

Staying Put Arrangements

Young Person's Leaflet



"I am now part of the staying put agenda and that has enabled me to stay put with my foster carers that I was living with before I was eighteen. This has helped me to stay on at college and to continue to reach my goals. My carers are really supportive of what I want to do. Being able to stay put has meant pretty much everything to me. If I had gone independent at eighteen I wouldn't have lasted and would have had to go back to my parents which wouldn't have worked out. I wouldn't have progressed as a person and I would have had different prospects."

Young Person

Leaving Care

Leaving Care can be a difficult time and not all young people are ready when they reach 18 years of age. You will get help and support to plan and prepare for leaving care but some young people they may need more help and support. If you have been living with a foster carer you may be able to remain with them after your 18th birthday under a 'Staying Put' arrangement.

What is a Staying Put Arrangement?

'Staying Put' supports young people leaving care to continue to live with their foster carers when they reach 18 years of age. This would be a decision for you **and** your Foster Carer.

Not everyone can be considered for a 'Staying Put' arrangement. The Government has decided that young people who were an 'eligible child' which means that you were cared for and placed with a foster carer up to your 18th birthday, can continue to live with that carer after 18 years of age.

It doesn't matter how long you have been living with your foster carer, even if it has only been for a short period of time. A 'Staying Put' arrangement should be considered when you move to live with your foster carer so that you can plan for your future.

It doesn't matter whether your foster carer/s are Local Authority foster carer/s, family or friend foster carer/s, foster carers who receive a skill based payment to meet your needs or foster carer/s from an Independent Fostering Agency.

The 'Staying Put' arrangement will support you to develop maturity, skills and confidence and help towards a gradual transition to adulthood and independent living.

A 'Staying Put' arrangement would mean that you wouldn't have a sudden disruption to your living arrangement and you would have the support you need to continue to achieve in education or employment and support you in making the right decisions for you at the right time.

'Staying Put' arrangements can continue until you are 21 years of age, but would stop if you leave before that time. If you left your 'Staying Put' arrangement for any reason, you can return but this will impact the support your 'Staying Put' carer will receive.

Children's Services will monitor and support your 'Staying Put' arrangement, and will also provide financial support.

How would I plan for a 'Staying Put' arrangement?

You and your carer will receive information about 'Staying Put' arrangements a long time before you are 18 years of age. You may think this is too early but it is important that you have time to think about what you want, ask questions, talk to your foster carer, social worker or personal advisor, and have time to make a decision about what you want to do when you reach 18 years of age. The decision about a 'Staying Put' arrangement is for you **and** your Foster Carer/s.

There will opportunities to get information and discuss 'Staying Put' arrangements.

- Leaving Care Assessment of Need

Your social worker will complete a Leaving Care Assessment of Need within 3 months of your 16th birthday or if you didn't become cared for until after your 16th birthday, within 3 months of becoming cared for.

The Leaving Care Assessment of Need identifies the support you need in preparing to become an adult and working towards living independently. You will be involved in the Assessment of Need and your wishes and feelings should be clearly recorded. You will receive a copy of this assessment, which will be used to develop your Pathway Plan. If your circumstances change significantly it may be necessary to undertake a further Leaving Care Assessment of Need to make sure that you have the right support you need.

- Pathway Plan

Your social worker will complete a Pathway Plan within 3 months of your 16th birthday or if you didn't become cared for until after your 16th birthday, within 3 months of becoming cared for. Your pathway plan will be based on and include your Care Plan and will set out what needs to happen, who is involved to help you receive the support and services you need to achieve what you want and are capable of and successfully move into adulthood. The Pathway Plan will be updated on a regular basis and change to meet your needs.

The Pathway Plan will include information about your health and development, education, training and employment and your Personal Education Plan, your emotional and behavioural development, your identity, Contact with family, friends and people you are close to, skills in relation to managing money, budgeting and opening a bank account, making sure that you are in 'suitable' accommodation and anything else that you may need support with, in preparing to be independent.

A number of people may be named in your Pathway Plan so it is important that they are involved in developing it. You will be involved in developing the Pathway Plan and will receive a copy of the first Plan and every time it is updated.

- Staying Put Meeting

A 'Staying Put' meeting will be held as part of the Leaving Care Assessment of Need. The meeting will ensure that both you and your foster carer/s understand what a 'Staying Put' arrangement would mean to you and make some early decisions. Both you and your foster carer can change your mind in the future if things change.

The 'Staying Put' Meeting considers your wishes and views, your foster carer/s wishes and views, what support you need for example budgeting, benefits, cooking and what support is already in place. If you need more support this will also be discussed and agreed. You and your will receive information about 'Staying Put' arrangements.

You and your carer/s will be asked whether you are interested in a 'Staying Put' arrangement and if this is something you do want to think about it will be included in your Pathway Plan. You will also be asked to think about where you may live if you do not remain with your foster carer/s.

- Staying Put Progress Meeting

A 'Staying Put' Progress Meeting will be arranged by your social worker around your 17th birthday to review the support you have received and the plan to have a 'Staying Put' arrangement following your 18th birthday. This meeting should take place after the second to last Cared for Children Review before your 18th birthday.

If you or your foster carer/s were unsure about a 'Staying Put' arrangement, this won't stop ongoing discussions during visits and reviews.

The Staying Put Progress Meeting will cover what was discussed at the Staying Put Meeting and check what has happened since. It will make sure that everyone has up to date information and understands what is involved in a 'Staying Put' arrangement. The Meeting will consider how you have progressed and whether a 'Staying Put' arrangement is still what you and your foster carer/s want. Discussions will have been ongoing between these meetings with both you and your foster carer/s and this meeting will make sure that you are clear about the information shared and pull this together into a more formal agreement, for example financial support and a 'Living Together' agreement.

- **Living Together Agreement**

This is an agreement between you, your carer, your social worker and personal advisor and the supervising social worker for the carer. The agreement covers the ground rules and expectations about you and the carer. Many of these issues will not be new to you, as you will have been living by the 'house rules' for some time but there may be some changes once you are an adult, therefore the agreement will cover what will stay the same and what, if anything will change. The agreement could be part of your Pathway Plan or it could be a separate document. You don't have to call it a 'Living Together' agreement. You will need to have some form of agreement which will provide evidence of the 'Staying Put' arrangement, what rent has been set, what is being provided, for example meals, heating and lighting et cetera.

The agreement can include anything that you and your carer feel is important, but there are some things that need to be included, for example if the 'Staying Put' carer is also continuing to be a foster carer, you will need to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check because you are over 18 years of age. You will need to agree to this check and understand what it means for you.

What happens next?

Your social worker will present all of the information they have completed with you and your carer/s to the Placement Panel where a decision will be made. The Panel may ask for more information and will also set a review date for the social worker to return and provide updated information. It is therefore important that the social worker presents your information as soon as possible, so that you and your carer get a decision as soon as possible to help you plan for your future. The Placement Panel will approve the 'Staying Put' arrangement once they are confident that everything has been considered and it is in your best interests. They will set a further review period within 6 months of you becoming 18 years of age to make sure that the 'Staying Put' arrangement is working well for you and your carer/s. You will receive a letter letting you know the Placement Panel decision.

At the final cared for children review before your 18th birthday, the Independent Reviewing Officer will review all of the information gathered in the Leaving Care Assessment of Need, Pathway Plan, Staying Put Meeting, Staying Put Progress Meeting, care planning meetings and your Living Together agreement and ensure that the right information, guidance and support has been provided to both you and your carer. They will also discuss your contingency plans. This is not because they don't feel that the 'Staying Put' arrangement is inappropriate, but because they want to make sure that you have options should you or your carer decide that the 'Staying Put' arrangement is not for you.

What if the 'Staying Put' arrangement is refused?

Where the social worker does not believe that a 'Staying Put' arrangement is in your best interest this will also be presented to the Placement Panel, as they make the final decision. As you are 18 years of age, you could still reside in your former foster carer's home however this would not be a 'Staying Put' arrangement and Children's Services would not financially support your carer/s. You would still receive support in other aspects of your care leaver's status.

If you are not happy with the decision of the Placement Panel, you can appeal by speaking to your Independent Reviewing Officer and requesting a review of your Pathway Plan. You can access an independent advocate if you feel this would be helpful. All complaints from young people are treated seriously and will be investigated according to the Procedure.

Your Independent Reviewing Officer will ensure throughout you being cared for, that you are aware of your options, rights and have the opportunity to contribute your wishes and feelings. They will also monitor your Pathway Plan and ensure that it clearly sets out what support you should be receiving and where you will be living following your 18th birthday.

Financial Arrangements and Support

Children's Services will continue to provide financial support to cover reasonable costs to support you in staying with your former foster carer/s. However once you are 18 years of age there may be other types of financial assistance, which can be claimed or used to help the 'Staying Put' carer for example, Housing Benefit and contributions from you.

The financial assistance will change from your 18th birthday unless you are still in Year 13 of education, are 18 years in that academic year and are due to take final examinations. The new financial assistance will not start until 2 weeks after your final exam.

Depending on your circumstances you may need to apply for Benefits to support you whilst you seek employment. You will be supported to make a claim for Benefits but not until you have finished your examinations. Whether you are claiming Benefits, in employment or attending University or a Higher Education Course you will be expected to make a contribution towards the cost of your 'Staying Put' arrangement.

If you join the Army or attend University and are away from your 'Staying Put' arrangement for a period of time, your carer will be paid a retainer fee to ensure that your home remains available to you, for example when you are on leave or during holiday periods at University. You are not expected to contribute towards a retainer fee.

The guide below has been published to support you understanding what you are entitled to claim.



Adobe Acrobat
Document

The 'Staying Put' Arrangement Young Person's Guide will provide additional information in relation to benefits.

Your Contributions

If you are in receipt of benefits, you will be responsible for your day to day expenses, clothing and contributing towards your meals and utility costs. You will be expected to contribute 50% to your 'Staying Put' carer each week. The Local Authority will also provide financial support to the carer.

Where you are in employment, your contributions will be based on additional income or earnings above the benefit rate at 50 pence in every pound or 50% up to a maximum of £100. The JSA rate in 2014 is £57.35, which would be deducted from your weekly earnings or income, leaving an amount which would then be further divided by 2 to identify 50% and this would be the amount you would contribute.

Monitoring 'Staying Put' arrangements

Your Pathway Plan will be reviewed, supported and updated on a regular basis and you will continue to receive visits from your Personal Advisor. You and your Personal Advisor will agree how often they will visit you. You will continue to have a review meeting at least every 6 months. Your 'Staying Put' carer will also receive support and will be visited. Support will continue even if you are not living under a 'Staying Put' arrangement. Your safety and the safety of any other children and young people in the home will be monitored whilst you are in the 'Staying Put' arrangement.

Ending a 'Staying Put' arrangement

Your 'Staying Put' arrangement can continue until you are 21 years of age but you don't have to stay until you are 21. Both you and your 'Staying Put' carer can end the arrangement at any time but you will both need to give notice.

If you leave your 'Staying Put' arrangement at any time before your 21st birthday, following the notice period, you can return but it will no longer be considered as a 'Staying Put' arrangement and the support your 'Staying Put' carer will receive in respect of finance will be affected.

It is therefore important that you think about when you would like to move on, and use the support available to you for as long as you need.

Your 'Living Together' agreement will include the arrangements for you and your carer to end the 'Staying Put' arrangement.

There is a Young Person's Guide to 'Staying Put' Arrangements. Your social worker will give you a copy or you can find a copy on [Website Link](#)

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