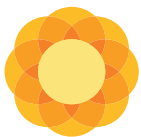




# Your guide to Foster Care

11 – 18 Years



**Foster  
Birmingham**

Birmingham's biggest family

خوش آمدی  
 SELAMAT DATANG  
 SELAMAT DATANG  
 ALOHA  
 TERVETULOA  
 FÁILTE  
 VITAJTE  
 BIENVENIDA  
 Добре дошъл  
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 DEGEMER MAD  
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 DOBRODOŠLI  
 BIENVENUE  
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 LAIPNI LŪDZAM  
 HAERE MAI  
 WĚLLKOM  
 خوش کهپسنز - خوش آمدید  
 BENVENUTI  
 Добро пожаловать  
 BENVINGUTS

# WELCOME

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## Young People's Guide to Foster Care

If you have this guide, you must be moving to a foster family. We hope this guide will help you understand what is happening.

The Government has said that we must provide you with a Young People's Guide to Foster Care when you move to your foster family. Your Foster Carer and Social Worker will explain its contents to you.

Your guide includes:

- A brief description of what the fostering service sets out to do for children and young people
- What you can expect from your Social Worker
- What you can expect from the Supervising Social Worker
- What you can expect from your Foster Carer
- Having your say
- Moving on

If you would like, we can ensure you get a copy of the guide in a form that would make it easier for you to understand. For example, Makaton, pictures, tape recording, a link to read on your phone or device, or translation into another language.

## Statement of Purpose

There is also a particular set of rules that tells you how foster care should work in Birmingham and the rest of the UK. This is called the Statement of Purpose and lists the aims, objectives and services offered by Birmingham Children's Trust Fostering Service.

It has been written to provide information to Foster Carers, those interested in becoming Foster Carers, children and young people, fostering services staff, and other colleagues or professionals within the Children's Trust and Birmingham City Council.

## Policy Statement

The Trust's Fostering Service believes that every child in care should enjoy the same quality of life and opportunities as any other child. We recognise that children's needs are best met by their family, where it is safe. We are committed to placing children who cannot remain in their own family in an appropriate alternative family placement wherever possible. We recognise that being separated from parents for any time will inevitably have a detrimental effect on most children's wellbeing.

## Our Vision

*"To give every child the opportunity to thrive in their families, in their school and their communities.*

*All children should enjoy a happy, healthy childhood that promotes their self-confidence and resilience, which gives them the foundation for adulthood and opportunities to fulfil their potential.*

*The Fostering Service is working to improve outcomes for Birmingham's children in care, providing them with safe and secure environments in which they can thrive, fulfilling their aspirations."*

## Our Aim

The main aim of our Fostering Service is to provide safe, high-quality foster care placements for children and young people that value, support and encourage them to grow and develop as individuals. You can find the complete Statement of Purpose at

[www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/downloads/11/fostering](http://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/downloads/11/fostering)

## The National Minimum Standards (NMS)

As a Trust, we have to follow the rules made up by the Government (the people in charge). The rules say how children should be cared for properly in foster care. These rules are called the National Minimum Standards.

NMS require the fostering service to provide support for carers so they can do the following:

- Provide you with foster care that meets your needs
- Take your wishes and feelings into account
- Actively support your care
- Keep you safe
- Support your health
- Support your enjoyment and recreational activities
- Support your education
- Support you for independence

If you want to know more about this, your Foster Carer or Social Worker can help.



## Important Information

This booklet belongs to:

My Social Worker is:

It is their job to visit me, make sure I am well looked after, talk to me about the plans for me, listen to me, arrange contact with my family and help with other things.

My Foster Carer is:

It is their job to look after me.

My Independent Reviewing Officer is:

It is their job to Chair my Review and to check that I am well looked after. They will also want to know how I am feeling and will make sure that everyone knows my views.

Our Supervising Social Worker is:

It is their job to help to support my Foster Carers and ensure they are looking after me well. When they visit they will also want to talk with me to see how I am getting on.



My Advocate is:

It is their job to help to put my views forward and to speak up for me. An Advocate can help to get problems sorted out and will let people know how I am feeling so that things can be changed.

My Independent Visitor is:

They do not work for the Trust, they are independent and will volunteer to come and visit me and become my friend. They will take me out to different places that I like going to.

My Personal Adviser (Leaving Care Worker) is:

It is their job to help me to prepare for independence. They will help me to find training, a place at college, or a job. They will help me to find somewhere to live, to sort out any benefits, and to learn ways to manage my money. They can help me up to 25.

My Nurse is:

They will see me every year and check that I am healthy.

My Virtual Head is:

They will make sure I'm supported to do well at school.



## What does it mean to be Looked After?

This means children and young people who are looked after by the Trust. It's not a term young people like; they prefer the term 'being in care', so that is what we will use.

You might live with friends and family, a foster family, a group home run by Children's Services, or a group home run by another organisation or supported lodgings.

If you are in care, you will have a Social Worker who will work with you. They need to visit you regularly, and you will have a Review at least every six months. This Review looks at how well you are in care and is an opportunity to talk about plans for your future. You can ask for a meeting / Review at any time if you feel there is something that needs everyone to sit down with the Independent Reviewing Officer and sort out.

You might be Accommodated or on a Care Order.

**Accommodated** - When your parent has agreed to you being cared for by the Trust, your parents still have legal responsibility for you.

**Care Order** - This is given by the Court to protect children and young people from being harmed. When this happens, the Trust shares parental responsibility with your parent(s).

## Where Will I live?

When we try to find you the right place to live we will think about your race, religion, language and culture. We will try to find you somewhere you feel comfortable and with people who understand your needs.

**Group Homes** - It is a place where one or more children live with trained carers who are there 24 hours a day to care for you. You will have a key worker who works in the group home and will spend time with you. They will tell you about all the things that you need to know. You will have key work sessions and talk about how things are going for you. They make sure that things go as well as they can and ensure you are cared for. You will have your own room and be given a key to your room. You will get pocket money every week and will get a choice about the meals that are cooked. You will be able to go on trips out, participate in group activities and go on holidays.

You can also:

- Have your friends over to visit and to stay for tea
- Stay up later at weekends, but there is a set bedtime in the week so you can get up for school
- Celebrate your birthdays with a party
- Have your phone as long as you use it responsibly
- Participate in residents' meetings where you get to have your say about what happens in the group home

There will be rules that you will need to follow. If you don't follow the rules, there are consequences called 'sanctions.' This means that you might miss out on trips out and other treats.

**Foster Care** - If no one in your family, like grandparents, aunts or uncles, can look after you, your Social Worker will find you another family that can look after you. These are Foster Carers and their family. Your Foster Carers will provide a safe place for you to live temporarily or permanently and care for you.

**Foster Families** - come in all shapes, ages and races. Some have a female and male carer, some just a female or a male carer, two females or two male carers. They could be Black, White or Asian. They may have their children around your age, or their children may be grown up. They may also be looking after other foster children. We only use grownups who have been trained and understand the things you are going through. You may stay with your foster family for a few days, or for a longer time. You will have your own bedroom. We will try to help you stay at your school if this is possible. If not, we will find a new school near to your foster family's home. You will be able to see your parents, family and old friends if it is safe. This may be at your foster home or a family centre. You may be able to phone your parents, brothers, sisters and old friends. Your Social Worker will talk to you about your family.

**Adoption** - There is a process where the Court rules that someone else is permanently given the parental legal responsibility to parent you. This responsibility is transferred from your biological or legal parent or parents. Adoptive parents are now your legal parent, but you will be supported to maintain links with your biological birth parents.



## Leaving your family and how it feels

Leaving your family and moving into a group home or foster care can leave you with a mixture of emotions. These can include feeling scared, shy, confused, anxious or stressed because you don't know the people you'll be staying with or why you have to live with them. You might feel sad, lonely or isolated if you have to move to a different area away from your family and friends. You might feel a loss of control and unsettled leaving familiar surroundings and people, especially if you and your siblings have moved to different placements. Amongst all this, you might also feel hopeful, happy that things are going to get better.

## Welcome Pack

It might not be easy settling in, but your Social Worker will give you a Welcome Pack; a backpack full of helpful information.

## What can I expect from my Social Worker?

A Social Worker is a qualified professional who the Trust employs to help you and do what is best for you. Your Social Worker's job is to help you and your family when you go through difficult times. Every child or young person in foster care has a Social Worker and they will also work with your family to try and make it possible for you to return home if that is what is best for you.

The plans that are made for you are called 'Care Plans' and these cover things like where you will go to school, who will take you to the doctors if you are ill, and how often you will see your family. If you are old enough you can have a copy of your Care Plan. Your Foster Carer should have a copy too.

Your Social Worker will:

- Visit you at your foster home to tell you about the plans for you, hear your views, and ask how things are going.



- Provide your Foster Carer with all the information they need to care for you, e.g. information about you, likes and dislikes, achievements etc.
- Invite the Foster Carer to meetings with other professionals about the plan for you.
- Agree with the Foster Carer on how they are going to care for you.
- Give the Foster Carer a written schedule about your contact with family and friends.
- Ask the Foster Carer to attend meetings and appointments regarding your education and health.
- Provide advice, guidance, and assistance to help the Foster Carer meet your needs according to your Care Plan.

If you are worried or don't understand something, tell your Social Worker to explain things to you or see your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) in private.

## What can I expect from the Supervising Social Worker?

Every Foster Carer has a Supervising Social Worker (SSW) employed by the Trust to supervise and support the Foster Carer in caring for you. A crucial part of their role is to help build valuable, professional relationships where everyone, including you, can communicate openly and honestly to meet the NMS. The SSW focuses on meeting your needs by supporting the carer with your day care and making sure the carer is OK.

The Supervising Social Worker will:

- Visit your foster family regularly every 4-6 weeks.
- Talk to you when they visit as they need to know you and make sure they support the Foster Carer(s) to care for you.
- Talk to the other children in the foster home when they visit to see how you are all getting on.
- Offer practical and emotional support to the Foster Carer(s).
- Provide information, advice and guidance for the carer(s) and their families.
- Liaise with your Social Worker - they will communicate regularly.
- Liaise with other professionals and support their working partnership with the Foster Carer(s).

## What can I expect from my Foster Carer?

As well as providing day-to-day care for children, Foster Carers are expected to advocate on behalf of the child, support their educational, health and social wellbeing, manage sometimes challenging behaviour, keep records, attend meetings and work with the broader team, as well as developing their skills.





## Why I am Rude

Poem by Sarah Dillon

The Centre of Excellence in Child Trauma

I am rude because I like the feeling of power and control it gives me, especially as I often feel very out of control on the inside.

I am rude because it gives me an outlet for all my pent up emotions that I struggle to identify.

I am rude because people in my past spoke to me or each other that way and I'm used to it.

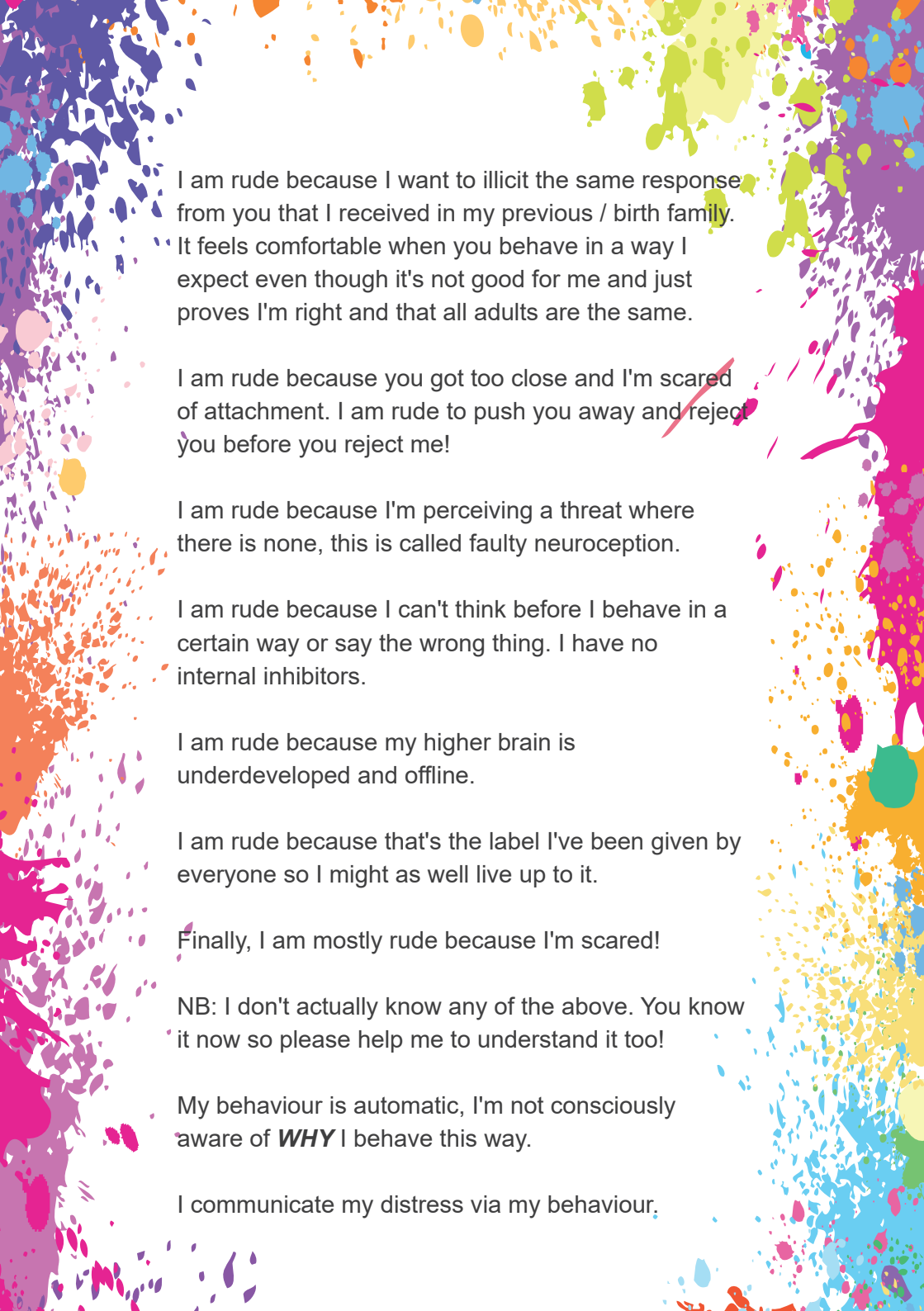
I am rude because it gets me attention, even if it's negative attention.

I am rude because I know it winds you up and I like to be in control of you so I don't feel as scared.

I am rude because I'm tired, hungry, thirsty or just want a cuddle, but don't realise I'm feeling these things.

I am rude because I've got heightened levels of cortisol in my body which pushes me into fight, flight or freeze.

I am rude because you've done something nice with me or for me and I want to remind you that I'm a bad kid. That's because on the inside I'm filled with shame and have a negative internal working model. I don't believe I deserve good / nice things so I sabotage everything.



I am rude because I want to illicit the same response from you that I received in my previous / birth family.

It feels comfortable when you behave in a way I expect even though it's not good for me and just proves I'm right and that all adults are the same.

I am rude because you got too close and I'm scared of attachment. I am rude to push you away and reject you before you reject me!

I am rude because I'm perceiving a threat where there is none, this is called faulty neuroception.

I am rude because I can't think before I behave in a certain way or say the wrong thing. I have no internal inhibitors.

I am rude because my higher brain is underdeveloped and offline.

I am rude because that's the label I've been given by everyone so I might as well live up to it.

Finally, I am mostly rude because I'm scared!

NB: I don't actually know any of the above. You know it now so please help me to understand it too!

My behaviour is automatic, I'm not consciously aware of **WHY** I behave this way.

I communicate my distress via my behaviour.



## What's a Review?

Whilst you are in care you will hear about Reviews. These are meetings where the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) checks to ensure that everyone is doing what they should do to ensure you are cared for properly, and all know what will happen to you and make arrangements for you to see your family. Reviews are also really important for you to have your say.

Ask your Foster Carer or Social Worker when your Review is. They have to be every six months, but you can ask for one to happen sooner if you are worried about something.

You can choose where you want your Review to happen; at your home, office, or elsewhere, who you want to be there and what you think should be discussed. Your Social Worker should be asking you, and you will also be sent a form to fill in asking for your feedback. If you cannot fill in the form by yourself, you can ask someone for help if you want.

At the meeting, your IRO will want to talk about many things to make sure you are alright. They will want to hear from your carers to see if they are doing their job and your teachers to know if you are getting all the help you should at school.

Your Social Worker will be asked if they are visiting you enough and listening to what you say. They will want to know if you are helped to keep fit and healthy. They will want to check that you are in touch with your family and old friends. They will ask you and you can either speak or, if you would prefer, you can write things down.

## **Advocacy**

An Advocate can:

- Speak up for you
- Attend meetings with you and help you get ready for meetings
- Help you to make a complaint
- Meet up with you in a place where you feel comfortable
- Speak to different workers for you about the things you are unhappy about and want to change
- Give you information about your rights
- Listen to you without judging you
- Help you to make your own decisions

If you disagree with a decision that has been made, an Advocate can help you to get your voice heard.

If you have a disability, or complex health needs, an Advocate can work alongside your carer or worker to help you with whatever you need to be heard.



## Participation

Article 12 of The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says:

*"You have the right to say what you think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect you and to have your opinions taken into account."*

All adults responsible for looking after children and young people have a role to play in ensuring your rights are met. This includes your Social Worker, Reviewing Officer, Foster Carer and Teachers.

One of the essential things about participation is that all adults understand that you have ideas and opinions to communicate, no matter how young you are.

We have a responsibility to let you have the chance to share your ideas, wishes, and feelings and the skills to do this.

If you have a disability or have difficulty speaking out, we can help you with special tools.

Participation is about making everyday choices. This could be about where you go, what you wear and who you see. It is also about sharing your opinions with adults to ensure you get what you need when you need it.

Your Foster Carers, Social Worker, and Reviewing Officer must work with you to find out what you want to happen and your views when making decisions that affect you.

This could be about moving home, changing school, or deciding where to go to college.



## Children in Care Council (CICC)

In Birmingham, all children in care and care leavers can participate in decisions that affect their lives. We strive to ensure that they have access to the services they need and the opportunity to shape how these services are planned and delivered.

Our Children in Care Council (CICC) plays a vital role in ensuring children and young people with care experiences have a say in their care and in the things that matter to them. You can contact them at [advocacy@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:advocacy@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk) or 0121 303 7217.

## Independent Visitors

Children need an adult in their life who take an interest in what they do. For most young people, this adult will be a parent or another family member. But there are many children and young people who do not have such a close relationship. Independent Visitors provide a caring adult for children in care. They will listen to you and be there for you. They are volunteers who the Trust does not employ, and they don't get paid. Volunteers do it because they want to support you!



## How do we find you an Independent Visitor?

At the Trust, we will work with charities that provide Independent Visitors. They will make sure that all people who want to be an Independent Visitor are police checked and trained to be kept safe.

It is up to you whether you have an Independent Visitor. If you decide you want one, we will chat with you about what things you like to do to find the right person for you.

We will carefully plan your first meeting with an Independent Visitor and then take things from there. Remember, it does take some time to get to know someone. They usually visit about every two weeks.

## Compliments, Comments and Complaints

You may want to share your views, good or bad, about how you feel a worker or service has treated you. It's usually easier to pay someone a compliment, but you may find you need a little help to feedback when there has been a problem. This is where you may choose to complain to the service by using its complaints procedure. Before you do this, you may want to try talking with your Social Worker, Foster Carer or Independent Reviewing Officer, who may be able to help you sort the problem out. If not, you can make a formal complaint.

Things I can complain about:

- Staff have been impolite to you
- Being bullied by staff or other young people
- You have been treated unfairly
- Social Services is not helping you
- Your Social Worker does not return your calls
- Something you have complained about before keeps on happening

Don't feel guilty if you need to complain, you have the right to complain. You will not get into trouble and your complaint will be taken seriously.

## Stage One

Stage One is for you to talk to your Social Worker, Foster Carer, Service Manager, or an adult you trust. If you've already done that and still want to contact us, send us your feedback online at [www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/contact](http://www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/contact) by clicking on 'give feedback or complain about our service.'

## What happens next?

Birmingham Children's Trust aims to contact you within two working days to let you know we've received your complaint. An officer from the service being complained about will be appointed to investigate your complaint within 10-20 working days (depending on the complexity of the complaint). They will provide you with a written response.

If you remain dissatisfied with the response you will, with an officer from the service you are complaining about, discuss the issues of concern and agree on a way forward. We hope we can help complaints to be resolved quickly.

An independent mediator chairs the meeting, and somebody from the Customer Relations Service will also be present at the mediation meeting to oversee the process and take notes of any actions agreed. Mediation can be used at any stage of the complaints process. If you remain dissatisfied with the Stage One process you can request an independent investigation at Stage Two of the complaints process.

You can contact the Customer Relations Service whose details can be found on page 40 of this booklet.



## Stage Two

An Independent Investigating Officer will be appointed to investigate your complaint. You will receive a copy of the Independent Investigating Officer's report and a response letter within 25-65 working days from the senior manager concerned. You will be notified of any delays.

Suppose you remain unhappy with the findings, a mediation meeting can be arranged, which is chaired by an independent mediator. It is a process where the complainant meets with an officer from the service they are complaining about to discuss the issues of concern and agree on a way forward. Somebody from the Customer Relations Service will also be present at the mediation meeting to oversee the process and take notes of any actions agreed.

If you remain dissatisfied with the stage two process, you can ask the Independent Review Panel to look at your complaint (Stage Three).

## Stage Three

If you'd like the Independent Review Panel to look at your complaint you need to let us know within 20 working days of receiving a letter and report from the manager of the service you're complaining about, following the Stage Two investigation.

The Panel is independent from the Council. Members of the Panel will look at the way your complaint's been handled and give you chance to have your say. They will consider the findings of the investigation into your complaint and send you a copy of their report within 5 working days of your review. The service or Council will review the findings / recommendations of the Panel and send you a letter within 15 working days. If you're still unhappy with the report you can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman at [www.lgo.org.uk](http://www.lgo.org.uk)

## Reading Your File

If you would like to look at your care file you need to send a letter to Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT) asking to see it.

If you are unsure what to write in your letter you can ask your Foster Carer or an Advocate to help you. If there is information in your file about other people such as your parents, friends or brothers or sisters, this information will be taken out before you can look at it. This is because the law says that you cannot look at other people's personal information. It will take some time for a worker from BCT to get your file ready for you to read.

Social Services are allowed to take 40 working days to get your file ready for you to read. They will then contact you and arrange a time for you to go and see your file. You can ask for your own copy of the information in your file. If you are 18, you have the right to see your file. If you are under 18, BCT will decide if they think you are old enough to understand and look at the information in your file.



## Other Important Services

### Health Team at Birmingham Community Health Care

We are a team of nurses and doctors based at the St. Stephens Centre, 171 Nineveh Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21 0SY. This service is for all children who are in the care of the Birmingham Local Authority. When you first come into care, a nurse from our team will get in touch with you.

What we do:

- We can give you a health check.
- Your nurse can talk with you and give you advice about your health.
- We can put you in touch with other services if you need them.
- We will also make a health plan just for you and address any identified health issues and signpost to other services as required.

The nurse will come to talk to you about your health every year. If you have any worries or questions you can ring and speak to your nurse on **0121 466 3640**. The team generally works from 8am - 5pm, but the nurses offer flexible appointments outside of these hours.

### Education (Virtual Head)

The Birmingham Virtual School organises educational services for children in care. They understand that things can be difficult for you at school / college / university, so they want you to have every opportunity to do well.

The Virtual School Headteacher leads the team; their role is to monitor and keep the educational performance of all children in care on par or better than their peers. They monitor the progress of all Birmingham's



children in care as if they were in one school / college / university and advocate for you to make sure you are supported at all stages of your education and have the best opportunities to be successful in your adult lives.

They also have Virtual School Team Managers, Education Officers, Education Support Advisers, and Placement Officers in the team.

They work in partnership with your school / college / university, Social Worker, family, and other key professionals to ensure the best education for you.

You can contact them on:

 0121 464 6599

 [birminghamvirtuelschool@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:birminghamvirtuelschool@birmingham.gov.uk)

## Youth Offending Team

Birmingham's Youth Offending Service works to tackle youth offending by:

- Getting involved with young offenders, their families, and communities earlier so that young people offending does not become a habit.
- They try to understand why young people offend and help to develop ways to prevent offending behaviour.
- Working with communities to help young people get a sense of ownership and pride in where they live and personal responsibility and concern for those around them.

Offending can include the following:

**Anti-social behaviour** - is behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to a person, a group of people you don't live with, a community or generally harms the wider environment, such as public spaces or buildings.

**Criminal Damage** - Damaging property that does not belong to you, such as scratching someone's car, throwing a stone at someone's house window or kicking a wall or door in.

**Threatening and abusive language** - Making threats to others even if you do not intend on carrying it out.

**Drug offences** - is having in your possession, owning, or carrying a controlled / illegal drug or substance, or producing, supplying and growing it.

**Knife crime** - is a crime that involves a knife. Knife crime includes: carrying a knife; trying to buy a knife if you are under 18; threatening someone with a knife; owning a banned knife; injuring or fatally





wounding somebody with a knife; intent to damage or harm somebody with a knife; a robbery or burglary where a knife was carried as a weapon.

**Theft** - Taking something that does not belong to you without permission, like a mobile or taking something from a shop without paying for it like sweets or a pair of trainers.

**Burglary** - also called breaking and entering and sometimes housebreaking, is illegally entering a building or other areas to commit a crime, such as theft.

**Sexual Assault** - is any sexual act that a person did not consent to or is forced into against their will. It is a form of sexual violence and includes rape, or other sexual offences, such as groping, forced kissing, child sexual abuse or the torture of a person in a sexual manner.

If you do any of these things you will be arrested and taken to the police station. The police will ask you if you need to get in touch with a solicitor or family member. If you are under 17 and cannot find an adult to sit in the police interview with you, then a worker from the Youth Offending Team will do this instead.

The police will take a photograph of you, take a copy of your fingerprints and DNA, where you may receive a warning, a final warning, or go to Youth Court.

At the Youth Court you can be given Youth Court Orders. When a young person pleads or is found guilty of an offence the Youth Court may impose an Order on them or their parents which we are responsible for supervising.

To find out more about how young people are sentenced visit [www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk](http://www.sentencingcouncil.org.uk)

## Moving on / Leaving Care

You must start as early as you can in gaining the skills you need for independence. For instance, keeping the home tidy, laundry, washing up, budgeting, shopping, and travelling alone. Your Social Worker will help you to start making plans from around 15, but you could start earlier with your Foster Carer if you like. These plans are to get you ready for when you leave care.

Some young people would like to leave their foster home as soon as they are 18 and move into their own place, and others would like to stay on with their Foster Carer after 18. Staying with your Foster Carer after 18 is called 'Staying Put'.

Staying Put is an agreement between you and your Foster Carers. The Staying Put arrangement is not the same as a fostering situation. You are now a tenant living with your former Foster Carer, who in effect, becomes your landlord / lady. You are now a young adult (not a foster child) who has left care. You are entitled to support a young person who has left care and be allocated a Personal Advisor. The Foster Carer is no longer acting in the capacity of Foster Carer for that young adult; they are their 'former Foster Carer'. The foster placement becomes a 'Staying Put' arrangement.

Your former Foster Carer may still be fostering younger children, so is still a Foster Carer to them, but your situation is now different.

### **My New Home (If I decide to move)**

Most young people going into independent living move first into Supported Lodgings (lodgings in someone's house and getting help and support from them) or to a supported accommodation project (where you will live either alone or sharing a home and get regular use from a team of workers) or a supported tenancy (your own flat but with help and support from staff). When you feel ready, you can then usually move into a flat of your own.



## Pathway Plan

Your Social Worker will help you by talking about your future and mapping out a 'Pathway Plan.'

This Pathway Plan should be prepared before you become 18 or stop being in care. Your Pathway Plan must be considered at your care Review chaired by the young person's IRO. Your Social Worker will complete that plan with you and must focus on your needs and priorities.

They must also, if possible, consult with:

- Your parents, other adults with parental responsibility, and relevant members of their wider family network.
- Your current carer and any prospective future provider of housing and accommodation support.
- Your designated teacher, college tutor or other educational professionals familiar with your learning needs and educational objectives.
- Any Independent Visitor appointed for you.
- Designated nurse for children cared for by the Trust, or any other medical professional providing health care or treatment, named in your health plan.
- Any Personal Advisors already appointed to support you.
- Your IRO.
- Any Advocate acting for you.

Your Pathway Plan will:

- Work out what type of accommodation will be best suited to you

- Look at the relationship you want with your family
- Sort out the support that is on offer
- Look at the education or training you are aiming for
- Explain the money you will have to live on
- Look at any cultural or identity needs you have
- Set out the people who are there to help you

The plan will also help work out when you will move over to the BCT Leaving Care Service.

### **Personal Advisers (PA)**

Once you stop being in care or reach legal adulthood at age 18, the Local Authority will no longer be required to provide you with a Care Plan and coordinate your care. You now have a Pathway Plan. The Local Authority must now appoint a PA to support you.

The PA will now be your key contact, follow your Pathway Plan, and ensure that you get the right kind of support. You should know who they are and have their contact details so that throughout your transition to adulthood, you can rely on regular support from your PA. Your Pathway Plan will be reviewed every six months and more often if you or your PA want. The support will continue up to 21 and beyond this, if you are still in education.


Your PA will be keen to help you get into employment, education, or training so that you can become financially independent and encourage you to look after your health and develop your leisure interests. The BCT Leaving Care Service will want to know your views about the help and support you are being given and anything that can be done to improve it.



## Important contacts


### **Birmingham Children's Rights & Participation Service**

 The Lighthouse, 100 Alma Way, Birmingham, B19 2LN

 0121 303 7217

### **Birmingham Children's Trust Customer Relations Service**

 PO Box 17342, Birmingham, B2 2DW

 0121 303 5161, option 2 (answer machine service available)

 [customerrelations@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk](mailto:customerrelations@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk)

### **Birmingham City Council Rights & Participation Service**

 0121 303 7217

 [advocacy@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:advocacy@birmingham.gov.uk)

### **Birmingham Community Health Care**

 St. Stephens Centre, 171 Nineveh Road, Birmingham, B21 0SY

 0121 466 3640

### **Birmingham Virtual School**

 0121 464 6599

 [birminghamvirtualschool@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:birminghamvirtualschool@birmingham.gov.uk)

### **Birmingham Youth Offending Service**

 Kingsmere, 18 Gravelly Hill North, Birmingham, B23 6BQ

 0121 464 0600

### **Children's Commissioner for England**


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

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



## Childline

Counselling service for all children and young people.

 0800 11 11 (free 24 hours)

 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## Forward Thinking Birmingham

The city's mental health partnership for 0-25 year olds.

 5th Floor, 1 Printing House Street, Birmingham, B4 6DF

 0300 300 0099 (or 0800 915 9292 for 24/7 crisis line)

 [www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk](http://www.forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk)


## National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Provides children and young people with advice about their rights.

 [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)

## Rights4U

Find out about your rights or ways to get your voice heard.

 0800 528 0731

 [www.rights4u.org.uk](http://www.rights4u.org.uk)

## Ofsted

 Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD


 0300 123 1231

 [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

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

## Umbrella (Sexual Health Services)

 Nuffield House, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, B15 2TH

 0121 371 4852

