

## The Right Side of Care

# In Care What is Care?

The leaflets in this pack have been developed with children and young people from Wirral to give you some information when you first become looked after. You can also visit our website for children looked after, young people and care leavers: [www.therightsideofcare.com](http://www.therightsideofcare.com)

# What is Care?

If you are looked after or in care, it means Wirral Council has been given the job of making sure you are safe and properly cared for.

The Children Act (1989) said that when a court is deciding whether a child should go into care or stay at home, the most important thing is what is best for you.

**This leaflet will help you understand what is happening when you are going to be cared for away from home.**

**It can be very different to what you know and there could be lots of questions you will want to ask...**

## Why do some children and young people live in care?

There are lots of reasons why someone might come into care:

- Their parents may be unable to look after them due to illness or family problems, which could include abuse or neglect.
- The courts may feel that their home is not a safe place to live.
- They may be placing themselves or others in significant danger.

## What types of care are there?

- 🗨️ Foster care – most children in care will be placed in foster care. You are cared for by a person or people who are not members of your own birth family. There are different types of foster care.
- 🗨️ Some young people are placed in children's residential homes.
- 🗨️ Adoption is when you legally become part of a new family and they take responsibility for looking after you forever.
- 🗨️ Connected persons or family and friends care is where you are cared for by other family members such as grandparents, aunts or uncles.

## What does the law say?

To help decide what is best for you, the court have to think about:

- 🗨️ How you feel and what you want to happen
- 🗨️ What you need to feel happy and grow up well
- 🗨️ How old you are, what your personality is like and how you would be affected by going into care.
- 🗨️ How well your parents or someone else who cares for you can look after you.
- 🗨️ Whether you have been hurt or not looked after well enough and how likely it is that this could happen again.

## How would I get placed in care?

- 🗨️ An agreement between your family and Children's Services means you can be 'accommodated'.
- 🗨️ Sometimes we need to go to court and ask for a care order if we can't agree about the plan for you.
- 🗨️ The courts only make care orders for children or young people when they feel that the child or young person's health, safety and welfare has to be protected by making such an order.
- 🗨️ This means Children's Services then share responsibility for your care with your parents.
- 🗨️ A care order can last until you are aged 18 years old.

## What else can the courts decide?

- 🗨️ If a child can be adopted.
- 🗨️ If a young person can be brought up in a different religion to the one they would have had if they'd stayed with their family.
- 🗨️ If a child can live outside the UK for more than 28 days.

## What are my rights in care?

Everyone has rights and a responsibility to respect the rights of others.

Laws such as the Children Acts and the Children and Young Persons Act make sure that you are treated fairly, wherever you are living.

## **Your rights include:**

- The right to be helped by the Children and Young People's Department if you are in need of help or support
- The right to health care
- The right to education
- The right to be protected if you are or have been mistreated or harmed
- The right to see what is written about you
- The right to have contact with family and friends
- The right to be treated fairly by the Children and Young People's Department
- The right to have your wishes and feelings taken into account
- The right to complain and be given help to sort out problems.

**When you are in care there are rules about how you should be treated. If you live in a foster home or residential home, you should not be punished in any of the ways listed below:**

- Stopped from having food or drink
- Stopped from seeing or contacting family or friends, or receiving contact from them as punishment
- Hit, slapped, pinched, squeezed, shaken, dealt with roughly or have things thrown at you
- Stopped from getting in touch with your social worker, solicitor or advocate
- Made to wear clothes that would draw unreasonable attention to you
- Stopped from having your usual medicines or seeing a doctor or dentist
- Deliberately stopped from sleeping.

# What is my care plan?

There are lots of reasons why someone might come into care.

Every young person who is looked after must have a care plan. This will say what needs to be done to care for you and who should do it. It is important that you say if you don't agree with your care plan.

## If you disagree with your plan you should speak to:

- Your carer
- Your social worker
- The Participation and Engagement Service
- Your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

You can find phone numbers for useful contacts on the back of this leaflet.

## The plan will explain things like:

- Why you are being cared for
- If there is a care order put in place for you
- Who will keep in touch with school
- Who will take you to the doctors if you are ill
- Who you should continue to see for example family and friends
- Who will help you if you have difficulties
- How long you will be cared for

Other people, who know you, like teachers or health visitors, will also help to make the plan. This will be written down and you will be given a copy.

We want to make the best plan for you. After your care plan is drawn up we will have a meeting to check you understand your plan and are happy with it. This is called a review meeting.

## Do I have to go to my review meeting?

By attending your review meeting you can let everyone know how you are getting on and share your thoughts.

Before the meeting, your independent reviewing officer (IRO) will ask to speak to you to find out:

- How you are feeling about your care
- If you are happy with your care plan
- Your thoughts, wishes and feelings.

## Can I find out more?

Look at the other leaflets in this pack which explains things in more detail.

# Some useful contact numbers

## **Childline**

Tel: 0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## **Childrens Commissioner for England**

Tel: 020 7783 8330  
[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

## **Childrens and Young People's Participation and Engagement Team**

Tel: 0151 678 1936  
Mobile: 07799 861 764

## **Childrens Complaints Officer**

Tel: 0151 666 5677

## **Bullybusters**

Tel: 0800 169 6928  
[www.bullybusters.org.uk](http://www.bullybusters.org.uk)

## **Ofsted**

Tel: 0300 123 1231  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

## **Wirral Council Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT)**

Tel: 0151 606 1008

## **Wirral Council Emergency Duty Team:**

Tel: 0151 677 6557