

# SHOW ME THAT I MATTER



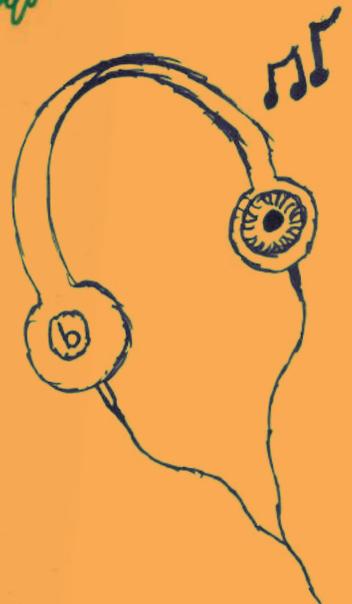
Socialising



A children's guide to being in care



Family



# Hello

Some children and young people are brought into care because they can't live at home with their birth families for lots of different reasons.

Your social worker and foster carer help you to keep healthy, stay safe, enjoy life and achieve. They encourage you to get involved in your community and support you to have a successful and happy life.

Not knowing what's happening might be a little scary for you, so we have put this booklet together. Hopefully it will give you lots of answers and help you settle into your new home.

This booklet will tell you who everyone is, what they do and why they do it. It will help you understand your rights and understand what is happening to you.

If there is anything not included in the booklet, please speak to your carer or social worker.

**We are here to listen to you.**

# contents

	Page
■ HELLO	2
■ ALL ABOUT ME	4
■ HARRY AND ELLIE'S STORY	5
■ LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE'S BOARD / THE MOMO APP	6
■ WHERE WILL I BE LIVING? Foster placement • Family and Friends Carers • Living in a residential home	7
■ WHO WILL SUPPORT ME?	8
■ CONTACT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS	10
■ OUR PROMISE	10
■ WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM UNHAPPY? With your placement or with children's trust	11
■ USEFUL CONTACTS	12



# All about me

Name: .....

Nickname: .....

Date of birth: .....

Age: .....

Ethnicity/religion: .....

First language: .....

School/nursery/college: .....

Likes: .....

Dislikes: .....

Favourite hobbies: .....

Favourite TV programmes: .....

Doctor's name, address and phone number: .....

.....

Independent reviewing officer's name: .....

Name of foster carers: .....

Address: .....

Social worker's name: .....

Date I came into care: .....

Mother: .....

Father: .....

Brothers/sisters: .....

# HARRY AND ELLIE'S STORY...



HI I'M HARRY, I'M 13 YEARS OLD AND LIVE WITH MY MOM AND MY SISTER ELLIE, WHO IS 10.



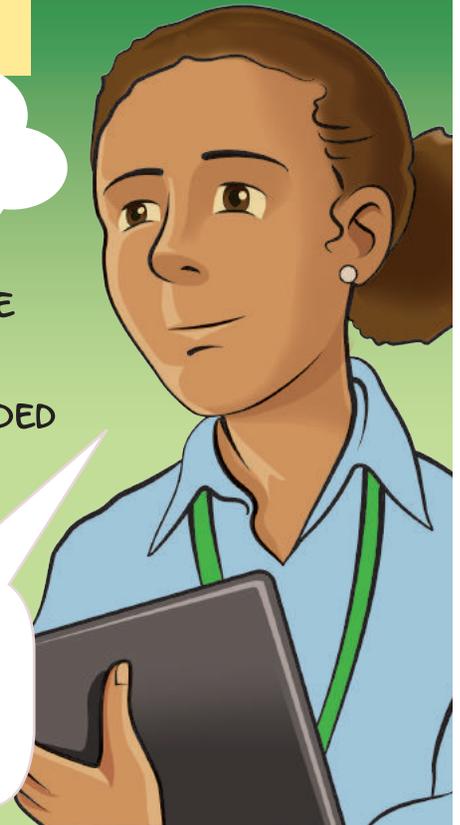
I'M ELLIE.

MY SOCIAL WORKER CAME TO VISIT AND SAW THAT MY MOM WAS STRUGGLING.



I CAN'T COPE AND I'M STRUGGLING TO LOOK AFTER MY CHILDREN. I HAVE NO SUPPORT FROM FAMILY OR FRIENDS.

HARRY AND ELLIE WILL BE PLACED IN A NEW HOME WITH A FOSTER FAMILY. A CARE PLAN WILL BE DECIDED BETWEEN HARRY, ELLIE, THEIR MOM AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES.



I WILL MAKE REGULAR VISITS TO HARRY AND ELLIE EVERY 6 WEEKS AND I WILL MAKE SURE THEY RECEIVE SUPPORT WITH HEALTH, EDUCATION AND ANY OTHER HELP THEY NEED.

WE LIKE OUR FOSTER FAMILY AND OUR NEW HOME.



THEY LOOK AFTER HARRY AND ME LIKE WE ARE PART OF THEIR OWN FAMILY.



MY FOSTER CARERS HELP ME WITH MY SCHOOL WORK, AND WE DO DIFFERENT THINGS TOGETHER.



# LAYPB

Looked After Young People's Board

Are you a young person in the care of Sandwell Children's Trust?

Are you aged 11 to 19 and do you want to make a difference?

Got something to say?

Fed up of not being listened to?

GET INVOLVED!

## KEY FACTS

**WE** listen to what young people have to say about being in the care of Sandwell Council.

**WE** tell people who make decisions at Sandwell Council about what young people tell us works or doesn't work in our lives.

**WE** involve young people in events, groups and meetings so they can tell us how we can make trust better.

**WE** give young people the chance to have their voices heard by people who run trust.

**WE** involve young people in lots of exciting projects.

**WE** give young people the chance to learn new skills.

**WE** give young people the opportunity to influence and change how trust are run for the better.

**WE** raise our concerns to the corporate parenting board at Sandwell Council.

**WE** also have a lot of fun too!!!!!!

**GET INVOLVED IN YOUR  
LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
BOARD TODAY**

For more information, please contact  
the participation team on 0121 569 5922 or go to [www.sandwell.gov.uk/laypb](http://www.sandwell.gov.uk/laypb)

# MOMO

MIND OF MY OWN

## The MOMO App

Mind Of My Own (MOMO) is an award-winning app that helps you express your views more clearly, get more involved in meetings and make better decisions with the social care team. MOMO is for children and young people aged 8 to 21. You can download it on a tablet, PC, mobile phone (App Store & Google Play), gaming consoles and any other device which uses the internet.

All you need is a valid email address. If you haven't got one, your social worker, foster carer or reviewing officer can help you.

The app will give you more confidence and independence, and help you to speak up, attend meetings and raise concerns. Once you sign up to the app you can use it in your own time if there's a problem or something you want to change.



For more information about the MOMO app,  
get in touch with the participation team on 0121 569 5922.

# Where will I be living?



## Foster placement

Foster carers are people who have been approved by Sandwell Council's Children's Trust provide a family for children and young people who cannot live with their birth families. Foster carers should make you feel a part of their family and give you the chance to be happy and achieve in a safe, secure, loving and caring home.

Your carer should:

- provide daily care and guidance;
- help you with your education and medical needs;
- go with you to all your meetings and act as your advocate;
- work towards your care plan; and
- support contact with your family and friends where this is appropriate.

Sometimes it may not be possible to match you with a foster carer of the same faith or culture. If this is the case, your foster carer and social worker should try and make sure you can continue with your religious beliefs and other family traditions.

## Family and friends carers

Family and friends carers are approved by Sandwell Council's Children's Trust in the same way as a foster carer. They provide the same care as a foster carer – the only difference is it's likely to be a relative or a family friend who is taking care of you.

## Living in a residential home

Some children and young people might have to live in a residential home. This is when you live with other young people. You may need extra support and you will have a residential support worker who will be able to help you with day-to-day living. This could also include 24-hour support.

# Who will support me?

## Your social worker

Your social worker is an employee of Sandwell Children's Trust and works in children's trust. Their role is to keep you safe, happy and healthy and help you to do well in school. Your social worker will visit and speak to you during their visit. They will listen to you and work with you towards your care plan.

Your social worker will attend your looked after child (LAC) reviews, personal education plan (PEP) meetings, health checks and any other meetings about you that your foster carer may need support with.

Your social worker should listen to your wishes and feelings and see how these can be best met.

If you are able to have contact with family and friends, your social worker should support this. They will also do any assessments and arrange help that you may need.

Your social worker is the person you should be able to talk to about anything and not feel scared or intimidated by them. Don't forget, they are there to help you.

I am here to support you and your foster carer

## Supervising social worker (SSW)

Your foster carer will also have a supervising social worker (SSW) who will visit to make sure all is going well in your placement. They will support your carer in keeping you safe and happy. They will attend foster carer reviews and, just before the review, they will ask you to fill in some paperwork, which will be shared at the review.

The SSW will carry out training with your carers to help them care for you and any other child they are caring for. They will also speak to you to make sure all is going well with the placement during their visit.

I am here to support you and your foster carer

## Independent reviewing officer (IRO)/Looked after child (LAC) review

An IRO is an independent person who will oversee your care while you are looked after by Sandwell children's trust. LAC review meetings are where all people involved in your care will meet up to look at how your needs have been met and if there is anything else they can do to make things better for you.

You will have a LAC review every six months. You may be asked if you would like to attend the review, as this meeting will discuss decisions about your life. You can even chair your meetings if you wish to do so.

The IRO will look to see if your needs are being met in your foster placement. They look at how you are doing in education, how your contact is going and whether you are healthy.

The IRO will look at your care plan and will make sure everyone is working towards it.

The IRO will visit you and get your views on how things are going before the LAC review is held. All people involved in your care will be asked to attend the review meeting.

I am here to independently chair your review meetings

## Health

I am here to make sure you stay healthy

As a looked after child you will have a health check when you first enter care and will continue to receive one every 12 months. These are carried out by a doctor and a health nurse for looked after children. Your carer should also take you for an eye test every year and for dental checks every six months. They should take you for any follow-up treatment that you need. Your carer should keep a record with dates of checks and give this to your SSW and social worker.

## Education

I am here to make sure you learn at school or college

Wherever we can, we will try to keep you at the same school. We don't want you to have too many changes all at the same time.

But if this isn't best for you, or your placement is outside Sandwell, you may have to move school.

At school, you will have a designated teacher who is there to help with your education and will attend your personal education plan (PEP) meeting.

You will have a PEP meeting every six months. This is to look at how you are doing and see if any other support needs to be put in place.

You have the right to attend these meetings with your social worker and foster carer.

In Sandwell, we also have a Virtual School for children in care. This works closely with schools to make sure you have a good education.

## What is a care plan?

A care plan is a document that explains what you need and how you should be cared for. Your social worker is responsible for writing the care plan and this should be updated just before each of your looked after child (LAC) reviews takes place.

## Pathway plan

Some children will continue to receive support when they leave care. They will need what's called a pathway plan until they're 21.

This plan includes your wishes and dreams for the future, like where you want to live and whether you want to continue in education or go to work.

Your views and wishes must be heard and taken into account before any decisions are made about your future. Please speak to your social worker if you want more information about your pathway plan.

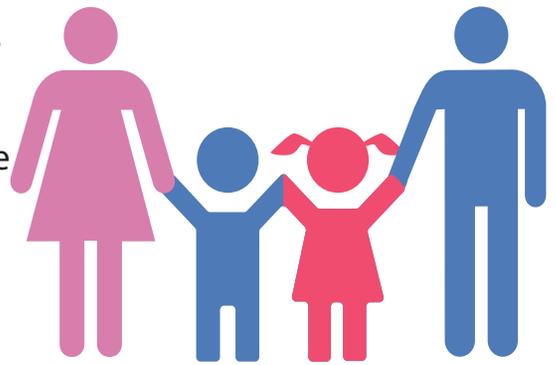
# Contact with family and friends

**Most children and young people who come into care want contact with their birth family and friends.**

In a lot of cases we do feel that you should be able to see birth relatives, but sometimes this may not be the right thing for you. If this is the case, your social worker will explain to you why this is.

If you would like contact with your birth family and we feel it's right for you, your social worker and foster carer will support you with this. Your visit may be supervised by your social worker or a worker from the contact centre.

All details about your contact will be part of your care plan. This can be reviewed at any time to make sure you are happy with how things are going.



Our PROMISE to  
**YOU**  
(Pledge)

We will:

- Keep you safe ✓
- Support you with education ✓
- Support your health ✓
- Help you prepare for adult life ✓
- Help your voice to be heard ✓

For a copy of your pledge...  
Please contact the participation team by calling 0121 569 5922  
or email [participation\\_team@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:participation_team@sandwell.gov.uk) or message Sandy Wells  
on Facebook



## If you are not happy in your placement

**If you are having issues, or you are not happy with your foster carer or placement, first of all try to speak with your foster carer.**

If you still feel things have not changed or got better, you should then speak to your social worker. They can set up a joint meeting with your foster carer and the support social worker (SSW) to talk things through and look for a solution.

If it is felt things will not get better in your placement, then your social worker will speak with their manager to look at other ways to put things right. This could even mean you having a change of foster placement.

**If you are unhappy and want to make a complaint:  
Call 0121 569 7867 or use the MOMO app**

## If you are unhappy with staff from Sandwell children's trust.

**If you feel you are not listened to, or that things have not been done by your social worker or any other staff in children's trust, first of all try to speak to them.**

If you feel unable to do so, then contact the office and ask to speak to their manager. Tell them what the problem is and ask them if it can be sorted out. You could ask for a joint visit and to speak to an advocate who will support you to get your views heard, so things can get sorted.

**If you are unhappy and want to make a complaint:  
Call 0121 569 7867 or use the MOMO app**



## What is an advocate?

**An advocate is a person who can help you say if you don't like something or if you don't agree with a decision that affects your life.**

**When you are looked after or in the care of children's trust, remember you have the right to:**

- Have a say in decisions that affect your life
- Be listened to and taken seriously
- Use an advocate to help look after your rights and to help you speak up and attend meetings
- Not be hurt or abused
- Be treated fairly, whatever your race, religion, sexuality, gender, language or disability
- Have your health looked after
- Get the most out of your school or college

Advocates are independent which means they don't work for the council or children's trust. Advocates will not tell anyone what you say to them without your agreement, unless there is something that might cause harm to you or someone else.

Call the Black Country Advocacy Service on **01902 877563**.

# Useful numbers



We at Sandwell Children's Trust want you to have a good placement and be treated as part of the family.

We will aim to support you with your day-to-day living and want you to feel able to talk openly to your social worker and others who work with you.

We want you to have the best life and for your future to be a happy and successful one.



Sandy Wells over 13s only

**LAYPB**  
Looked After Young People's Board