

# Your Guide to

# Being in Care

15 - 18 Year Olds



**DARLINGTON**  
Borough Council



## What does Foster Care mean?

Foster Care means that you will live with a foster family. This family will be your carers, as you are not able to live with members of your family. This is known as “going into Care” or “being Looked After”

There are lots of reasons why young people are sometimes not able to live with their family. You might have been neglected or maybe you just need to

be cared for in a different way.

It is important that you are properly looked after and your foster family will make you feel safe, comfortable, give you the privacy you need as a teenager and work with you to develop the independent living skills you need during your transition into adulthood. These could include cooking, budgeting and housekeeping skills.

## What does Residential Care mean?

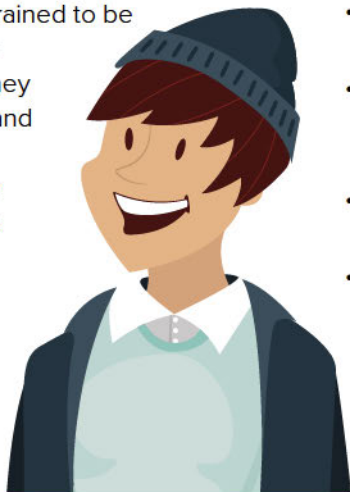
Residential Care means you will live in a residential children’s home. The staff in the home will take care of you when

you are not able to live with your family or other relatives and friends.

## What is a Carer?

A Carer is someone that looks after young people if they need to live away from home. A Carer can be a foster carer (who may also be a family member or friend) or a member of staff in a residential children’s home.

Carers are trained to be able to look after you. They will understand the reasons why you are looked after.



Your Carer will:

- Help you to be healthy and safe
- Help you have fun
- Help you make choices about your future
- Help with your school or college work
- Help you grow and have aspirations for your future and become more independent
- Keep you in touch with people you care about
- Ask what you think and listen to your views

## Moving to live with your Carers

A Social Worker will take you to your Foster Carer's house or residential children's home so that you can meet them and everyone who lives there.

You will be able to take your clothes, games and books with you. You can also take photographs and any special things with you.

Your Carer will make sure you eat well and teach you how to cook for yourself. They will wash and iron your clothes but may ask you to help too as you are

becoming older and need to learn new skills. They will make sure you have everything you need and help you with school or college work.

Your Carers will also take you out for trips and may take you on holiday.

Carers will ensure you have some pocket money and a bank account to make you more independent. An Independent Living Skills Booklet is available so speak to your Social Worker if you would like a copy.

## Seeing your family & friends

Your Social Worker will try to make sure that if you have brothers and sisters that you can all live together with the same Carers. If this cannot happen, then your Social Worker will make sure that you are able to keep in touch with each other.

If there are people you want to see or people you don't want to keep in touch

with, then you can talk to your Carer, Social Worker or Personal Advisor about this.

Sometimes it is good to see your family, but sometimes it might not be possible, or it might upset you. Your Social Worker will talk to you about "contact or family time" and will make sure that your Carers know your plan.

## School/College

Your Carers will make sure that you get to and from school or college and that you have everything you need for this.

You will continue to go to your usual school or college where at all possible.

You will receive support from the Virtual School, your Social Worker and Personal Advisor. If you are attending college you will be entitled to a 16-19

year old bursary, this can help with travel, food and equipment costs.

Speak to your Personal Advisor to find out more.



## Your Health

When you go to live with a Carer you will have a medical check with a health professional to make sure that you are keeping well and are healthy. If you need any treatment your Carer will make sure that this happens for you. If you feel unwell your Carer will make sure you receive support to go and see your Doctor or if you feel upset, they will find someone who can help you talk about how you are feeling such as a Therapeutic Social Worker or Psychological Well-being Practitioner.

Your Social Worker will make a referral for a Health Passport when you are 16, this will provide you with an understanding of your and your family's health history.



## Your Care Team

### Social Worker

While you are in care your Social Worker will visit you and spend time talking with you.

They will also help you talk about how you are feeling. Your Social Worker has responsibility for developing your care plan with you, taking on board your thoughts and wishes.

### Personal Advisor (PA)

Their role is different to a Social Worker and they may support you with all areas of your Pathway Plan from the age of 16 up until your 25th birthday dependent upon your eligibility criteria.

### Carers

Your Carer will look after you and support you to make decisions about your life.

### Supervising Social Worker

Foster Carers will have their own Supervising Social Worker. Their job is to make sure your Carers are looking after you properly and have all the support they need.

See Your Journey Through Children's Service leaflet to find out about other professionals you may come into contact with.

## Darlo Care Crew & Care Experienced Forum

Darlo Care Crew is Darlington's Children in Care Council. It is a group of young people aged 11 to 16 who are in care or have been in care. They get together once a month to talk about issues which are affecting young people in care and try to make things better. They do this for example by talking to Senior Managers and attending Corporate Parenting Panel. There are also opportunities to get involved in other activities such as Regional Children in Care Council meetings.

Around the age of 16 if you want to keep being involved and helping to shape services for young people who have moved into Leaving Care you can join the Care Experienced Forum.

This group again meets monthly to discuss issues facing young people, for example around learning to live independently and improving access to other Services.

Both groups also have lots of fun and have a more social side such as Christmas Parties, trips and taking part in activities.

To find out more about either group speak to your Social Worker, PA or contact your Participation Officer.

# DARLO CARE CREW



## Looked After Review (LAR) & Pathway Plans

During the time you live with your Carers there will be meetings called Looked After Reviews. The meeting will look at what it is like living with your Carers and other aspects of your life and will review your Care Plan.

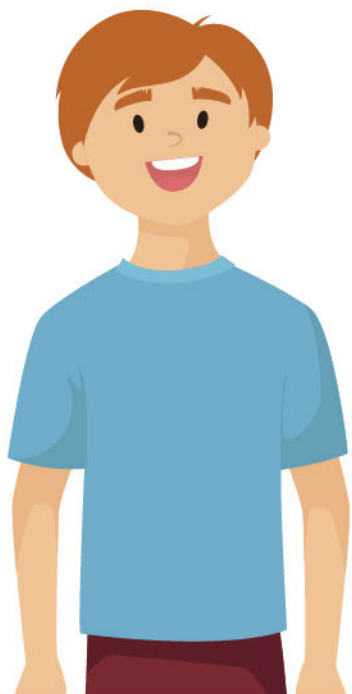
This is your meeting and your opportunity to discuss your Care Plan. Initially a person called an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will chair these meetings but now that you are older, you may wish to take on the role of chair. If you do talk to your IRO about this as it's your right!

Your Carer will support you in these meetings but if you wish to have an

advocate please speak to your Social Worker or PA.

Other people who may attend are your parents, extended family members, a teacher, a school nurse and anyone else that may be important to you. Please tell your Social Worker and IRO who you do and do not want at your review.

Care Plans are replaced by Pathway Plans when you turn 16. A Pathway Plan considers all areas of your life and are used to support you through your journey into adulthood.



## Care Leavers Local Offer & Care Leavers Covenant

The Care Leavers Local Offer details all the support you can expect to receive from the Leaving Care Team and Darlington Borough Council. This support is broken down into sections such as relationships, education, employment, accommodation, finance and health & wellbeing.

Some of the practical support within these sections include reduced price bus passes, Leaving Care Larder and paying for you to return to Darlington from University 3 times a year.

To find out more visit [www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/childrens-social-care/leaving-care-and-the-local-offer/our-local-offer-to-care-leavers](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/childrens-social-care/leaving-care-and-the-local-offer/our-local-offer-to-care-leavers) or speak to your PA.

The Care Leavers Covenant – this is part of the Government's commitment to provide Care Leavers with a greater level of support during the crucial stage of transitioning into adulthood. Its aim is to support Care Leavers with living independently, education, training and employment and finding accommodation. To find out more visit [mycovenant.org.uk](http://mycovenant.org.uk) Or download the Care Leavers Covenant App.





**These are Darlington's promises to our Looked After Children & Care Leavers to ensure they THRIVE!**

Money & Pocket money

Own space & time

Privacy

Celebrations

Personal belongings

Culture

Leisure

Compliment

Opportunities

BE YOURSELF

Holidays

Compliment

Education, Employment and Training

Apprenticeships

Further Education

Extra Tutoring

Pastoral Support

Personal Approach

Job Skills

Achieve

Higher Education

Careers Advice

P.E.P.'s

Participation Worker

Family

I/R/O

Therapeutic Social Worker

Team Managers

Your Care Team

Advocate

Health care team

Carers

Personal Advisor

Education Team

Social Worker

Independent Visitor

Health and wellbeing

Physical health

Positive activities

Live card

Happy

Emotional health

PSHE

Family and relationships

Transport

Wider Family

Friendships

Frequency

Good/Strong relationships

Meet the care team

Contact / Family time

Good Quality placements

Life Story Work

How are you feeling?

Nursery/School

Fun & Activities

Family

People that care for you



# Useful Contacts

## **NYAS National Youth Advocacy Service**

Independent and confidential social and legal advice, information & advocates.

**www.nyas.net** Tel:  
**0808 808 1001**

## **Changing Futures Independent Visitors Service**

A befriending and mentoring service for young people to build relationships based on trust and respect.

**Tel: 01429 891444**

## **Children's Rights Director for England**

The Director will listen to you about your thoughts on how you are looked after. Be heard and find out about your rights.

**www.rights4me.org**  
**Tel: 0800 528 0731**

## **ChildLine**

24 hour helpline for children in distress.

**www.childline.org.uk**  
**Tel: 0800 1111**

## **Ofsted**

An official body that regulates schools & Children's Services.

**www.ofsted.gov.uk**  
**Tel: 0300 123 1231**

## **Darlington Safeguarding Partnership**

We keep you safe while you're Looked After.

**www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk**  
**Tel: 01325 406452**



# Have Your Say!

You are always more than welcome to speak to one of the Team's Participation Officers about ways we can improve things for children and young people in care.

Also we'd love to know what you think about this guide – what you like, which bits were boring, did it help you or how can we make it better?

One way to have your say and share your views is through Mind Of My Own. The One app is a communication tool created by Mind Of My Own which makes it easier for you to express your thoughts, experiences, good news and report any problems to your Care Team.



Ask your carer about downloading the app or when your Social Worker next visits ask if you can use Mind Of My Own with them to record what you are telling them.

To speak to a Participation Officer you can call **01325 405639** or email [mindofmyown@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:mindofmyown@darlington.gov.uk)



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