

# HAVING A PLACE TO LIVE

**A GUIDE TO THE SORT OF PLACES YOU MAY LIVE IN WHILE YOU'RE IN CARE, AND YOUR HOUSING OPTIONS WHEN YOU LEAVE CARE.**

This is from a series of FREE factsheets for young people with care experience, produced by the charity for children in care and young care leavers, Become.



## Where you might live when you're in care

**Key Foster home** This is when you live with and are cared for by foster carers in a family home. There may be other foster children there as well as you. Your foster carers might also have their own children. You might be in a foster home for a short time, or a long time – your social worker should tell you what the plan is for how long you will stay. Your foster carers will either work for the local authority or for an organisation called an independent fostering agency, who will give them training and advice on how to be a good foster carer.

**Key Children's home** This is a big house with other children and you'll be cared for by a team of staff. You'll have your own room and there are also shared areas to relax, eat and have fun in.

**Key A respite care placement** This is when you go to stay in a different place to where you normally live - for example if your usual carers are ill or if they need to go away for any reason. This is only temporary.

**Key A secure placement** This is a residential placement (like a children's home)



that is locked. You may have to live in one if people think you are likely to hurt yourself or someone else, although the purpose is to keep you safe, not to punish you.

**Key Kinship care** This is when you live with someone in your family (not your parents) who has been approved by your local authority to be your kinship carer.



## Moving suddenly

If you are told you have to move from one care placement to another and you weren't expecting this, then it's important to remember that your wishes and feelings **HAVE** to be taken into account by the people deciding about the move. If you have any worries about moving placement then you

should talk to your social worker and tell them how you feel (or personal advisor if you've left care but are under 25). If you don't think your views are being listened to, you can contact your independent reviewing officer or request support from an advocate (see Factsheet 2 The Name Game if you're not sure who these people are and how they can help you).



**BECOME.**  
THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE  
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ANYTHING IN THIS FACTSHEET CONTACT THE CARE ADVICE LINE ON 0800 023 2033, WEEKDAYS 10AM – 5PM. WE'RE HERE TO HELP CHILDREN IN CARE AND THE ADULTS WHO LOOK AFTER THEM.**

**Care  
ADVICE LINE  
FREEPHONE  
0800 023  
2033**



## Where you live when you leave care

When you turn 16 your social worker will start helping you think about what you want to do when you leave care. You don't have to leave until 18 and it's a really good idea to stay in care as long as you can, with people looking after you and helping you think about where you want to go in life.

The law says that your local authority has to provide you with somewhere suitable to live when you leave care. Your social worker should ask you for your views on where you want to live and they should write down any decisions you and they make about your future in a document called your pathway plan (make sure you have a copy of this so you know what the local authority has promised you).



When you move on from foster or residential care, the accommodation you choose with your social worker or personal advisor will depend on what's available, and how much independence you (and they) think you're ready for.

## Here are some of your options

**🔑 Staying Put** If you are settled and happy in your foster placement, and your foster carers want you to stay, you can ask to remain there until you are 21. At 18 you'll still become a 'care leaver', but really nothing much will change.

**🔑 Supported lodgings** This is similar to 'staying put', but you'll be living with a new carer and you'll have more independence than when you were in your foster placement.

**🔑 Foyers and supported housing** Similar to a hostel, but much nicer and for 10 to 100 people. You can usually stay up to one year. They also provide opportunities for education, training and employment. Some young people may be housed in a hostel or other temporary accommodation such as a 'B&B', but this is only appropriate if you are over 18, and should only be for very short periods of time.

**🔑 Training flats/supported accommodation (sometimes called 'semi-independence')** These are flats

where you can practise living independently. They are different in each local authority, but you may stay there for a few months or longer while you develop your skills in managing a tenancy, budgeting and living alone while still being supported by adults.

**🔑 Specialist accommodation** If you have certain needs (for example, a disability) that can't be met by common types of accommodation, you should be given housing that's right for you.

**🔑 Independent accommodation** This is rented accommodation with extra support if you need it, such as financial advice.

**🔑 University accommodation** If you are going to university, the local authority must find you somewhere to live during the holidays (which might be at the university) or give you money towards it. There are other ways to fund your accommodation the rest of the time – take a look at Factsheet 4 in this series or our website [Propel.org.uk](http://Propel.org.uk) which gives information about what each university offers care leavers.