

For young people ages 12 - 18 years

This is a letter from the Children In Care Council in Wakefield, and has been written for you to help you through your first weeks of care.



Dear

The beginning of care was the hardest part for me.

Not knowing what to expect was the worst, but nothing was close to how bad I thought it would be. When you start to settle in you realise foster carers only want the best for you. They will help you and make you feel part of the family.

They will also support you to keep in touch with your own family while you are staying in the foster home.

Your social worker will help you understand your reason for being in care. And they will also include you in decisions made about your care (such as where you live, what school you go to, what support you need).

no decision about me,
without me

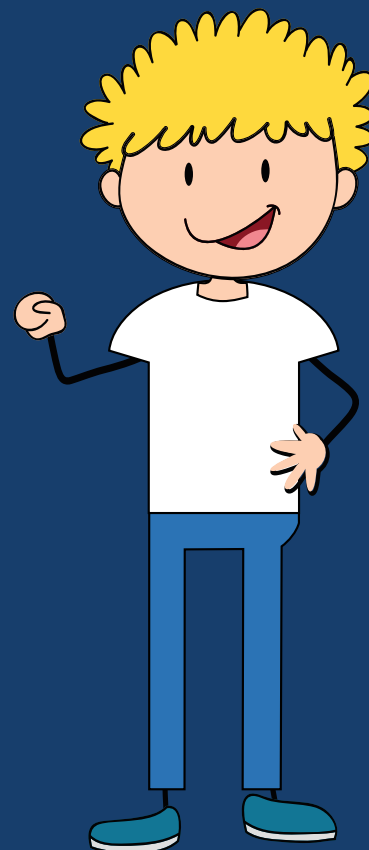
When I came into care I really worried if I would see my family again. Seeing your family is important although it's not always possible for everyone. What I wanted to know was the truth about what was happening - your social worker will ask you about your wishes and feelings before any decisions are made about seeing family and people important to you.

don't look back,
look forward

Why me?

Firstly, it really isn't your fault.

Children come into care for so many different reasons and it's important for you to know your reason. What could help is a life story book, your social worker should start this off with you but your carers can also collect things with you to help you understand your past, who your family are and eventually help you understand why you are in care.



Why not look at the Care4us website www.care4us.co.uk

Sometimes things don't go the way you want them to. For example, you might not be happy with how your carers treat you or feel like you weren't included in an important decision. If that happens, it's okay to speak up. It's your right to complain if you're unhappy.

Don't worry, you won't get into trouble for it. Everybody wants to help make things better for you. If things don't change you can call the Complaints Team at **01924 302840** and talk to them about what's happening.

You'll meet a lot of professionals in your life, and they might say things like, "I know how you feel." Even though this can be frustrating, they often say it because they want to help. But what I think can really help is meeting other young people in care who are going through similar things.

You might not live with someone your age, but the Participation Service runs groups where you can meet other children in care. These groups are a chance to share experiences, connect with others your age, and even make changes to the services that affect us. Service Managers come to these groups too, so your voice can really make a difference.

You don't have to attend, but if you're interested, your carers should help you get there. To learn more about the latest groups, call your Participation Worker on **01924 305118**.

Going into care is an emotional time, but soon you will start to feel safe and secure. You can trust what we have said in this letter because we have all been in care.

Everyone's experience of care is different but your experience will be good if you are healthy, safe and happy.

*participation makes life in care
better for others*

We hope this letter makes you feel a bit better!

There is lots more information on our website, including a Guide to Foster Care which explains in detail about what to expect and how you should be cared for.

www.care4us.co.uk



From:

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VoiceAbility

Talk to an advocate,
scan the QR Code or
phone **0300 303 1660**

