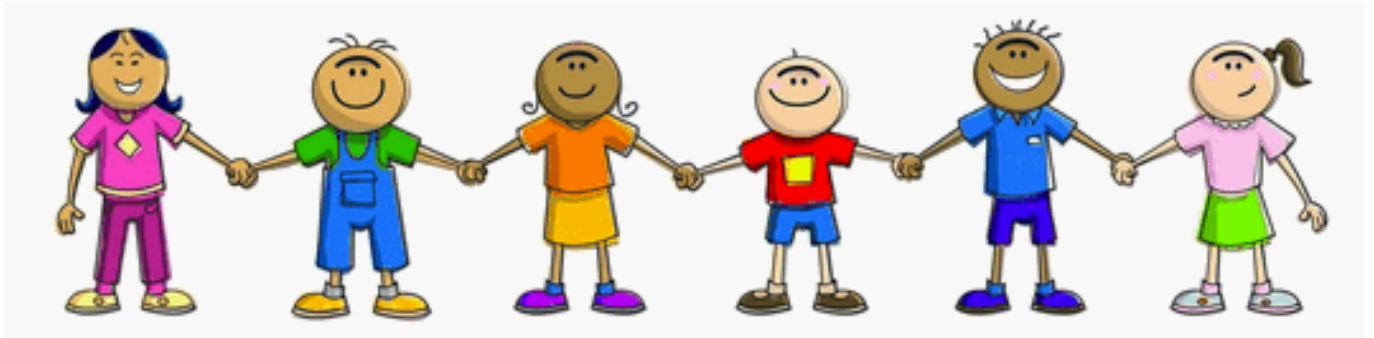


Looked After Young People

– A Guide



This booklet will give you some information about what will happen while you are a looked after child. It should help you to understand:

- How plans for your care and future are made
- What a review is, and what happens at a review
- How your wishes and feelings are listened to, and what to do if you feel that they aren't being listened to
- What to do if you're worried, upset or angry
- Where to go for help, advice or support



Doncaster Children's
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What is a looked after young person?

A looked after young person is someone under the age of 18 who isn't living with their birth parents and the local authority is helping to care for them. This can mean:

- Their mum and/or dad have agreed that they will be looked after
- The court has made them subject to an interim or full care order (which means that they can't be looked after by their mum and/or dad anymore)

Some looked after young people still live at home but are subject to a section 31 care order. If this happens, there are still a lot of rules about where the child lives, and who they see, to make sure that the child is safe and happy. Every child is different. Your social worker should be able to explain why you are looked after and what this means for you.



What is going to happen while I am a looked after young person?

Becoming a looked after young person can make you feel lots of different emotions such as; angry, sad, happy or confused. All of these emotions are normal.

While you are looked after, the local authority will make decisions with you about how to keep you safe and happy. This is called a care plan. Your care plan is talked about at reviews. A review is a meeting where decisions are made about your life and your future. You have an independent reviewing officer (IRO) who chairs your reviews.

Who are the people that will be at my review?

Your IRO and your social worker will work together with your foster carers, school and health professionals to create your care plan. Your parents or other family members may attend as well, if it is safe and you want them to. Your social worker will ask you who you would like to go to your review. If there is someone that you don't want to go to your review, the IRO can see them at another time. You can choose who goes to your reviews, and who doesn't.

Your thoughts and feelings are the most important of all, and you can go to the reviews if you want to. If you don't want to, you still have the right to tell everyone how you are feeling. Your IRO will speak to you to find out your wishes and feelings, and talk about these at your review. The review is held in a private place that everyone can get to. If you want the review to be held somewhere, you can tell your social worker or IRO, and they will try to arrange this.

What is an independent reviewing officer? (IRO)

An IRO is a social worker who has helped and listened to lots of looked after young people. It is their job to chair your reviews and check that plans are being made for you and your future. They are responsible for making sure that;

- Your care plan is in your best interests (your best interests are the most important!)
- Your wishes and feelings are listened to and taken seriously
- Any problems are listened to and dealt with in your best interests
- Your care plan covers all aspects of your care and future



What is talked about at my review?

The review will be about your care plan, and plans for the future. Your care plan should involve what is going to happen for the weeks ahead, but also for the rest of your childhood until you become an adult. The plan should explain where you are going to live, and who with. The plan can change depending on what happens in your life, but your social worker and IRO will always talk to you about this. You are the most important person, so it is essential that your social worker and IRO know where you want to live until you become an adult. If you change your mind, let your social worker or IRO know, and they will try to arrange this. **If there is something that you don't want to be talked about at your review, you must make sure that you tell your social worker or IRO about this before the review.** They will talk to you about different ways to share this information, and try to work out a plan that you're happy with.



What will be in my care plan?

The care plan is very important. It is a plan to make sure that you are safe and happy. It should try and make sure that;

- You're healthy
- You do as well as you can do at school
- You see the people you care about
- You feel good about yourself
- You're listened to
- Any worries or problems are sorted out as quickly as possible

The care plan is about making decisions, and it should explain **who** is going to do **what**, and by **when**. This is to make sure that you and everyone at your review understands the plan, and what is happening in your life.

What is a Personal Health Plan (PHP)?

Every looked after young person has their own nurse; this is usually your school nurse or specialist nurse. It is their job to make sure that you are the healthiest you can be. They will want to see you at least once a year to talk to you about:

- The food you eat, and how much exercise you do
- How you're growing and developing. They may want to check your eyesight, weight and height
- As you get older, they may want to talk to you about changes in your body and your feelings, and what this means for you
- How you can stay safe and look after yourself as you get older
- Any illnesses or medication you need to take
- How you are feeling about yourself and your life, and how they can help you with this

Just like your social worker and IRO, anything you say to your nurse is confidential. This means that they will not tell anyone about what you say. The only time they would have to tell someone about this is if they think that you or another young person is unsafe. They will always talk to you about this first, and try to explain why this is happening.

What if there is something about my health that I don't want to be talked about?

If there is anything that you don't want the nurse to talk about at your review, let them know. You might also want to let your social worker or reviewing officer know about this as well, so they don't bring it up.

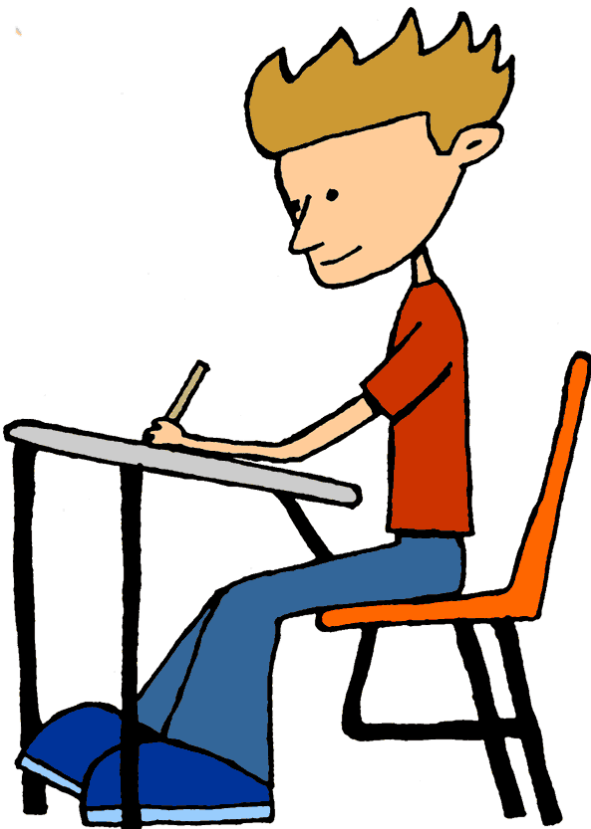


What is a Personal Education Plan (PEP)?

Every looked after young person who is old enough to go to school should have a plan to make sure that they are doing the best they can do in school. The plan should look at:

- How you are doing at school, and if you need any extra help
- If you have help with school at home, with your homework for example
- If you have support to do activities that you're interested in, like sports, art or music
- Your friends, and how well you get on with everyone at school
- If there are any problems in school that are making you or other young people unhappy
- What you want to happen when you leave school, for example if you want to stay in education, or get a job

The meeting to decide your PEP is held once a year, with regular reviews throughout the year. The first meeting is usually at autumn half term when you have settled into your new school year. If you are having problems at school, or there are any big changes that might affect your PEP, the meetings might need to be held more regularly.

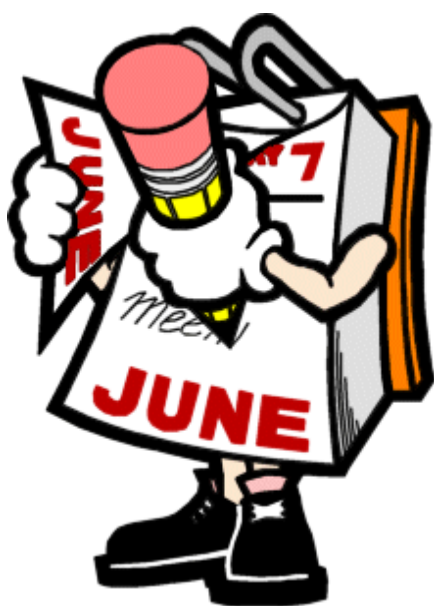


Who goes to my PEP meeting?

Usually it is your foster carer or key worker, a teacher who knows you well, your social worker and you. Other people might be invited as well, such as your parents, your IRO or a learning mentor. If there is someone you don't want to go to your PEP meeting, let your social worker know and explain why. The social worker will talk to you about this and try to make a plan that you are happy with. Afterwards, everyone at the meeting is given a copy of your PEP to make sure that they know what needs to be done.

What happens after the review?

The IRO will write up what was said at your review. They will also write a list of recommendations (things which they think need to be done to keep you safe and happy). These should be done before your next review.



How many reviews will I have?

Your reviews will be held regularly while you are looked after. Your first review should take place within 28 days of you becoming a looked after young person. The second review will be 3 months after the first review. After this, the reviews will be held at least every 6 months, until you are no longer a looked after young person (which could be when you are 18).

How will the local authority make sure that people do the things they promised?

The list of recommendations written by your IRO will be given to everyone who came to your review. It is the IRO's job to make sure that all the things on this list are done before the next review.

If you think people aren't doing the things they promised, it is important that you tell your IRO. They will try to sort this out, and tell you what is happening.



What can I do if I am unhappy or confused about anything?

You can always talk to your social worker or IRO about how you are feeling. If you are unhappy with your care plan you can ask your IRO for an early review meeting to talk about this. You can ask your Social Worker or Carer to request this too.

Who can I talk to?

Remember, **you are the most important person** in all of this. While you are looked after, you have the right to know about your care plan. You also have a right to have your say on any decisions made about you and your life. Your social worker and IRO should support you with this.

My social worker is: _____

Telephone number _____

Their manager is: _____

Telephone number _____

My IRO is: _____

Telephone number _____

Advocates (people who can help you have your say) can be contacted on: _____

If you are unhappy with the support you are receiving you can make a complaint to
01302 736053



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