



**01254  
244700**

# **YOUNG PERSON'S**

## **Welcome Guide**



# Notes

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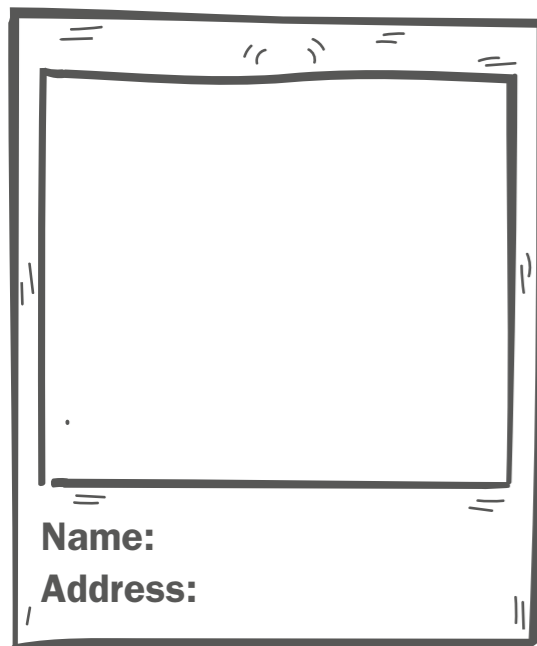
# Introduction

**This guide has been written for you.**

CANW is a foster care charity. We are here to help children and young people live with a foster family. CANW has foster carers who are very kind and experienced at looking after children and young people.



## ALL ABOUT ME



Name:  
Address:



**Birthday**  
Date:  
Age:

**My Family**

My Children's  
Right Worker:

**Numbers**

My Foster Carers:

My Social Workers:

**My  
School**

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Contact**

## Your Social Worker

**Your social worker is someone that has been specially trained to work with young people and their families.**

They will visit you regularly and keep in touch with your family and your foster carer.

**YOUR social worker is there to help YOU and YOUR family.**



## CANW Social Worker

**A CANW social worker is someone who looks after the foster carers and makes sure that they are looking after you and you are OK.**

They will talk to YOU and YOUR social worker. If you have any problems you can ask to speak to them.

## Independent Reviewing Officers

Independent reviewing officers (usually shortened to IROs) are professionals working with young people in care, in addition to their social workers. Each young person in care should have an IRO. The IRO's job is to check that the local authority/council is doing what it should be doing for you while you are in care, to go to

all your reviews and to make sure they are done properly, to check on your care plan, and to make sure the local authority/council takes proper notice of the your wishes and feelings.

**If you want to speak to your Independent Reviewing Officer ask your social worker how you can contact them.**

# INFORMATION ABOUT ME

# HII!



## My file

CANW have to keep information about all the young people who live with their foster carers to make sure you are looked after properly. If you ever want to see any of the information we hold about you, ask your foster carer or their social worker.

Your social worker will also have information about you, and you can ask them to see this as well. You are also allowed to write notes in your file if you want to – ask your social worker about this.

## Being ‘Looked After’ by Social Services

You may hear people use the term ‘looked after’ when they are talking about you. All this means is that Social Services are looking after you whilst you are unable to live at home, and they are involved in the decisions about your future.

Whilst you are being ‘looked after’ by Social Services, your social worker will keep in contact by visiting and telephoning you regularly.

## Meetings & Reviews

Throughout your stay with your foster carer, regular meetings and reviews are held by Social Services, (which they have to do by law). Your social worker will arrange these meetings about and for you.

It is always useful if you can attend these meetings although you may choose not to. Your parents, social worker, teacher and foster family will be some of the people who may be invited to attend - as well as anyone else you would like to invite. These meetings and reviews are to check that things are going okay and to plan for your future. You do not have to go to them if you don’t want to - but it is important that the people who do go to these meetings understand and know what YOU want. Speak to your social worker about attending these meetings or having your views heard.

## Contact with your family

In most cases, all young people will be encouraged and helped to see their families as often as possible, but sometimes there may be reasons why this is not possible and these reasons should be explained to you.

Discuss with your social worker about contact with your family and how you will see and talk to them.



## WHERE YOU LIVE

### House Rules and Safer Caring

CANW asks all its fostering families to have a Safer Caring Policy which may detail household rules. These rules are there for all members of the household and are designed to keep everybody safe.

### Bedrooms/Privacy

Everyone has a right to space and privacy and as such you will have your own bedroom whilst you are staying with your foster carers.

Members of the household will knock before entering anyone's bedroom and we shouldn't touch each others things unless we have permission to do so.

We appreciate that having your own space is important but sometimes there may be occasions when your foster carer may need to enter your bedroom i.e. to check that your room is clean and tidy.

There may also be occasions when a foster carer may check your room because they are worried about your safety and welfare. You will always be told if this happens.

### Using the Telephone /Confidentiality

**You should be able to use the telephone in private especially if you need to talk confidentially to your social worker.**

As long as it has been agreed by your social worker you should be able to phone and receive calls from your family.



# FOSTER CARERS

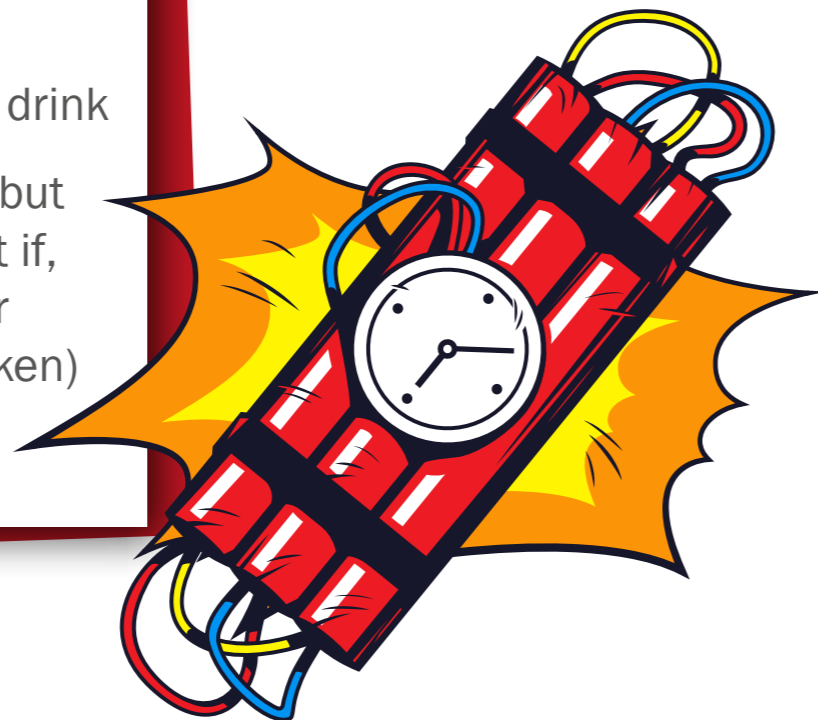
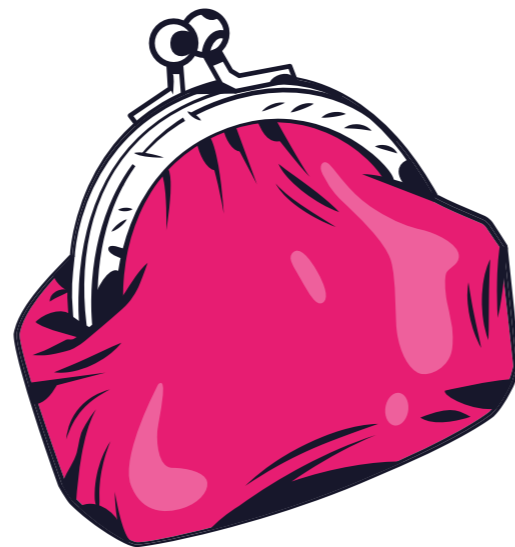
## When things aren't going well

Whether you're a young person or an adult, everyone needs boundaries and when we do something wrong we need to have this explained to us so we can learn to do the 'right' thing next time. The thing to remember is that whatever you've done nobody should ever smack, hit or hurt you.

## Your Foster Carer

### MUST NEVER:

- Smack you or physically hurt you
- Stop you from seeing your parents because you've been naughty
- Lock you in a room
- Stop you from having food or drink
- Take all your pocket money, (but you may have to pay part of it if, for example, you're paying for something that you have broken)
- Humiliate you



## Food

It is important that you like the food that's on offer to you so talk to your carers. They will make sure that they give you food that you like, but they will also need to give you a healthy balanced diet as well.

You should never be made to eat food you dislike, or are allergic to, and your religious dietary needs should always be respected.

It could be helpful to go shopping with your carers so you can look at the different foods you might not have tried before, as well as the food you like.

If you are having problems that prevent you from eating, or are worried about food in other ways, there is help on offer. Talk to someone you trust so that they can support you. REMEMBER that you can always speak to your social worker or carers.

## Pocket Money

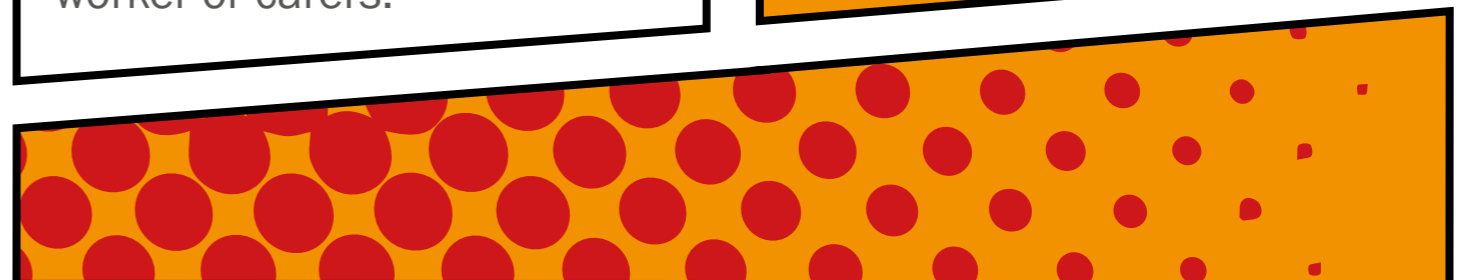
The amount of pocket money you receive from your foster carers usually depends on how old you are.

It's up to you how you want to spend or save your pocket money. Your foster carers will help you set up your own bank account so you can learn how to take responsibility for your own money.

### How much pocket money will I receive each week?



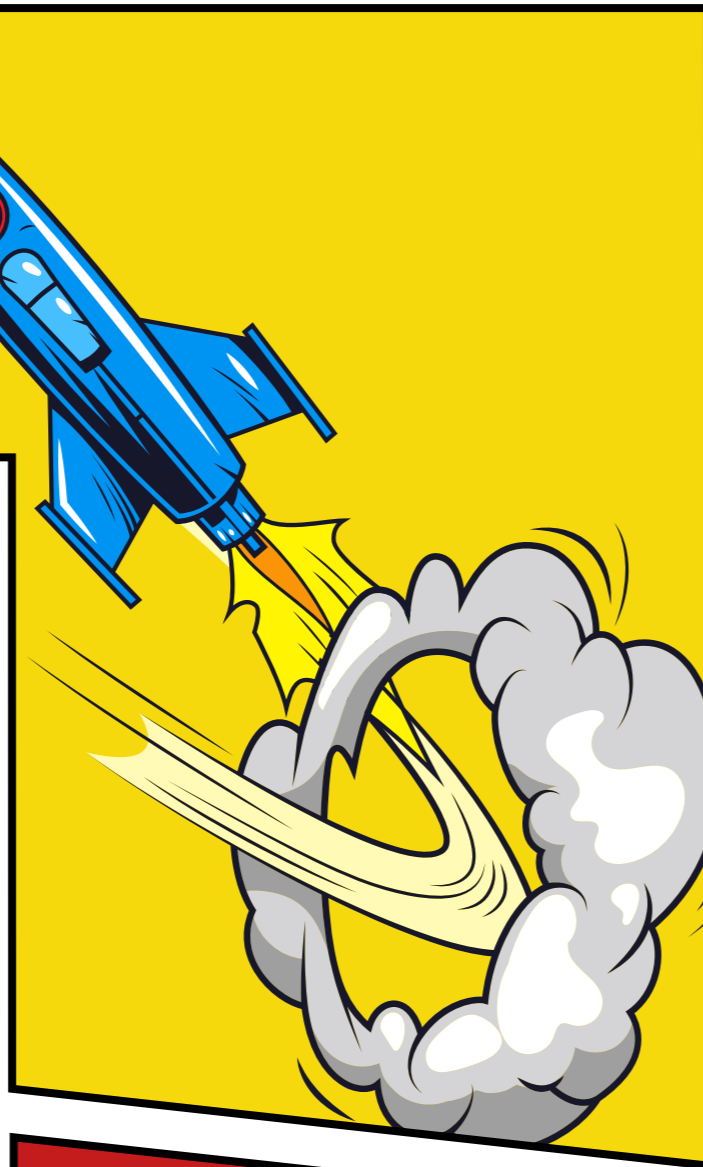
Your carers will also put some money aside for you, into a savings account every week. They will look after this until you are an adult.



## Hygiene & Beauty

Your carer will provide you with any items that you need to keep yourself clean. If you require other essential items, discuss this with your carer and they should purchase them for you. Make-up can be purchased with your pocket money. You may require specific products for hair and skin care and your carer will be responsible for purchasing these items for you.

Your cultural background and religion may influence what you do with your hair, e.g. your religion may require you leave your hair uncut. This will always be respected. You may need to make your carer aware of these things so they can support you.



## Medical Card

Your medical card is an important document with your full name, date of birth, NHS number and your doctor's details on it. You need it to get medical and dental treatment on the NHS.

Your carer will look after it for you until you are 16, or longer if you want them to.

## Feelings

It's important that you are able to share what makes you happy, or sad, and any worries that you may have. Your foster carers, social workers and legal guardians all want to help and protect you.

If there's anything e.g: bullying or being hurt by someone, or maybe you need help with homework, do talk to someone.

If you don't find it easy to talk, you could write it down and pass it on to someone you trust.

If someone makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe, tell someone you trust.



## YOUR EDUCATION

**All children and young people are legally required to attend school every day**

Whilst living with your foster carers, you will be involved in making plans to ensure that you receive an education. This will help to give you better opportunities so you can have better outcomes in the future.

If you are living near to your home, you may be able to carry on going to your current school, but if you have to move further away, your foster carers and social worker will try to organise a new school as quickly as possible.

If there is any delay in a school being found or if you are excluded from school, you will be expected to complete school work and follow an educational routine at home.

If you are out of school for a long period of time, an Education Welfare Officer may work with you to help you get back into education.

Your foster carers will encourage you to do homework and offer any help you might need. They will also attend consultation evenings in school and keep in regular contact with your school.

If you are of school leaving age, speak to your foster carer and social worker about support with further education or job opportunities.

## YOUR RIGHTS AND WHO YOU CAN TALK TO

**Everyone has rights.**

**Whilst you are living with your foster family, it is important for you to know that there are certain things that your foster family should support you with.**



**You have the RIGHT TO:**

- Be listened to and consulted
- Follow your chosen culture and religion
- Have contact with your family and friends if it is safe.
- Telephone your social worker if you need to
- Eat a special diet/foods that are part of your culture/religion
- See your social worker if you need to - and in private
- Have pocket money
- See a dentist and doctor when you need to
- Go to school and have a state education
- Have suitable clothing to wear
- Private time (privacy)
- Your own bedroom
- Complain/Children's Rights Officer
- Share your views

**You have the right to share your thoughts and feelings about decisions that are made about you.**

This means people will ask you for your views and listen to what you say. It doesn't mean you will always get what you want, but you will be told the reasons why.



## **If you have a complaint or need to talk to someone...**

If you are not happy with the way you are being looked after or need to talk to someone about something that is worrying you, you must tell someone. You should tell us how you feel so we can try and sort it out.

If you do have a complaint, CANW will take everything you have to say seriously. We might need to speak to the people who your complaint is about - just so we can get everyone's views. But we will talk to you first about this.

You can also tell your foster carer, social worker, teacher or your parents if you have any problems.

The thing to remember most of all is - You have a right to complain, a right to voice your opinions and views, and you will not get into trouble for telling the truth.



**Joanne Lever**  
Human Resources Manager

**01254 244700**

Email: [youngpeoplescomments@canw.org.uk](mailto:youngpeoplescomments@canw.org.uk)



## **childline**

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME

**0800 1111**

**NSPCC Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH**



## **CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER**

**0800 528 0731**

**[help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)**

**Sanctuary Buildings | 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT**



**Ofsted**



**0300 1231231**

# What is an Independent Advocate?



# HELLO

**An Advocate is somebody that you can trust to speak on your behalf:**

Independent, means they don't work directly for CANW.

**What does an Advocate do?**

- They can listen to you.
- They can advise you of your rights.
- They can provide you with information so you can look at your options.
- They can speak on your behalf, if you wish.



# RACE, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Race Equality means that all people; white, black, red and yellow, have the right to be treated fairly and that everyone should have the same chance.

**Equal rights no matter what!**



**There are many different religions celebrated in Britain**



Christianity



Islam



Sikhism



Buddhism



Hinduism



Judaism

When children come to Britain from other countries they sometimes feel frightened, uncomfortable, sad and lonely. Everything is new to them. You could make them feel better by welcoming them and making them feel happy to be here. You could play with them, talk to them, make friends and invite them to tea. Find out about them, and tell them about you.

# ACTIVITIES

**Are there any clubs or activities you would like to go to?**

**Your foster carer can help you with this.**

CANW also run activity clubs for you and other young people during school holidays. Attending CANW activities is a great way to make new friends.

CANW also runs a young leader's program that works to empower our young people, involving them in participation and personal growth opportunities.

We will contact you regularly to let you know of opportunities to get involved.



## DIFFICULT TIMES

### Sexual Health -

Being curious and understanding how your body works is perfectly normal. Your foster carer will talk to you about appropriate boundaries, consent and contraception. Your foster carer will not be embarrassed to talk about personal healthcare and hygiene. We want you to be safe and healthy and your carer will give you all the information you need to help you make good choices.

**Self-harm/Suicide** - Self-harm is when someone hurts themselves on purpose as a way of trying to manage distressing or overwhelming feelings and experiences. Someone who is self-harming might be dealing with lots of intense thoughts and feelings, and hurting themselves may feel like the only way to cope. Or, they might feel numb and hurt themselves in order to feel something. Your foster carer wants to keep you safe and will always listen to your concerns or worries and try to help you.

**Eating disorders** - None of our bodies are made the same and this can sometimes be upsetting. There may be times that you try to do something to improve your body and make yourself feel better. Sometimes this doesn't work out, or you may take things a little too far which harms you instead. This could leave you feeling completely overwhelmed. Your foster carer understands and will help you take the right steps to heal yourself.



**Grooming** - The majority of adults are good people but there are some bad people who seek out young people who are vulnerable and through the process of grooming expose that young person to great harm. Grooming is a subtle, gradual, and escalating process of building "trust" with a young person. If something feels wrong – tell someone like your foster carer.

**Gangs or harmful peer pressure** - The vast majority of young people are not involved in gangs and want nothing to do with them. However, the behaviour of the small number of young people who are involved has a significant impact on communities, on their families and friends as well as themselves. If you think you might be involved in a gang or dealing with peer pressure you can talk to your foster carer for help.

**Running Away** - There may be times when you feel like running away because of something that is happening, or because you feel unhappy. If you do run away, lots of people will be worried about you and your safety. Talk to your foster carer before you make any decisions.

# JARGON BUSTER

## What some words mean:

**LAC** - This stands for 'Looked After Child'. It means any young person that is in care.

**LAC Review** - This is a big meeting where your IRO makes sure all the adults are looking after you properly. Your wishes and feelings are always included.

**IRO** - This stands for 'Independent Reviewing Officer'. Your IRO will chair your LAC Review and is in charge of making sure all the adults are looking after you properly.

**LASW** - This stands for 'Local Authority Social Worker'. This person is YOUR Social Worker.

**SSW** - This stands for 'Supervising Social Worker'. This person is your foster carer's social worker.

**PEP** - This stands for 'Personal Education Plan'. All young people in care must have a PEP. This makes sure your school is doing everything it can to support and teach you properly. Your wishes and feelings are always included.

**LAC Medical** - All young people in care must have a medical once a year. This is done by a special nurse and can happen at a doctor's surgery or in the home.

**Inclusion Manager** - This is somebody in school who makes sure any young people who need extra support in school get the help they need.

**EHC Plan** - This stands for Education, Health and Care Plan. This is a plan that sets out exactly how a young person will be supported in school. Your wishes and feelings are always included. Not all young people need an EHC Plan.

**P.A** - As you approach 18, you will no longer have a social worker. You will have a 'Personal Advisor' instead who will support you with things you need to know about living independently as an adult.

**Independence** - As you get closer to 18 you may be encouraged to take more responsibility for yourself to prepare for a time when you leave foster care. CANW will offer leaving care learning opportunities in addition to the skills your foster carer will give you so that you are ready as you can be for the next steps in your life.

**Pathway Plan** - Around your 16th birthday, your Care Plan will change and be called a 'Pathway Plan'. Your wishes and dreams for the future, in terms of where you want to live and whether you want to continue in education or go to work, should be at the heart of your pathway plan.

