

Our Rights

Knowing your rights as a child in care and care leaver is very important to understanding any decisions made about you and where your views and comments count.



gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

“Our Rights” can help identify important areas that impact your life and can be understood quickly and easily.

For more info the leaflet should be used alongside the ‘**Everything you need to know about being in care**’ guide. If you are aged 16 or over, please speak to your social worker/leaving care worker.

+ My care
+ My plan
+ Speak up

“Our Rights” was created and designed by Gloucestershire Children in Care Council & supported by the Participation Team. With thanks to all the teams for their support. Thanks to Corporate Parents for helping to solve our ‘thorny’ issues!

Education

Children in Care are entitled to funding up to the end of year 11 from the Virtual School via the Personal Education Plan (PEP) which can help towards any educational needs i.e. tuition, books and ICT support

Young people

should get in touch with their Social Worker and/or Designated Teacher to set up a PEP to be able to use the funding available.

For those 16 and older,

you should get in touch with your education provider (e.g. school or college) to find out how to claim a bursary or any financial help. You can also speak to your social worker to find out more.

The  Virtual School



ADVICE

Contact the Virtual School if you would like to know more about the education offer available

Care Plan

Your main plan is called your **'Care Plan'** or **'Pathway Plan'** and should say what your needs are now, how they will be met and the plans for the future.

You should also have a young people friendly version of your plan called **'My Journey'**.

The plan should say the sorts of decisions that your carer is allowed to make for you, like going on school trips and overnight stays at friends.

Within your care plan, you will have a placement plan which should take into account what you want.

The placement plan can give lots more detail about how you will be cared for and how your carers will help meet your needs.

Case reviews and records

- The law says that important decisions, for example placement moves, should not be decided without a review taking place.
- Your case reviews are meetings, normally chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), to make decisions about your care plan, and to make any changes to it.
- Your IRO will check that your local authority does all the things agreed at your review. You should be asked about your wishes and feelings and these should be primary at your case review.
- Your local authority must also keep a record for you, which will include your care plan, health and educational reports, social worker visit reviews and all other important information about you that when you are ready and want to, you can look at.

Advocates

You have the right to an advocate to help voice your views with any aspect of your care. An Advocate, who is independent, is there to listen and can help you when you have a specific problem or complaint. Your social worker or IRO should tell you how you can get an advocate.

INFO

More information about advocacy can be found in your guide **'Everything you need to know about being in care'**





MOMO
MIND OF MY OWN

You can also get in touch via the MOMO App (FREE) where you can give your views, plan for a review meeting and make a complaint.

Making a complaint

All Children in Care and care leavers have the right to make a complaint or comment about any area of your care. The first step would be to talk to someone influential such as your Social worker, fostering social worker or foster carer however, if this isn't possible, within your guide use the Feedback leaflet to send in your complaint or comment or go online <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/complaints-and-feedback/complaints-about-childrens-social-care-services/>

Top facts for Children and Young People in Care and Care Leavers

- 1 You should be introduced (if possible) to your placement and made to feel welcome - being introduced to food, routines and expressing your likes and preferences e.g. food, hobbies and interests
- 2 You should be consulted about the frequency of your contact with family and you should be supported to have contact with your brothers and sisters if you wanted and it is safe to do so
- 3 You should get pocket money as agreed with the foster carer and social worker. This should be discussed at the placement planning meeting. It could also be saved e.g. added to ISA (individual savings account)
- 4 You should have an opportunity to go on holiday at least once a year. You should be given a choice to go with your foster family.
- 5 You can be allowed a mobile phone if agreed with by the foster carer

- 6 You should have access to a computer either at school or home which is mainly used for education and homework. Extra uses can be determined by the foster carer
- 7 You are entitled to receive presents for birthdays and religious festivals (such as Christmas or other religious celebrations)
- 8 You should have or be entitled to a form of photo ID (e.g. passport or driving license)
- 9 You have the right to chair your own review and PEP. You may be able to chair or co-chair other meetings, please speak to your social worker
- 10 You are entitled to preparation for independent living in accordance to your care and pathway plan to support your development.

Leaving Care

The following rights and entitlements are relevant for those who are care leavers

You have a right to:

Have a Leaving Care worker

You will have a worker allocated to you to help you plan your future and review and revise the pathway plan regularly. We will also keep in touch.

Setting Up Home Grant (leaving home grant)

You may be entitled to a setting up home grant to help you with your move to independence. Up to £2,000 is available depending on your situation.

Higher Education, Summer Residential within Further Education and Employment

You may be entitled to a Higher Education Bursary to help you gain a higher education qualification. We will also help you with accommodation during your summer vacation. We will also provide assistance with expenses associated with education and training. And for those in employment, we will also provide assistance with expenses associated with this.

Staying Put

You are entitled to request to remain in your foster carer placement up to the age of 21 under a staying put arrangement subject to agreement by your foster carer.

Access to your Personal and Health Records

As a Care Leaver you may wish to access your personal case records. The Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) has given UK care leavers extra rights to view their child care records. So, in most cases, you are allowed to view your records. If you wish to see the records we keep on you then talk to your Social Worker/ Leaving Care Worker. They will explain to you what you need to do and assist you if required to complete the right forms.

For further information on all the above please talk to your social worker/leaving care worker.



Children in Care Council

The Children in Care Council (CinCC, also known as 'Voice Gloucestershire') is your voice for all children in care in Gloucestershire. We want young people in care and those leaving care to be actively involved in helping to decide what services they receive.

Gloucestershire's Children in Care Council seeks to represent and promote the views, opinions and experiences of Gloucestershire's Children in Care and Care Leavers in order to influence the development of services provided by Gloucestershire County Council and its partners.

What we do

-  It is our job to improve services for other Gloucestershire children and young people in care
-  We aim to listen to children and young people in care so that their voice can be heard by adults that run Children's Social Care
-  We aim to improve gaps in services that Gloucestershire provide us because we want children and young people in care to have a better quality life.
-  We want the experience of coming into the care of Gloucestershire County Council to be a positive one for children and young people in care.

 We explain to adults that run Children's Social Care what changes we would like to see.

 We work as a team and co-operate with each other to get good results for children and young people in care.

Get Involved!

 Tell us about service that you get. Happy with it? Got ideas on how it could be better?

 Join the CinCC. Or get involved in ad hoc bits of work.

 Take part in surveys, consultations, workshops, training, recruitment, conferences, focus groups, etc. Lots of different opportunities to have your say.

Join Us!

If you want to get involved with the work of the CinCC you can either,

-  talk to your social worker/IRO
-  talk to your foster carer
-  talk to a member of the CinCC or
-  contact Della or Lyn via email
cypvoice@gloucestershire.gov.uk
-  or go to www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/cincc

More information



Contact the Participation Team on
cypvoice@gloucestershire.gov.uk / 07876390658

