



## Being in care

This leaflet is for children and young people who are living in care of the Children's Service. Being in care usually means that you are not living with your family and live with foster carers or in a children's home. Some children in care do live with family members but with extra help from children's services.

When you are in care we want to make sure you have a say in what is decided about your life. Living away from home can be difficult and we want you to be able to tell us about what you would like to change and what help you think you need. Your views are essential.

Being in care means you will have a social worker who will make some decisions with your family about what is best for you. You need to know about these decisions and have a chance to have your say too. If you cannot have what you want you should be told why and be helped to understand the reasons.

A lot of the decisions that are made happen at your review meeting.

## What is a Child in Care review meeting?

Review meetings happen after you have been in care for four weeks, three months after that and then about every six months. The idea of the review meeting is to look at all the help you are getting and to decide what else we need to do together to make a good **plan** for your life. All the important people in your life get a chance to contribute to the meeting and say what help they think you should get. This means your social worker has to talk to you, your parents or family and carers and other professionals like your teacher.



## Who is invited to the meeting?

Some of the people who know you well will be invited to attend your review meeting. Some will be asked to send a report with their views instead. Your social worker should talk to you before the review. This is to find out if you would like to be at the meeting and whom you would like to be **invited**. You can also say if there is someone you don't want to be there and we will think about whether this is possible.

## Where will the review meeting be held?

If you are coming to the meeting it should be held somewhere comfortable for you. This may be at the place you are living, let your social worker know where you would like your review to be held.

## Who is in charge of the meeting?

Your meeting will be chaired by one of Barnet's Reviewing Officers. The **chair** is the person who is in charge of the meeting and has to make sure everyone gets a chance to talk. Your reviewing officer is **independent**. This means that they do not work directly with your social worker and are in a different team. The reviewing officer is supposed to be **neutral** which means they don't take sides.

They are supposed to listen to everyone and help everyone decide fairly what is best for you. The reviewing officer also has to make sure that you get a chance to tell us what you want. Then everyone will make a **plan** together at the review for the next few months that we hope you will be happy with.



## Preparing for the review

If your social worker can't visit to talk to you before the meeting then they should ring you or ask someone else you trust to help explain about the review.

Your social worker should ask you to think about the way you would like to tell us at the review **what you want** for your future.

You could write something down, draw a picture, make a video or write a poem - whatever you think is the best way to tell us would be great. Or you can fill in the **form** we send you to tell us your views.

You can decide who you would like to help you with this.

## What gets talked about at the meeting?

Your social worker should also talk to you about the things that will be talked about in the meeting. This is called the **agenda**.

Some things we have to talk about because they are important for making sure you are being well looked after. You can add things you want to talk about as well.





These are some of the things we will talk about:

- What you would like to happen.
- How things are going where you live.
- Your family or parents views.
- How long you will be in care and where you will be living.
- What help you may need when you leave care.
- Your religion, language and cultural needs.
- Arrangements for you to keep in touch with family and friends.
- Collecting photos of your family for you to keep.
- Your health and feelings.
- Arrangements for school and leisure activities.
- Your career ambitions.
- You may like to bring certificates or school work to show us.

### What happens after the meeting?

After the meeting the chairperson will write up notes of the meeting called **minutes**. You should get a copy of these notes. The notes will have a list of decisions made at the meeting and who will carry these decisions out. The decisions should be completed before your next **review** if this is possible.

### What happens if I am not happy with what is decided?

If you are unhappy with the plans being made for your care you have the right to complain. Ask your social worker or the reviewing officer for a copy of our complaints leaflet which explains how you can complain.



### Any questions?

If you would like to ask anything about what is said in this leaflet, please contact your social worker or the Reviewing Officer.

Your reviewing officer must also check that the plans that are agreed are carried out. If he or she thinks that you are not getting the help you need then they must do something about this. They will start by talking to your social worker to sort this out but they can also get help from a lawyer if the help you need is not being arranged. Your reviewing officer can explain this to you in more detail.

Social worker's name

tel:

Reviewing officer's name

tel:

### Treating everyone equally

Barnet Council believes all young people should be treated equally regardless of their race, religion, disability, gender, age or sexuality.

If you would like this leaflet translated into another language, please contact your social worker who will arrange this.

# Your Child in Care Review

Information for children and young people who are looked after by the Children's Service



Listening to **children**

