



Children and Young People in Care Staying Put



Children and Young People in Care - Staying Put

From 18 years of age, young people are no longer legally 'cared for'. Whilst your social worker, young person's advisor, foster parent and other people will talk to you about what support you may need and will prepare you to leave care, this can be a difficult time, and not everyone is ready to leave care when they are 18 years of age.

Young people develop family relationships with their foster parents and want to continue to have the same support that other young people have when they leave their family.

What is a Staying Put Arrangement?

Staying Put supports young people leaving care to continue to live with their foster parents when they reach 18 years of age. This would be a decision for you and your foster parent. Not everyone can be considered for a Staying Put arrangement. The Government has decided that young people who were an 'eligible child' or cared for and placed with a foster parent, can continue to live with that foster parent after 18 years of age.

An '**eligible child**' is someone who is cared for by the Local Authority, is aged 16 or 17 years and has been cared for, for a total of at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 years. These young people are eligible for support as a care leaver. Once a young person becomes 18 years they are known in law as a 'former relevant child'. It doesn't matter how long the young person has been living with the foster parent, even if it is only for a short period of time, but it is important that when a child or young person moves to live with a foster parent, Staying Put arrangements should be considered as a possibility for the future.

It doesn't matter whether your foster parents are Local Authority foster parents, family or friend foster parents or foster parents from an Independent Fostering Agency. Your social worker will discuss Staying Put with you and will include information in your Pathway Plan.



As you will not be 'cared for' after your 18th birthday, the foster home changes to a Staying Put arrangement, and you are effectively lodging in the home, but the nature of the support and relationship with your former foster parents will not change. The rules of the house will stay the same, but you will need to talk to them and your social worker and agree whether there are other things that you need to agree to, as you will be 18 years of age. Staying Put arrangements can continue until you are 21 years of age, stop living in the household before that time, or finish your higher education course if at university.

Why should I have a Staying Put arrangement

There are lots of reasons why you may want to remain with your former foster parents. There are no additional rules about who can have a Staying Put arrangement. The Staying Put arrangement supports young people to develop maturity, skills and confidence and help with a gradual transition to adulthood and independent living. Staying Put arrangements make sure young people don't have a sudden disruption to their living arrangement and have the support they need to continue to achieve in education or employment in support they need in making the right decisions for them at the right time.



Staying Put Meeting

A Staying Put meeting will be held which will ensure that both you and your foster parents understand what a Staying Put arrangement would mean to you and make some early decisions. This will be explained to you by a member of the Supported Accommodation Team. Both you and your foster parent can change your mind in the future if circumstances change. Your social worker and personal advisor would attend as would the foster parent's supervising social worker. You may want other people to attend for example your Independent Reviewing Officer, a member of your family or your advocate.

The meeting will talk about your wishes and views, your foster parents, 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 agree how the support will be provided. The meeting will identify who is going to do what, and when they will do it. For example, the foster parents will receive financial assistance to pay for the Staying Put arrangement, however this will be paid from a number of sources, including Children's Services, DWP and you. The meeting will also need to discuss what will be expected of you and whether there are any rules that



may change. It is important that both you and your foster parents are able to discuss this and are supported in developing an agreement.

This is called a 'Living Together' Agreement and is explained later in this guidance. Finally, if the meeting agrees that a Staying Put arrangement is a positive option, a member of the Supported Accommodation Team will ensure that you and your foster parent is provided with the Staying Put arrangements agreed. This will be also recorded in your Pathway Plan.

A further meeting can be arranged if this is what you want, this doesn't have to be an extra meeting but could fit in with care planning meetings or reviews that are already taking place. Remember neither you nor your foster parents have to make a final decision at this time. It is important therefore to think about what you would want to do if you were not going to remain with your foster parents. These are called contingency plans.

When you are ready to progress with Staying Put, we will ask you and your foster parents to sign the Staying Put /Living together agreement. This is to ensure that plans are in place when you turn 18 and that any financial arrangements are set up. Your foster parents will still have an important role to play in supporting you towards gaining the skills and knowledge you will need to become more mature and prepare you for adulthood and independence.

Living Together Agreement

All Staying Put arrangements are developed by the Supported Accommodation Team between you, your foster parent, your social worker and or your young person's advisor. The agreement covers the ground rules and expectations about you and your Staying Put parent. 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, what rent has been set, what is being provided, for example meals, heating and lighting et cetera. This will be very important if you wish to claim Universal Credit.

The agreement can include anything that you and your foster parent feel is important, but there are some things that need to be included, for example if the Staying Put parent is also continuing to be a foster parent, 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.



Some of the things that might be included in your agreement are listed below but this should be developed over time and with your foster parent to make sure that you both know what is expected of you.

For example: -

- The time you will return home by at night.
- Whether friends, family and partners can visit or stay at the address.
- Whether you can stay out overnight, is this by agreement, with whom, how many nights (Remember the financial support provided to your foster parent may be affected if you are not living in the home on a consistent basis)
- Attending education, training or being in employment – not staying at home all day.
- Drinking alcohol inside and outside the home.
- Smoking inside the home.
- Your behaviour if there are other younger children in the home –you may be expected to be a positive role model.
- How your room should be kept – clean and tidy.
- Doing your own washing and ironing.
- Whether meals are provided or you are expected to cook for yourself and / or others.
- Jobs around the house for example vacuuming, washing dishes, shopping et cetera.
- Notifying any damage or things that are broken.
- Making use of the support provided, keeping to the agreement

Financial Arrangements

We fully support foster parents becoming Staying Put parents and will continue to provide financial support to cover reasonable costs to support you staying with them. Former foster parents shouldn't be financially disadvantaged by agreeing to Staying Put. 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 parent for example, Housing Benefit/Universal Credit and contributions from you. The Staying Put parent will be financially supported equivalent to the rate they were paid when they were a foster parent minus the pocket money and clothing allowance element, which you will be responsible for.

The different financial assistance will start on your 18th birthday. Depending on your circumstances you may need to apply for Universal Credit to support you whilst you seek employment. You will be supported to make a claim for UC. Whether you are claiming UC, 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 attend University and are away from your Staying Put arrangement for a period of time, your Staying Put parent 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 will not expect you to contribute towards a retainer fee.

Your Contributions

We will support and encourage you in being involved in education, employment, or training. This will help you to achieve independence and be self-sufficient however there may be occasions when you will need to claim Universal Credit. Where 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 a minimum of £25 per week to your Staying Put parent.

The **Supported Accommodation Team** will provide you with an exact calculation of what you are expected to pay as part of the Staying Put Meeting.



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 young person's advisor. You and your young person's 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 parents will also receive support and will be visited by the Supported Accommodation Team.



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 parent can end the arrangement at any time but you will both need to give notice.

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 possible. Your 'Living Together' agreement will include the arrangements for you both to end the Staying Put arrangement.



Get in touch

We'd love to hear from you...

If you would like to find out more about becoming a host, please email:

supportedlodgings@wolverhampton.gov.uk

or visit:

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You can get this information in large print,
braille, audio or in another language
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