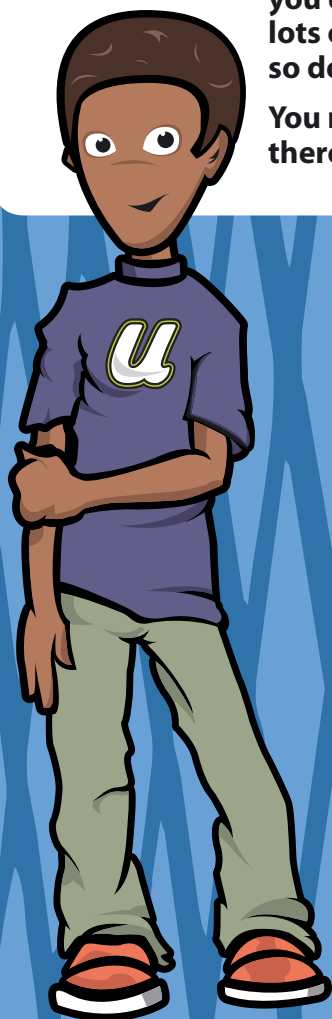
Draw a picture of your Independent Reviewing Officer

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed blue border, intended for drawing a picture of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

Sometimes you can't live with your family for lots of different reasons.

"Being in care" or "looked after" means that you don't live with your family. There are lots of children like you who are in care, so don't worry you're not the only one.

You might be scared about being in care but there are lots of people who will help you.



What Does Foster Care Mean?



It means you are going to live with grown ups which are called foster carers. They will look after you as part of their family.

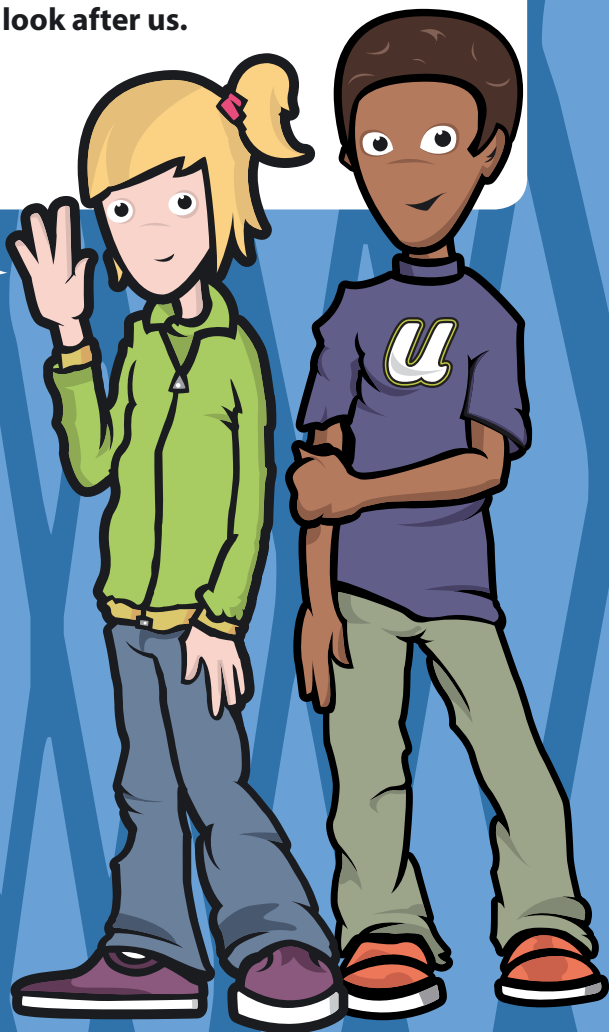


You may live with your foster family for a short time or even just go at weekends. You may be in care for just a couple of weeks or you may be in care till you are old enough to live on your own.

Most children who are looked after live in foster homes with a family. You will have foster carers who will look after you.

We live with foster carers because we can't live at home with our family. Our foster carers are called Jane and Mike.

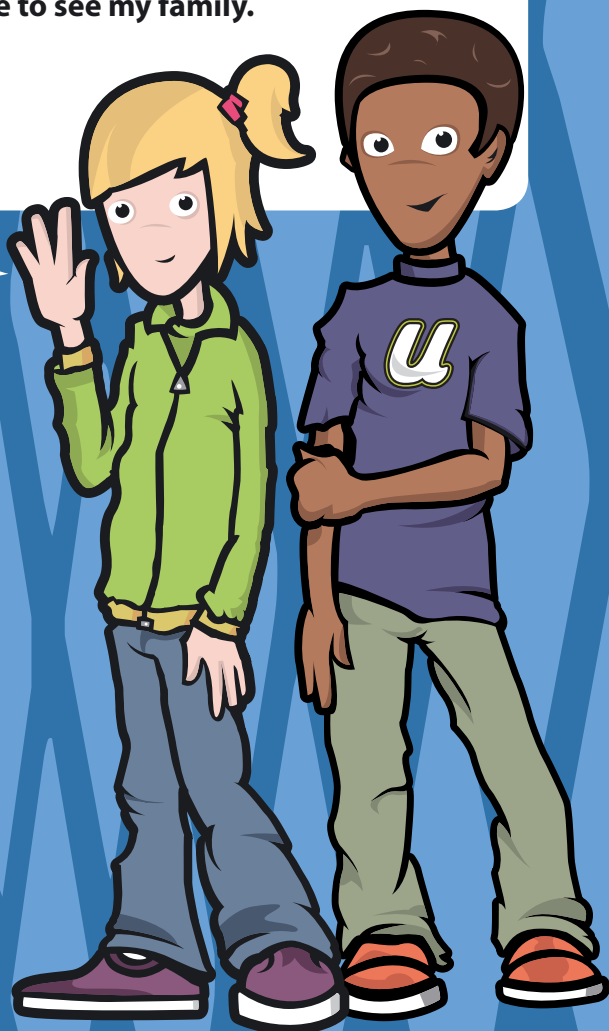
Jane and Mike have two of their own children. They are really nice and look after us.



We have a Social Worker called Sam. She's nice and friendly. It's Sam's job to come and see us, and make sure we're ok.

I talk to her about what I want to happen and if I have any worries.

She also arranges for me to see my family.



When you are in care, you will have a special grown up who will make sure you are happy and safe. This person is called a Social Worker.

What Does Your Social Worker Do?

They will make
sure you are
happy

They will try to
help you if you
have a
problem

They will help
you to be as healthy
as possible

They will try to
help you keep
in touch with
your family and
friends

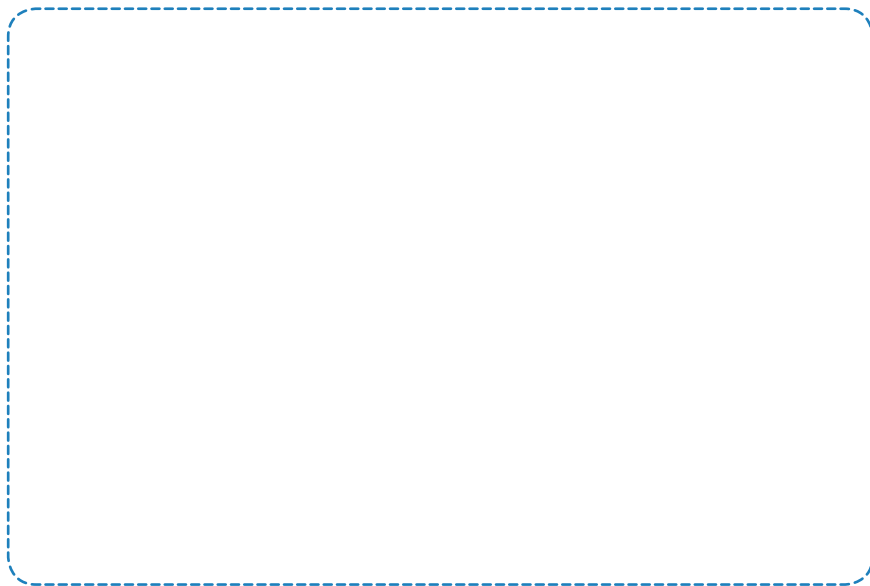
They will talk
to you about
where you
live

They will make
sure you are
looked after
well

They will make
sure you go and
like your School



Draw You And Your Social Worker Together



Will My Social Worker Come And See Me?

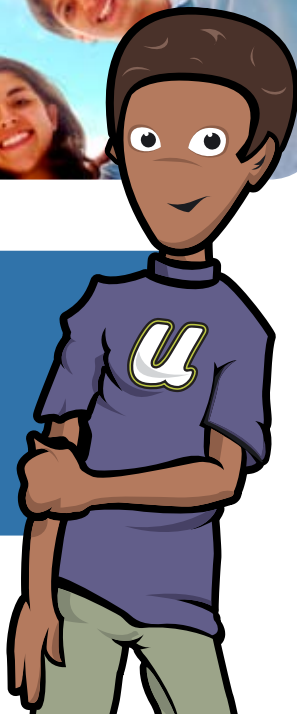
Your Social Worker will come and see you at your foster home when they can. Your Social Worker may not be able to see you as much as you would like, but they will try to see you as much as possible.



When you first start to live away from home, you, your Social Worker and foster carer will sit down together to talk about you and what they are going to do to look after you. This is called a meeting...



When you are in care there are lots of people who are going to try and make sure you're ok, but they all need to know how they are going to look after you. This is called a care plan....



What Will It Say In Your Care Plan?

How you are
getting on

How you are
getting on at
School

If you will see
your family

Where you
are living

What things you
do when your
not at School

Things
you like to do

Make
sure you are
looked after
well

Your plan will be changed when things change. You will always be told when your plan changes.



Your Review



When you are in care all the grown ups want to make sure you are happy and safe.

A review is a meeting with you to discuss how you are getting on and how you feel about where you live. It is a chance for you and those people who are responsible for you, to share what has been happening and to plan for your future. Whilst you are looked after you will have regular reviews. The first one will be within 28 days of coming into care, then within 3 months and then at least every 6 months or more often if needed. In the review you and the people who care for you can decide how best to meet your needs and to agree how to improve your care plan.

The review is organised by your Social Worker with the Independent Reviewing Officer. The Independent Reviewing Officer must make sure that you and maybe your parents are involved in the plans for your care and that your wishes and feelings are known.

Your Review

The Independent Reviewing Officer will usually be the same person at each of your reviews. Independent Reviewing Officers works for Staffordshire County Council, but they are not one of the people who usually cares or visits you. This is so they can check that you're getting the best care possible from people who look after you.

The people who will come to your review are those who know about you and those who play a part in your life. This will include your foster carers you live with, your Social Worker, and his or her boss, maybe your parents or other family members and any adults who are important to you.

The Independent Reviewing Officer will lead the review. You can always ask you Social Worker about who will be attending your review.

Your Review

Your review is about you, so it's really important your wishes and feelings are taken into account.

It is best if you are at the review meeting so that you can hear what is said, put your own views across and take part in decisions that are made.

If you decide not to go to your review, you can give your views by completing a booklet that your Social Worker can provide. Or you can decide with your Social Worker how your wishes and feelings will be provided to the review. After the review your Social Worker should tell you about the decisions that were agreed.

Before your review you will be given a booklet to complete. The booklets are personal and can help you decide what you want to be discussed at your review.

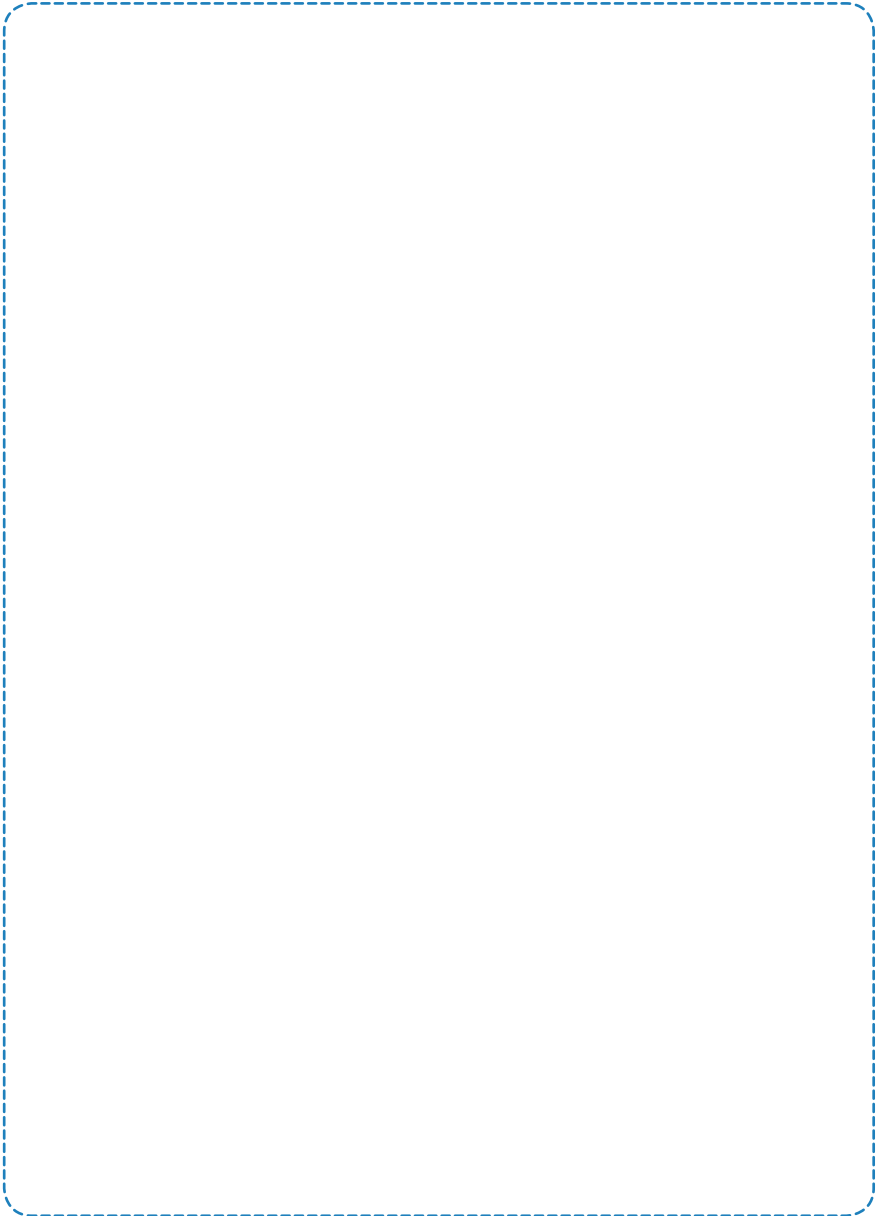
Who Can Be Foster Carers?

Not all grown ups can be foster carers. Foster carers are chosen by grown ups who work for Staffordshire County Council. They make sure that the carers will make sure you are safe and happy if you go and live with them.



Some foster carers will have other foster children who live with them and some of the carers have their own children as well. They will try and make you as happy as possible in their home.

What Does Your Foster Home Look Like?

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed blue border, intended for a child to draw a picture of their foster home. The box is centered on the page and takes up most of the lower half of the page.

Will It Be Like Living In My Own Family?

Every house has rules and living in foster care is no different. At some point you should ask your foster carers to go through their house rules.

Ask your foster carers to help you write the house rules down.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

Friends

If you have moved away from where you lived, your carer and Social Worker will try to make sure you still see your friends.



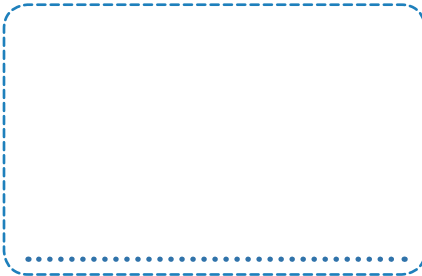
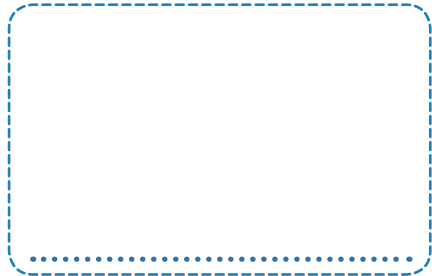
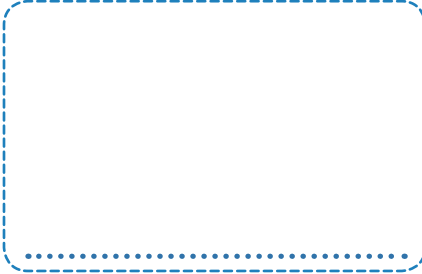
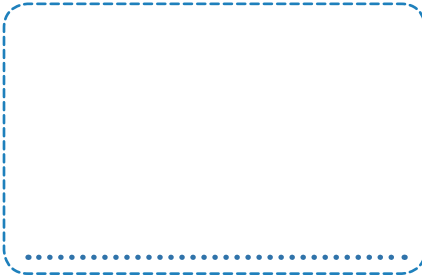
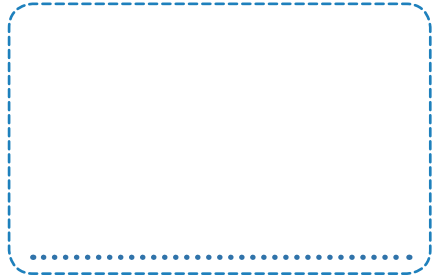
It is not always possible to meet your friends because they live so far away but your Social Worker will do their best to make sure you don't lose contact.

Can I See My Friends?

Yes. Your carers and your Social Worker will want you to have friends like all of us do. If you have a really good friend they might ask you to stay over at their house. Your Social Worker and your carers will need to make sure you'll be safe there, like any family would.

Who Are Your Friends?

You can draw a picture of you and your friends below.
You can also write their names on the line.

A large rectangular box with a dashed blue border. At the bottom of the box is a horizontal dotted line, intended for writing names.A large rectangular box with a dashed blue border. At the bottom of the box is a horizontal dotted line, intended for writing names.A large rectangular box with a dashed blue border. At the bottom of the box is a horizontal dotted line, intended for writing names.A large rectangular box with a dashed blue border. At the bottom of the box is a horizontal dotted line, intended for writing names.A large rectangular box with a dashed blue border. At the bottom of the box is a horizontal dotted line, intended for writing names.A large rectangular box with a dashed blue border. At the bottom of the box is a horizontal dotted line, intended for writing names.A large rectangular box with a dashed blue border. At the bottom of the box is a horizontal dotted line, intended for writing names.A large rectangular box with a dashed blue border. At the bottom of the box is a horizontal dotted line, intended for writing names.

My Family

You may still want to talk and see your family. If that is ok with your Social Worker you will be able to see them.



We want you to talk and see your family. So your Social Worker will try to sort out visits and telephone calls.

Who Do You Go And See In Your Family?

Write the name and draw the picture of your family members.

Things To Do And Places To Go

There are lots of clubs and groups you can go to and meet lots of new people.

You could go to:

Football

Canoeing

Guides

Horse Riding

Swimming

Dance Classes

What Do You Like To Do?

1.

2.

3.

4.

Bullying

Nearly everyone is bullied at some time in their lives, by brothers and sisters, by neighbours, by adults or by other children. If you are being bullied, you may feel scared and alone but you should try and sort it out so that the bullying stops.



It can be hard to tell someone, if you don't feel you can tell the person face to face it may be easier to write a note to your carers, teachers or foster carers telling them how you feel.

What Is Bullying?

1. People calling you names
2. Making things up to get you into trouble
3. Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving
4. Taking things away from you
5. Stealing your money
6. Taking your friends away from you

Your Health...

All sorts of people go to hospital for all sorts of reasons, from children having their tonsils taken out, to mothers giving birth to babies in maternity wards.



Lots of people work in hospitals too. Doctors, nurses, surgeons, ambulance drivers, cleaners and cooks are all there to make sure you're properly looked after.

Sometimes doctors try to stop you getting sick in the first place. That is why you have vaccinations or jabs.

Your Health...

There are other things you can do to stay healthy, such as eating lots of fruit and vegetables and taking 30 minutes of exercise every day.



It's also a good idea to wash your hands before meals and whenever you go to the toilet. That way, you're less likely to get ill in the first place, and if you do get sick, you'll probably get better much faster.

What Exercise Do You Do?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Health Assessments...

What is it?

So that you know you are fit and healthy, you will have a health assessment where you will be seen by a doctor or nurse. They will talk to you, and you can tell them how you are feeling and if you are worried about anything.



They will measure you to see how tall you are and weigh you, and they may talk to you about what you eat.

They will also want to know if you can see and hear. So they will check your eyesight and ears. Don't worry it won't hurt.



Health Assessments...

Where will my Health Assessment take place?

This can happen in the doctors or nurses room at a clinic, at home or even at school.

You may have your carers there to look after you, but if you want, you can speak to the doctor or nurse on your own.

What will happen after?

Once the doctor and nurse knows all about you and your health. They will write a plan so that you can stay feeling good and healthy. They will also let you know what you need to do to be more healthier.

Your Health Plan:

Your plan will be looked at again and changed when it is needed.

Immunisations...

What are immunisations?

These are injections which you need to have throughout your life. They will help to stop you getting sick. It is a small needle and may sting a little bit this is very quick and it is very important to help keep you well.

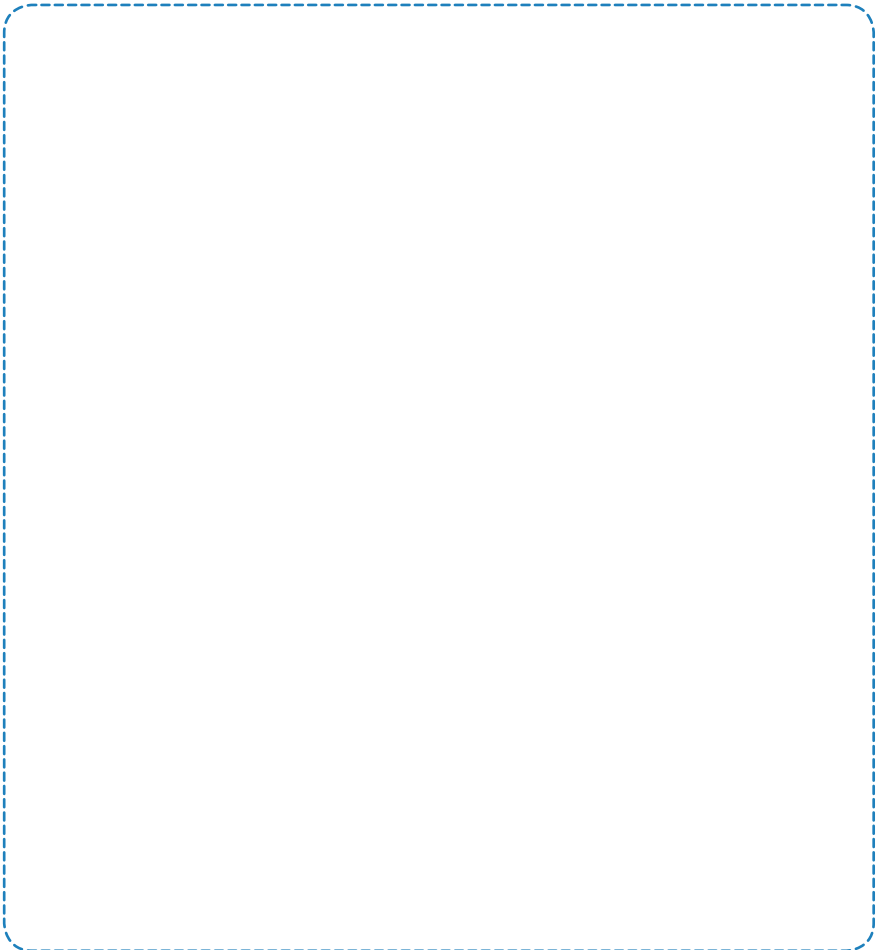
When Do I Have Immunisations And Why?

when	what does it protect me from?
Two Months Old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Haemophilus.
Three Months Old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Haemophilus.
Four Months Old	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio and Haemophilus.
Around 12 Months	Haemophilus Influenza
Around 13 Months	Measles, mumps and rubella.
Three years and four months or soon after	Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis and polio measles, mumps and rubella
Girls aged 12 to 13 years	Cervical cancer caused by human papillomavirus
13—18 years old	Tetanus, diphtheria and polio

Growing Up...

You will not always be a child and eventually you will grow. You may notice some changes like getting taller. As things change you can talk to your carers.

What Does Your Body Look Like?

A large, empty rectangular area with a dashed blue border, intended for a child to draw a picture of their body.

Keeping Clean...

It is important to keep clean. Wash everyday and keep your hair and nails clean, so wash them every time you use the toilet and before a meal.



Clean your teeth at least twice a day, this will help you to have good strong teeth because they need to last for a long time.

Healthy Relationships

During your life you will meet lots of people who you will be friends with. This means you will see them and play together when you can, but you want to make sure your friends are kind and nice to you.

What Could Good Friends Be Like?

1. They will tell you the truth.
2. They will not tell anyone your secrets, unless you're at risk.
3. Talk to you as often as they can.
4. Be kind to you and help you when you are upset.

What Could Bad Friends Be Like?

1. Get angry when you can't see them.
2. Be nasty to you.
3. Tell you that you can only have one friend.

Remember you can always talk to your foster carer or Social Worker if you have a problem with a friend or friends.

School

What's your school like? Schools come in all shapes and sizes. Some have thousands of pupils, some have fewer than a hundred, some are in the countryside and some are in big cities, but every school is there to teach children about the world around them.



It takes a lot of hard work to run a school. As well as teachers, there are caretakers, cleaners, secretaries, lollipop men and ladies and dinner staff - all working to help you do well and enjoy school.



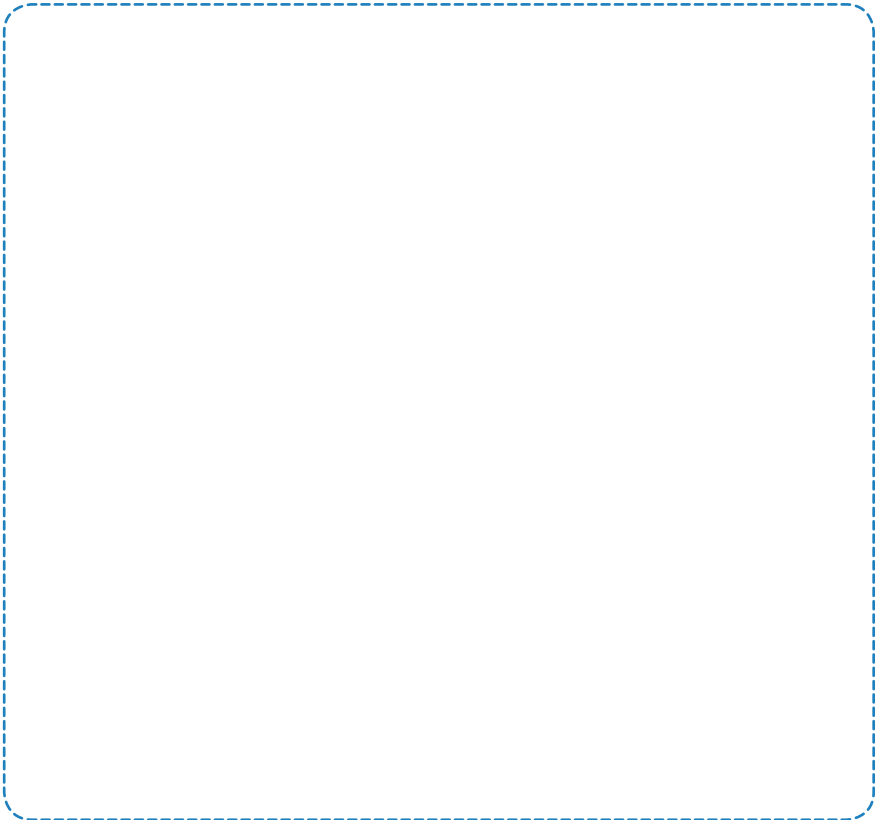
There are also your parents or carers. They can also get involved in school life. They may come along to parents evenings or help to run school trips or fetes. They might also help you with your homework.

Will I Go To The Same School?

If it is possible and you are happy, you will stay at the same school when you live in foster care.

Sometimes you can't go to the same school but your Social Worker and foster carer will talk to you about where you are going to go in the future.

What Does Your School Look Like?

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed blue border, intended for a child to draw or write their answer to the question 'What Does Your School Look Like?'. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the page.

Why Should You Go To School?

When you grow up, you will want to get a good job which you like.

If you go to school your teachers will help you learn lots of new things which will help you when you are older.

What Do You Learn About At School?

Draw and write about what you learn at School.

Your Designated Teacher

In your school you have will a special teacher who makes sure all children in care are safe, happy and doing well.

What Do You Like About School?

What Does Your Designated Teacher Do?



They will talk to
your Social
Worker

They will make sure
you have a Personal
Education Plan

They will give
you a chance to
have a say

If you need them
you can go and
talk to them

They will talk
to you about
your school
work

They will make
sure your doing
well in school

They will help
you if you have
a problem



Your Personal Education Plan

All children in care who are of the age to attend school have something called a Personal Education Plan (PEP). This plan tries to make sure you are doing well in your education and you are happy with how you are getting on at school.

How Does It Work?

Within 20 days of you entering care you will have a Personal Education Plan. Your Social Worker will work with the designated teacher at your school to arrange a meeting to discuss your plan.

before the meeting

- The designated teacher at your school will meet with you to discuss why you are having the meeting and make sure you feel able to have your say.
- Before the meeting your designated teacher will collect information about you such as your attendance record, exam results and may ask other teachers how you are getting on.

your personal education plan meeting

- Everyone who attends your meeting will discuss your plan and make sure it meets all your needs.
- Together you will make sure your plan is complete and everyone understands what the plan says.
- You will also set the time and date for your next plan review.

Your Pledge....

Staffordshire County Council's Pledge to children and young people in care.



Something Gone Wrong Or Right?

There may be times when you may not be happy about being in care or with the services who are trying to help you.

Staffordshire County Council has a special team of people who you can tell if something has gone wrong.

You can also tell the team if something has gone well and you are pleased and happy.

Making a complaint can sometimes be really hard. Don't forget to speak to your Social Worker or carer because they will be able to try and sort your problem out first.



Something Gone Wrong?

Before making a complaint you could talk to one of the below people.

**Your Social
Worker**

**Children's
Voice Project**

**Another
member
of staff**

A Teacher

Your Carers

Who Else Do You Think You Could Go To?

Speaking Out In Care

Something gone wrong.....

Have you decided to make a complaint or compliment?

If you have decided to make a complaint or a compliment, you can find a specially designed leaflet in the back of this folder which will guide you through making a complaint or compliment.

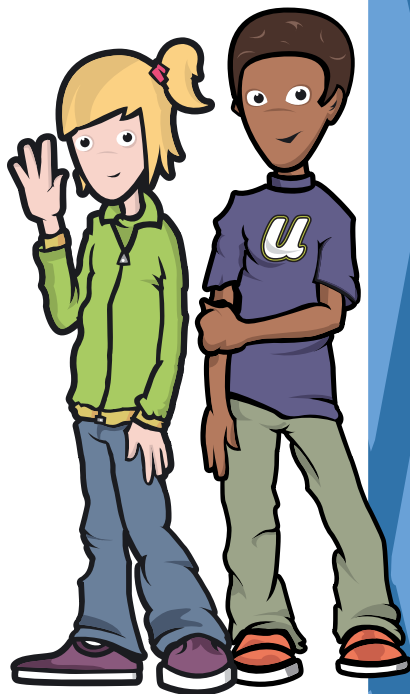
Don't forget you can always speak to the someone if you need help to make a complaint or compliment.

Key Contacts from the Complaints Team!

Complaints and Compliments Team Helpdesk:

01785 278601

Freephone: 0800 0837014



Do I Have Rights?

Everyone has rights! Children and young people have rights and it's a good idea if you know what your rights are.

What Are My Rights?

You have the right to:

- **Be treated with respect**, as a real person, whatever your age.
- **Be treated fairly** whatever your age, race, disability, religion or the clothes you wear.
- **Be listened to** and your feelings and wishes to be heard and considered when people are making plans about your future.
- **Be able to go to school.**
- **Be able to complain** if you are unhappy or worried about something like being bullied, abused, not listened to....
- **Be able to have an independent visitor** if you feel you want someone to listen to you.
- **Be able to have an advocate** who can help you sort things out when you make a complaint or are unhappy about something.

A Children In Care Council For Younger Children (CHICC)

The group was set up to try to help improve the lives of younger children in care by listening to children.

Children who come to the group can have a say about things that matter to them, such as school, Social Workers, where they live, what happens in their lives, and this is passed to the people who need to know.

Some of the things that have been discussed at the meetings are School, Social Workers, Feelings, Bullying, E Safety and the Packs for children coming into care.

How often does the group meet?

- One day in every school holiday.
- If there are children who want to be part of this group who can not come in school holidays, then we will try to have some meetings that they are able to come to.
- Drinks and lunch will be provided at the meeting.
- As well as having a say at the meetings, there are always some fun activities.

We ask members of the group to invite other children to join the Children in Care Council (CHICC) and we go to events to tell other children about joining, and to tell them about the group. When the group has been running for one year we will write to all Staffordshire children in care again to invite them to join.

Anyone who would like to come along to the meetings can contact Pauline or Sue at sue.bond@staffordshire.gov.uk or telephone 01785 854063

Get your Carer to ring up and find out more about it!

What Is The Virtual Care Council?

The Virtual care council (VCC) is an interactive website where you can keep in touch with other young people in care and see all the latest news, have fun and get everything you need to know about being in care. (for example updates to this pack)

How Does It Work?

The VCC is a secure website, which means only young people in care can see it, it also means you need a password. Your Social Worker should help you get a password when you come into care. If not, you should contact the Children & Young People's Voice Project on 01785 253878.

Once you are on there you can play games join in with discussion and post blogs.

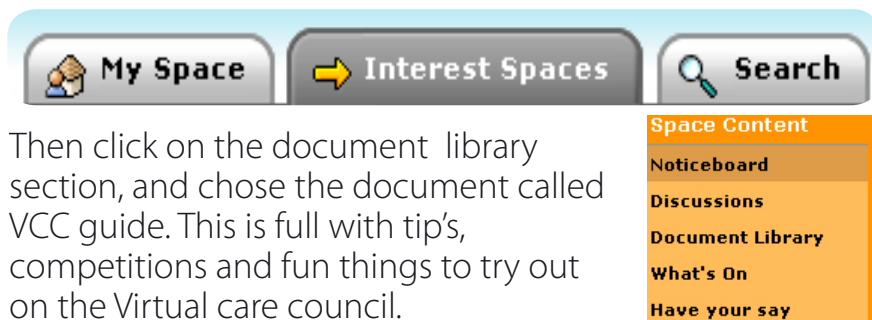
Using The Site?

To Log on go to the SLN2 website: <http://sln2.net> You should see a box that looks like this



What Do I Do Now?

Now feel free to start using the VCC it can be a bit confusing at first so if you need more information click on the interest space tab at the top, it should look like this.



What else

An important part of the VCC is you having your say on things that matter to you and being able take part in a consultation project.

Two ways of doing this are through the discussions tab's and the have your say section. All the questions on the have your say section are anonymous so if you want to have your say let us know, you will never by identified unless you want to be.

CARS

puts you in the driving seat

What can CARS offer?



You have a right to have your say.

Children's Advocacy and Representation Service (CARS)

What can CARS offer?

The respect you deserve

We can help children and young people who are:

- looked after in a placement, like a children's home or a foster home
- living at home with family but receive support from a social worker.

How?

We can...

- tell you what your rights are
- help to get adults to listen to you
- make sure that you have your say about the things in your life
- offer advice and information
- come to your review to make sure you are listened to
- help you make a complaint.



Do you know you have the right to complain if you don't have these things?

- Respect
- Good, healthy care
- A reasonable standard of living
- Safe living
- Education
- Protection from all kinds of abuse

CARS is run by the NSPCC

The people who work for CARS, children's rights advocates, believe children and young people come first . . . and that their wishes and feelings matter.

You can use the service if you are looked after or having help from Staffordshire or Shropshire local authorities.

If you have a worry, a problem or a complaint, please get in contact because talking helps - and together we can sort it out.

If you talk to someone from CARS it is private. Nobody will be told without your permission, unless you or someone else is being harmed or at risk of being harmed.



If you need any advice,
you can call freephone

0800 233 311

24-hour answerphone

**or contact CARS during office hours
(Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)**

Staffordshire CARS

4 Chapel Street
Stafford ST16 2BX

01785 228888

Shropshire CARS

Sycamore House, East Wing
The Professional Quarter
Shrewsbury Business Park
Shrewsbury SY2 6LG

01743 281981

How to complain

You have the right to make a complaint if you are not happy with the work offered by CARS. You should contact the children's services manager at the CARS office in Stafford, at the address and phone number above.

The NSPCC keeps records about the people it works with. You can ask to see your file at any time so if any information is shared with other people you will know about it.

Information And Advise Services

Childline - 0800 1111 - www.childline.org.uk

This is a free helpline for children and young people in the UK. Children and young people can call Childline to talk about any problem – their counsellors are always there to help you sort it out.

Think you know - www.thinkyouknow.co.uk

This is a website created to provide young people the space to share what you think is good and what is not, share your experiences of things that have gone wrong and show ways in which you can get yourselves out of bad situations online.

Bullying Online - www.bullying.co.uk

Bullying Online was founded in 1999 by journalist Liz Carnell. The website contains lots of resources and reliable information on a variety of bullying issues.

Useful Words And Phrases To Know...

Foster Care

This means to live in a house or apartment with one or two carers who will look after you as part of their family.

Foster Carer

The person or people who look after you in a foster home.

Residential Care

This means to live in a house with other looked after young people with the support of staff.

Social Worker

The person whose job it is to help look after you by arranging meetings, visiting you and carrying out your care plans.

Complaint

This means to raise concerns about how you are or have been treated.

Essential Information Form

This form tells your carer things they need to know about you like your school, health and family.

Care Plan

This is used to tell us and the people caring for you what should be done for your future care.

Children and Young People's Voice Project

The Children & Young People Voice Project aims to help young people have their say about their care, the service they receive and plans that are being made for the future.

Independent Reviewing Officer

The Independent Reviewing Officer must make sure that you and your parents are involved in the plans for your care and that your wishes and feelings are known.

Useful Words And Phrases To Know...

Personal Education Plan (PEP):

All young people in care who are of the age to attend school have something called a Personal Education Plan. This plan tries to make sure you are doing well in your education.

Review:

A review is a meeting with you to discuss how you are getting on and how you feel about where you live.

Health Assessment:

You will meet with a doctor/ nurse or sometimes a school nurse for your health assessment, to discuss your health. The assessment should be about how you are feeling, the things you can do to be healthy and any problems you have or things you are worried about.

Children Advise and Representation Service (CARS):

CARS can help children and young people who are looked after in a placement like a residential care home or foster homes, to make sure your wishes and feelings are heard.

Pledge

A pledge is a promise or set of promises made to you. Staffordshire County Council has a pledge for children and young people in care.

Children In Care Council

The Children In Care Council aims to improve the lives and futures of children and young people in care.