

Being Looked After By Sutton

We are giving you this booklet to help you understand what is meant by being looked after.

We also want to tell you about how we are going to look after you and the different people you may meet.

We will tell you about how to contact the right people to help you.

We will tell you how to get in touch if you are not happy and you need to tell someone.

Every child or young person is looked after for a different reason.

No booklet is going to be able to tell you about your own particular situation but there are some things that all looked after children and young people will have in common.

We want each one of you to be safe, happy and successful, whether you are looked after for a short time or for many years.

For the rest of this booklet, when we say 'child' we mean any child or young person up to the age of 18 years.

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To Be Inserted:

London Pledge

Sutton Pledge

2. Being Looked After: What Does it Mean?

First of all, we wanted to explain what being 'looked after' means.

You may also hear different ways of describing being looked after. You may hear 'in care', 'accommodated', 'on a Care Order', 'being on short-term breaks'. This leaflet will help try to make sense of all of these.

To help you understand the different ways of being looked after, we need to explain to you what 'parental responsibility' means.

Parental Responsibility

Parental Responsibility (or P.R.) is very important.

A person with parental responsibility is the one who makes the important decisions about the child's life. Some decisions, such as having an operation, or applying for a passport, need

the person with parental responsibility to make that decision.

It is possible for more than one person to have parental responsibility. Your parents are the first people to have parental responsibility. For some looked after children, the Council also has parental responsibility.

'Looked After'

Being 'looked after' means that you will be living somewhere, usually away from your parents, provided by the Children and Families Service (we're sometimes known as Social Services). We work on behalf of Sutton Council.

Different Ways of Being Looked After

Accommodated

Being accommodated means that you are being looked after with the agreement of your parent or parents.

The Council does not have parental responsibility for you.

On a Care Order

To be looked after on a Care Order, a Court will have decided that being looked after by the Council is the best way to keep you safe and plan for your future.

If the Children and Families Service decides to apply for a Care Order it can take many months to make a final decision about whether this is the best plan. While they are making a decision the Court may decide that you should be looked after on an Interim Care Order. Interim Care Orders are temporary.

The Court knows that this is a very important decision and needs to know all of the information that they need to make a decision. That is why it can take a long time.

If you are looked after through an Interim Care Order or a Care Order, the Council will have Parental Responsibility for you as well as your parents.

Children and Families Services will always need to listen to your parents' views, and to your views, about any decision that they take.

Placement Order

If the Children and Families Service believe that the best plan for you is to be adopted, they will apply to the Court for a Placement Order.

If you are being looked after under a Placement Order, then we will be planning for adoption and looking for an adoptive family for you.

There is another leaflet especially for children who are being adopted. If you are looked after under a Placement Order and haven't been given this leaflet, then ask your social worker.

Placed for Adoption

If the plan for you is to be adopted and we have found an adoptive family for you, then you will be placed for adoption with them.

You will be living with your adoptive family for a period before the final Adoption Order.

Your adoptive parents will apply to the Court again for the Adoption Order.

While you are placed for adoption, your adoptive parents will also have parental responsibility for you. They will share this with the Council and with your birth parents.

After the Adoption Order, your adoptive parents will be the only ones who have parental responsibility.

There is another leaflet especially for children who are being adopted. If you are placed for adoption and haven't been given this leaflet, then ask your social worker.

Looked after through a series of short breaks

For some children, they do not need to be looked after full-time.

We may agree with your parents to look after you for short periods regularly.

Even though you are spending most of your time at home, we need to make sure that the sort of care that we have is suitable for you.

Even if it is for a short time, while you are looked after you are legally 'accommodated' (this is explained earlier in this section.)

3. Why Am I being Looked After?

This is the most important question to ask and to know the answer to. This is all about you and it is vital that you know as much as possible.

Even if you *think* that you know why you are looked after, keep asking the people below.

If you find it difficult to remember, ask them to write the reasons down for you.

Children are looked after for many different reasons.

Who Can I Ask?

You can ask:

- Your parents and other members of your family
- Your social worker
- The person looking after you (Section 4 will give you more information about this)
- Your Guardian (Section 7 will tell you more about this)

- Your advocate (section 9 will tell you more about this)
- Your Independent Reviewing Officer (Section 5 will tell you more about this)

If there is something about the reasons for being looked after that you do not agree with or still do not understand, then you could ask to speak to your social worker's manager.

You are also able to make a complaint.

If you do not already have an advocate, you should ask your social worker about this (See Section 9 about advocates.)

There is information at the back of this leaflet about how to make a complaint.

4. Where Will I Live?

Children who are looked after live in different sorts of placements. This section gives you some information about each of them.

Foster Placements

Most children who are looked after live in foster placements.

Fostering is where you will live in a family home. Foster carers will have received training and are approved as having the skills and knowledge to look after children.

Foster homes are all very different from each other. There may be single carers or a couple.

There may be children living in the home, or there may be other adults, such as grown-up children of the foster carers. Every adult will have been checked to make sure they are able to keep you safe and look after you well.

Some foster carers are approved for only one foster child. Some will be approved for up to three. It depends on whether they have enough space in their homes, or whether they have other commitments, such as a job.

Foster carers live in different sorts of homes. Some may live in flats, others in large houses.

When we are looking at whether someone will make a good foster carer, the important thing for us is that they will be able to look after you very well and help you meet all your goals.

Foster carers have their own social worker, called the Supervising Social Worker. It is their job to help and support the foster carer(s). It is also their job to make sure that the foster carer(s) are providing the care that you need.

Most foster carers are approved by London Borough of Sutton and their supervising social worker works for Sutton.

There are also some foster carers approved by Independent Fostering Agencies and they will have a supervising social worker from that agency.

Whoever they are approved by, all foster carers are expected to have high standards.

All families have different ways and different house rules. If there is anything you want to know, then remember to ask. No-one will be upset with you.

If you are still unsure about anything, then ask your social worker to ask for you. Remember the list of people in Section 3. Ask if you're not sure about anything.

Residential/ Children's Homes

Another sort of placement will be a Residential Unit or Children's Home.

There are many types of Residential Units. They will provide homes for different numbers of children or young people.

Some units are mainly for young people to live in for a short time, so that we can decide what is the best plan. Others are designed for children and young people to live in long-term. Some may provide their own education or have a school attached.

All Units will have a guide written for children. If you don't have a copy, ask your social worker to make sure that you get it.

The staff at Residential Units do not live there full-time. There will be a group of staff who work shifts and take turns in 'sleeping in'.

Many Residential Units will have a 'Key Worker' system. This means that there will be one member of staff who will take a particular interest in you. They will be the one to attend meetings and keep in touch with your family and your social worker.

If there is anything that you don't understand, then ask a member of staff. Don't worry if you have been told before. Nobody expects you to remember everything.

All Residential Units will have a Complaints Procedure. If you are not happy about anything, then you can ask for this. If you don't feel able to do this yourself, then ask one of the list of people in Section 3.

Residential Schools

Some young people will attend a boarding school. Most will only be open during the school term and may only have boarding during the week.

If they are not full-time boarding, then you will be staying in another placement at weekends and during school holidays.

A few schools are open all year round and this will be where you will live all of the time.

Most of the pupils at boarding schools are not looked after.

That is the main difference between boarding schools and residential units.

Secure Accommodation

If we are very worried about your safety, then we will apply to a Court for a Secure Accommodation Order. This is very rare. We have to be worried that you are putting yourself at serious risk of harm to do this and that nowhere else will be able to keep you safe.

In Secure Accommodation, you will not be able to go out. It is locked accommodation.

The length of a Secure Accommodation Order is set by the Court. You will have a chance to come to Court and give your point of view. You will have a solicitor to speak for you.

Secure Accommodation Units will also have a Key Worker system (see Section on Residential Units).

You can ask to speak to an advocate as well as having your solicitor. Speak to your social

worker or your key worker about this. There are details at the back of this booklet about how to contact the advocacy service.

Like Residential Units, Secure Accommodation Units will have a Complaints Procedure if you are unhappy about how you are being cared for.

Youth Custody

Young people who are remanded into a Secure Training Unit, because they have been accused of committing a crime, become looked after.

You will be allocated a social worker.

Living at Home

If you are on a Care Order and you are living at home, then you will still be looked after.

This is not a very common arrangement but may be the best plan if we have been able to work with your parents and are now clear that you will be safe living at home.

Because the Council still have parental responsibility, we will be working with your parents to support you.

Placed for Adoption

Adoption means that the adults you have been placed with will apply to become your legal parents.

When you are placed for adoption, your adopters will also have parental responsibility for you, as well as the Council and your birth parents.

Your adopters will apply to the Court for an Adoption Order.

Once you are adopted, only your adopters will have parental responsibility for you.

If you are placed for adoption, there is a separate leaflet giving you information. If you do not have this leaflet, then ask your social worker for a copy.

5. Planning and Reviews

What Will Happen to Me?

It is really important that you understand what is going to happen next.

We have to make a plan for every child that we look after. You, and your parents will be asked about what you want in the plan.

When you are first looked after, we will start with something called a Placement Plan. At this stage, we may not know a great deal about you. The Placement Plan will include how often you are going to see your family, how you are going to get to school, whether you have any special needs about your health. It will also give you some information about where you are living.

Every looked after child is allocated to a social worker.

Your social worker will visit you regularly. He or she will visit you in the first week and after that will visit you at least every four

weeks. You will have their telephone number and you can call them between 9.00 and 5.00 every weekday. If they are not there, you can ask to speak to the duty social worker if you want to leave a message or if there is something urgent that you want to talk about.

Your social worker needs to talk to all of the important people in your life as part of a Core Assessment.

A Core Assessment is a way of bringing together information about you so that we can make the best possible plans with you for your future.

The social worker will speak to:

- Your parents
- Other members of your family
- Your teacher
- Your health visitor or school nurse or doctor
- Your foster carer/ residential staff

If there is somebody important that you would like them to speak to, for example a close friend, then let your social worker know.

If there is anyone that you definitely do not want them to speak to, then let your social worker know. They will listen very carefully to the reasons and explain to you if they still feel that they need to speak to the person.

Confidentiality

That sounds like a lot of people who will know all about your business and your private life.

Your social worker will explain to all of the people that they talk to about how important it is to keep your information confidential. Only the people that have to know will be given any information.

When the Core Assessment has been completed, you will be able to see a copy and your parents will also be given a copy.

If there is anything that you think is not correct, then let your social worker know. If

this is a fact, like your date of birth, then that will be changed. If you don't agree with their opinion, then the social worker can write down that you don't agree, but they may not change what the report says.

Care Plan

The social worker will use the assessment to write a Care Plan for you. The Care Plan tells you what we are aiming to achieve for you while we are looking after you and how we are going to do that.

Child Care Reviews

Child Care Reviews are held at regular intervals and they are a chance to look at the Care Plan and decide if it is still working and whether there needs to be any changes.

The most important person involved in the Child Care Review is YOU.

We really want to hear your opinion about what should happen.

Child Care Reviews are led, or chaired, by an Independent Reviewing Officer, or IRO.

The IRO is not your social worker or their manager. They are called Independent to make sure that the Review takes a good look at the Plan and makes sure it is working for you.

The IRO should spend some time with you on your own to talk about the Review.

As part of the Review there will be a meeting.

Those invited to the meeting will include:

- You
- Your parents
- Your social worker
- Your carer (foster carer, residential worker)
- Your guardian if you have one
- Your advocate if you have one

Other people could be invited such as your teacher, another relative or friend of the family, your school nurse. We will invite the

important people to help us make the best decisions about you. If they can't come to the meeting, they might write something or speak to your social worker. You will be asked who you want to attend, or if there are people you don't want to attend, or if there is some information that you don't want to be passed on to everyone.

The IRO will talk to you about how best you can let everyone know what you want to happen.

You may want to attend the meeting and tell everyone there yourself. Many young people do.

We do know that sometimes it feels hard to speak out in a big meeting.

So, here are some ideas of other ways to make sure your views are heard:

- You might want to let the IRO, or your advocate, or anyone else that you choose, know what it is you want to say and ask them to tell the meeting, but be there

yourself to hear what everyone else is saying.

- You could write down what you want to say.
- Sometimes a drawing is a very good way of letting people know how you feel.
- You could even make a tape or a video recording.

There will be a Child Care Review within one month of the time when you started being looked after.

The second Review takes place three months after that.

Then there will be a Review every six months.

You can contact your IRO between Reviews. If you don't know how to do this, ask your social worker.

Permanence

One of the most difficult things about being looked after can be if you're not sure where

you will be living in the future and who you will be living with.

That is why the most important part of your Care Plan will be about having a plan for permanence. That means finding a place where you know you will be living for the rest of your childhood.

At the time of your second Review, or four months after you have been looked after, we will need to be making a very clear plan about how to make sure you have a permanent home.

Some of the choices are:

- Going home to live with your parents
- Going to live with a relative or family friend
- Living with a foster family
- Living in a residential unit
- Being adopted
- Special Guardianship

It may be that we will take some time to think what the best plan is for you, but the Review will help you to understand what the

plan is and what we are doing to make sure it comes about.

6. Moving

We will try all we can to avoid children and young people having to move placements.

Sometimes, it is necessary and there are times when it is the best thing.

Moving to a Permanent Placement

There are many foster carers who provide homes for children for short periods. If you need to stay looked after on a permanent basis, then we will need to find a different family. That may be either an adoptive family or a permanent foster family.

Another social worker, from the Adoption and Permanence Team will work to identify a family that will be able to look after you.

They will take into account a lot of different things, such as your race, culture and religion, whether there are other children in the family or where they live. They will also talk to you to find out what you think would be the most important things to look for.

When it is time to move, we will plan it carefully and give you time to get to know your permanent family before you move.

Other Planned Moves

There may be other reasons to make a planned move.

Maybe we want to move you closer to your school, or your family.

Again, there will be plenty of time for you to get to know the place where you are moving to.

When it is time for you to move into your own home, this will be another move for you. You will get a separate booklet about Leaving Care.

Unplanned Moves

Unfortunately, there are times when children have to be moved without planning.

There may be something unexpected that happens in the placement.

It may be that it just isn't the right place for you, or that you and the carers find it difficult to live together.

It may be that there are problems between the children that are living in the placement.

We will do all we can to support you if anything like this happens. Thankfully, most children never have to go through these problems.

7. Family Courts

Care Proceedings

At the start of this booklet, we described different ways of being looked after.

When Children's Services believe that a child may be harmed they may go to Court and apply for a Care Order to protect the child. This may have been what happened for you.

The Court will not be able to decide immediately whether to make a full Care Order. If the Court believes that you do need to be looked after while they make a final decision, then they will make what is called an Interim Care Order. Interim Care Orders last for a shorter time.

There are different types of Court.

In some courts, Magistrates make the decisions. There will be three magistrates in court.

In other courts, the decision is made by a judge.

Everyone in the case has their own solicitor, or lawyer, and they will make the case to the magistrate or judge and explain what they believe should happen.

The magistrate or judge needs to know what you think and want. They also want an independent person speaking up especially for you.

That is why the court appoints an independent person called a Guardian.

The Guardian will also appoint a solicitor for you to speak on your behalf at court.

Your Guardian will visit you regularly whilst the Court proceedings are taking place.

Secure Accommodation Proceedings

If we are very worried about your safety, then we will apply for a Secure

Accommodation Order. This means that you will be kept in a secure unit, which is locked.

Again, the court will appoint a guardian and you will have a solicitor to speak on your behalf in court. You will also be able to attend the court.

**These are very different from criminal courts.
If you are ever in trouble with the Police,
then you will get separate advice about that.**

8. Will I Be Able To See My Family?

We want you to make sure that you keep in touch with your family and friends when you are being looked after as long as it is safe for you to see them.

You will often hear the term Contact. This is the term most often used for keeping in touch.

Apart from actually meeting people, you may also be able to keep in touch through the telephone, letters, emails, texts.

If there is someone that you want to be in touch with, then let your social worker, your advocate or your IRO know about them.

The most important thing for us is that you are safe, so it may be that we will spend a little time making sure that any arrangement is safe for you.

9. Advocates, Independent Visitors and Mentors

All children who are looked after, or who have left care, are entitled to an advocate.

The Advocacy Service is independent from the Children and Families Service.

Advocates are trained and they are all checked and approved as suitable to work with children.

Advocates are there for a variety of reasons.

Some of the ways they can help are:

- To help you say what you want to happen**
- To help you when you are very unhappy about something and want to make a complaint (See Section 17 about complaints)**
- To be a friendly, supportive person who you can talk to.**

If you would like to have an advocate, or even if you're not sure and wanted to talk to the Advocacy Service and find out more about it, then speak to your social worker, your carer, or your IRO and they can put you in touch. It's really easy.

If you do not have anyone that visits you regularly from your family, then an Independent Visitor should be appointed. Independent Visitors come from the same service as advocates. Their role is to be a friendly, supportive adult in your life. They may take you out for activities or just spend time with you, chatting, listening and maybe offering you some advice.

You may be offered another type of person known as a mentor. They usually will spend time with you, like advocates or independent visitors, but will be for a shorter period, and will be helping with a particular aspect of your life, such as education, or getting into work.

10. Education

Going to school and getting education is really important and while you are looked after by the Children and Families Service, we will try and help you get the best from your education.

When you become looked after, where it is possible, you should stay in the same school even if for a short time this means going to school in taxi. However, if you are living some distance from your school and are going to stay being looked after then it may mean that you move to a school closer to your placement. You should be involved in discussions around this. Try not to worry about starting somewhere new though, your social worker and carer will make sure you settle in there and you have all the support you need.

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

Every school has a special teacher who works with children and young people who are looked after. This teacher will support you and will

make sure that the school give you help if you need it.

The Personal Education Plan for Looked After Children (PEP)

If you are school age and are looked after you must have a personal education plan (PEP). The PEP is there to keep a record of all-important information to do with your education. It is your personal and individual plan, which looks at what you're good at, and if there is anything you need special help with. It will say what this is and who is going to do this. The PEP takes place in the form of a meeting at your school and is organised by your social worker and is reviewed at least every 6 months. You will have a chance to have your say in this meeting and other people who are involved in your care and education will also have chance to speak.

If you are in care when you turn 16 you will start to prepare for independence and will be allocated a social worker for the Leaving Care Team. You will no longer have PEPs but your

education will be discussed as part of your Pathway Plan.

Looked After Children Education Support Team (LACES)

Sutton has its own mini looked after education team based at the Cottage Carshalton Park called LACES. This team is there to help you get the best possible education. The team can also arrange other types of help, for example tutors and extra support when you are coming up to taking exams. There are three people in the team:

Sarah Summerhayes - 020 8770 6740/4316

She manages the team and works with children and young people who are living away from Sutton

Margaret Broderick - 020 8770 6421

She works with young people in Year 9 - 11

Nuala Falvey - 020 8770 5905

She works with children in primary school and year 7 & 8

11. Health

When you first come into care, you will be offered a health assessment with our local paediatrician. He is a specialised children's doctor with lots of experience.

The health assessment is really just a chat about your health and covers all aspects including your physical, mental, social and psychological health.

It's really important that you attend the first health assessment so that we can collect all the information about your health, this is so that things that may need to be done won't be missed.

If you stay in care for longer than one year, you will be offered an appointment with a nurse at least once a year. If you attend a local school, it is usually your school nurse who will see you. This doesn't have to be in school, quite often, if you prefer, the nurse will see you in your foster home or residential unit. These health assessments are informal, and

really just an opportunity for you to have a confidential chat with a health professional.

Health assessments

Initial health assessment

The doctor will generally want to know how you are feeling and will ask you if there are any issues that you would like to specifically talk about during the health assessment. He'll want to know if you have any worries, and whether you are eating and sleeping well.

He'll also want to know about you generally, for example, how you're getting on at school, and what you like doing.

Specific questions that he may ask you will be about whether you have any worries about your eyes, hearing. If your eyes haven't been tested for a long time, he'll probably suggest that you see an optician later on.

He'll want to know whether you have got a doctor, and whether you have seen him recently. He'll want to know whether you have

been ill in the past, have been in hospital, or whether you have any illnesses that you regularly take medicine for.

The health assessment is confidential. Your social worker and carer will get a summary of the report, which he writes, but things that you discuss won't be written about in great detail in the summary.

At the end of the assessment, he'll write a list of things that need to be done that will make sure you are kept healthy. This will help your social worker write your health plan.

Review health assessment

The review assessment is carried out once a year. Usually this will be with your school nurse, or if you no longer attend school, the Sutton looked after children's nurse will make an appointment to see you.

The nurse will go over the initial health assessment plan, and talk to you about any worries you may have with your health.

She'll talk to you about your physical health, emotional health, sexual health and keeping yourself safe.

Again this assessment is confidential and gives you an opportunity to talk to someone about any health worries you may have

Health plan

When you are in care, your social worker has to write a health plan for you. Normally, the health plan is taken to your review. This is shown to the chairperson of the review, so if there is anything about your health that you don't want to be talked about, it is easier if it is written on the plan.

Your social worker writes the health plan after she gets the summary report from the health assessment. The plan is very simple, it just says what needs to be done to keep you healthy, who is going to do whatever needs to be done, and also when it could be expected to be done.

Your social worker will write this, but you will get the opportunity to comment on the plan.

Keeping healthy

Most people know what to do to keep themselves healthy. Eating well, exercising, making sure they have had all their jabs. Visiting the optician and dentist regularly. Your social worker and foster carer will work hard to help keep you healthy. If you need any books about diet, or exercise you can talk to your social worker or foster carer about this. Also, if there is a sport or leisure activity that you would like to do, ask your social worker or foster carer.

Keeping Safe

Taking drugs, drinking alcohol and smoking are all things that can cause us not to be so healthy. You may have had lots of information about these through school or other places you have visited, for example, Connexions, youth clubs.

There are specialist workers around that can discuss any problems that you would like to talk to if you need to about smoking, drugs or alcohol. Information about how to access services can be found at the back of this booklet.

(Drugs, alcohol, smoking, resources)

Sexual health

Sexual health is something that will probably be discussed at your health assessment. This is really to make sure that you are aware of the sexual health services available in your area. Talking about sexual health can sometimes feel a bit embarrassing, so if you don't want to discuss sexual health at the assessment, that's fine. There are details of how to access information, help and advice in the back of this section of this book

(Sexual health leaflet)

Emotional health

When you are in care, sometimes it helps if you talk to someone about your emotional health. We have two psychologists in Sutton who are available to help you deal with how you are feeling. You can ask your social worker or the health professional who does your health assessment to refer you if you think this may help you sort out some of your feelings. Please see 'Being Sad or Unhappy'.

There are also other agencies that you can go to talk about your emotional health. You can access these services in confidence. More information is given about different services in the back of the book (or wherever)

Liz Ross, is a clinical nurse specialist who works for social services. She can talk to you at anytime about any aspect of your health. You don't have to wait for your health assessment.

She can be contacted either via your social worker, or on 020 8770 6591

12. Being Sad or Unhappy

There are many reasons why children become looked after, but it will have been difficult for every one.

You may be feeling very sad about being away from your family, or what happened at home.

Sometimes, you might be feeling angry.

These sort of feelings can make it very hard to get along at home or sometimes at school. You may not know yourself why you are acting the way that you do.

There are lots of people who want to help you and understand.

For some children, it's useful to have the help of a different sort of trained professional. They have different titles, such as therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist.

Their job is to help children deal with the problems they face. Sometimes they might

meet with you on your own, or sometimes with your carers or your social worker.

They will talk to you about what would be best for you.

If you would like to speak with someone like that, then talk to your carer or your social worker.

13. Leisure and Having Fun

We think it is really important that you should be able to have fun and to have opportunities to do the things that interest and excite you.

Wherever you are living, your carers should organise activities and give you reasonable time and space to play and have a good time.

Like all children (and adults), you do need to be safe. So, carers will make decisions about what is well-organised, or how much freedom you can have depending on your age. Talk to them about what you want to do.

Friends

We want you to keep your old friends and have opportunities to meet new ones.

If you're not sure what the rules are where you live about inviting friends round, then talk to your carers.

Let us know who your friends are and how you would like to keep in touch with them.

Sleepovers

It is possible to spend the night at one of your friends, but you need to talk to your carers about this as far in advance as possible.

Like any responsible adult, they are going to need to know where you are and who you are with, so they will need, at least, to speak to the parents of your friend.

If you have just moved in, then your carers will want to get to know you and your friends before they are likely to give you permission. Remember, their job is to keep you safe, and sometimes that will mean saying no.

If you are accommodated (See Section 2) we may also have to speak to your parents to ask what they think.

Sports or Hobbies

If you already involved in any organised activities like a sports club or dance classes or

Scouts/ Guides, then let us know and we will do our best to make sure you can keep going.

If you'd like to join, then talk to your carers or your social worker.

We won't be able to support everything, but we will do as much as we can to help.

14. Money

Your carers, whether they are foster carers or residential homes, are given some money to provide what you need.

Every household and every home has a budget and they have to plan how they will spend their money, because they won't be able to do everything.

They should provide you with enough good food, enough clothing and toiletries for your everyday needs. They should also be able to help you enjoy your leisure (see Section 13).

In most placements, you should be going on an annual holiday.

For children living in Sutton foster carers we provide a list of the amount of clothing every child should have. Ask your social worker if you want to see the list. It doesn't say that the clothing should all be expensive designer gear, just that it should be good quality.

School age children should receive some pocket money. How much this is might depend on several things:

- Your age**
- What the household rules about pocket money are**
- What other things carers buy already**
- Some residential homes have a set amount for pocket money**

If you don't know what the rules are about pocket money where you are living, then ask your carer or ask your social worker or your advocate, to explain.

Savings

It's a good idea to get into the habit of saving some money. If you would like to open up an account, then talk to your social worker about it.

Learning to budget is a really important skill for the future, especially if you will be moving on to independent living. See 'Leaving Care.'

15. Special Guardianship

Recently, the Government introduced a new sort of Order called Special Guardianship.

Some children and young people who have been living in a foster family for many years feel that they don't want to be looked after any more. They feel that they want to belong to the foster family. On the other hand, they still want to be part of their birth family.

Special Guardianship offers a way to do this, as long as the foster carer wants this as well. There might be some good reasons why they don't want to. For example, they may want to continue to be registered as foster carers or they might be worried that they will get less support.

Once a Special Guardianship Order is made, the Special Guardian has parental responsibility (see Section 2). The Council won't have parental responsibility any longer, but your parents will still have theirs.

The Special Guardian is the one who will make all the major decisions for you.

Relatives are also sometimes able to apply to be Special Guardians.

If you want to know more about Special Guardianship, then ask your social worker.

16. Leaving Care

Preparing and helping young people to leave care and become independent adults is such a big subject that we have written a whole, separate booklet about it.

You will receive a copy when it is nearer the time to leave care.

That booklet also explains the ways we will support you with money.

If you are worried about what will happen to you when it is time to leave care, then talk to your carers or your social worker.

You could also talk at your Review about what career you would like to have and how we can help you to plan for that.

17. What Should I Do If I Am Unhappy?

This is a really important section of this booklet.

The Most Important Thing To Remember Is That If You Are Not Happy About Something We Want To Know About It.

We may not be able to solve every problem.

But, if you don't tell us, then we can't help.

If Someone is Hurting You

Then please tell someone you trust as soon as you can.

Nobody is allowed to hurt you.

Even if the person who has hurt you is looking after you, or they work for the Council, then please tell someone you can trust.

Some examples of people you could tell are:

- Your carer
- Your parent
- Your social worker
- Your teacher
- Your advocate
- Your IRO
- Your Guardian
- The NSPCC
- ChildLine

We will look into what you say very carefully to try to make sure that you are safe and that you are not hurt again.

Bullying

This is a big subject and we also have a separate leaflet about bullying.

Bullying can take place in school, outside of school, or where you live.

If you are worried about this, then please speak to someone you trust as soon as possible.

What Do I Do if I Have A Complaint About the Children and Families Service?

Remember, if you are unhappy about something, however small, then let someone know about it. You can talk to any of the people in the section above

Complaints don't have to be a major thing and most of the time they can be sorted out very easily without anyone being upset.

If you have talked to people about your concerns and they haven't been sorted out, or if you don't feel you can or want to talk to any of these people, you can make a formal complaint by contacting the Complaint's Officer on 0208 770 4946.

There is a leaflet about making complaints and you should be given this at your Review.

You can also contact the Advocacy Service to help you with any complaint. All the numbers you need are at the back of this booklet.

18. What Do I Do If I Want To Give Someone A Compliment?

We learn from when things go well, as well as when things go wrong.

We want the best for you, so as well as hearing about things that go wrong, please also tell us when things are going well for you.

If you think there is someone who has done a really good job, or there is a part of the service you think works well, then let us know.

You could tell one of the people we listed above or you could tell the Executive Head of Children's Services, Lynda Crellin on 0208 770 4007.

19. Getting Involved

There are some formal groups of looked after children.

These groups share experiences with each other. It's a good way to make friends with other children and young people who are having similar experiences to you.

It's also a good way of letting us know whether you think we've got things right.

We are trying to develop more groups.

If you are interested then speak to your social worker.

Contact Telephone Numbers and Addresses

Children' and Families Service **Tel: 020 8770 4799**
The Lodge
Honeywood Walk
Carshalton
SM3 3NX

Advocacy Service: Jigsaw4u **Tel: 020 8687 1384**
40 Mill Green Road **e-mail: infolondon@jigsaw4u.org.uk**
Mitcham,
Surrey
CR4 4HY

Sutton Complaints Officer **Tel: 020 8770 4946**
Community Services
Civic Offices
St Nicholas Way
Sutton
Surrey
SM1 1EA

The Leaving Care Team **Tel: 020 8335 3402**
717 London Road
Cheam
Sutton
SM3 9DL

The Joint Adolescent Service **Tel: 020 8377 0935**
717 London Road
Cheam
Sutton
SM3 9DL

The Youth Offending Team **Tel:020 8773 6621**
57 Montague Gardens
Wallington
SM6 8EP

The Youth Awareness Project (YAP- Advice and information on drugs and alcohol) Tel: 020 8770 0017

11 Lower Road
Sutton
SM1 4QU

Open Door (Youth Counselling Service) Tel: 020 8770 4388

1 Grove Cottage
Grove Park
High Street
Carshalton
SM5 3BB

Sutton Youth Service: 020 8770 6656

Sutton Racial Equality Council: 020 8770 6199

National Organisations that help Children & Young People:

Ofsted National Business Unit

Telephone: 08456 404040
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

(Ofsted inspect fostering agencies and residential homes.)

Children's Commissioner for England:

www.childrenscommissioner.org/adult/index.cfm

The Children's Rights Director

www.rights4me.org.uk

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC Helpline: 0800 800 500

The Who Cares? Linkline - Offers confidential help and advice to anyone in care at present, or in the past: Freecall: 0500 564570 (Mon, Wed & Thurs 3.30 - 6.00 p.m.)

**National Missing Persons Helpline: 0500 700 700(freefone)
www.missingpeople.org.uk/**

Samaritans 24-hour Helpline: 020 8681 6666