

# A BASIC GUIDE TO BEING LOOKED AFTER IN CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH



Children's Rights are not Wrong!



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.  
This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.

*This Guide is also available in Digital Story format...*

*www.rightsforme.co.uk and check it out!*



# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

This Guide covers the main rights you have when you are LOOKED AFTER, including:

- The Right to Care of a High Standard
- The Right to Be Safe
- The Right to Have Contact with Family and Friends
- The Right to Be Treated and Valued as an Individual
- The Right to Be Healthy
- The Right to an Education and other Activities
- The Right to Information that Relates to You
- The Right to Have a Voice

Your Social Worker's Name:

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Your Social Worker's Telephone Number:

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Your Social Worker's e-mail address:

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If you are unsure about who your SOCIAL WORKER is, you can ring CHILDREN'S SERVICES on:

**0808 100 1727**

or e-mail them at:

**cscb@caerphilly.gov.uk**

All of these rights come from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. You can get a full copy of these rights at:

[www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk](http://www.uncrcletsgetitright.co.uk)





# YOU

## HAVE THE RIGHT

### TO care of a High Standard

You should live in a place that is clean, comfortable and free of smoke, where you are cared for, encouraged and praised. You should have access to all the things you need to achieve your full potential.

Any rules or decisions involving you should be explained to you in a way you can understand, and should be based on your age and personal situation. You should be allowed to ask questions about these decisions and rules.

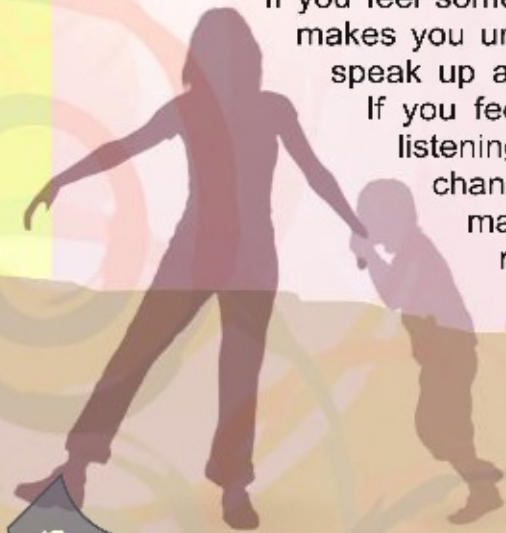
If you feel something is unfair or makes you unhappy, you must speak up and tell someone.

If you feel that nobody is listening or that positive changes will not be made, you have the right to make a complaint.

Some of the things you may want to discuss and agree with your Carer/s and your Social Worker are:

- \* Pocket money
- \* Bedtime
- \* Rules
- \* Diet
- \* Personal space
- \* Using the internet
- \* Mobile Phones

- \* Privacy
- \* Activities
- \* Personal belongings
- \* Enough clean clothes, suitable for both you and the time of year
- \* Achieving your own Independence





# YOU

## HAVE THE RIGHT

### TO BE SAFE

The adults that care for you, work with you and for you, should make sure that you are free from being hurt, scared or intimidated.

By listening to you and making you feel comfortable, you should be able to talk to them about any problems or worries you may have. You should never be:

- \* **treated by other people in a way that makes you feel scared of them (e.g. shouted at)**
- \* **hit or physically hurt on purpose**
- \* **treated by people in a way that hurts your feelings on purpose**
- \* **touched in a way you do not like**
- \* **put in a situation where other people are being shouted at or hurt**
- \* **placed at risk of substances that could harm you or others around you**
- \* **made to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable, unhappy or scared**

If at anytime you feel you are being bullied or you feel unsafe, you should speak to an adult such as your Carer/s, Teacher, Social Worker or an Advocate, who will listen and work with you to stop the bullying.

If you do not want to tell an adult you know, you can use the helplines/websites listed below.

Remember, you can only be protected from being bullied if you speak up.

If the person upsetting you or making you feel unsafe, (whether an adult or child), you must tell someone.

If you or someone you know is in any kind of immediate danger, you should contact the emergency services by dialling **999**.

If you or someone you know is being placed at risk, or are not being looked after properly, you should call:

**Children's Services**  
tel: 0808 100 1727

#### **Useful Websites:**

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

(for information and advice on Keeping Safe and Bullying)

[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

(for information and advice on Drugs and Substance Misuse)

[www.thinkyouknow.com](http://www.thinkyouknow.com)

(for information and advice on Cyber-Safety)





# YOU

## HAVE THE RIGHT

### TO CONTACT WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

You have the right to ask to see or speak with those people who are important to you such as friends and family. This is often called 'contact'. Contact can be:

**\* Meeting up with someone (face to face)**

**\* Talking over the phone**

**\* Texting**

**\* E-mailing**

**\* Facebook or other social networking sites**

**\* Skype or other video chat rooms**

**\* Post (snail mail)**

**\* Supervised Contact (meeting someone face to face but with a Social Worker in the room to make sure the child/young person is free from risk or harm)**

Your Social Worker and Carer/s should ask you if you wish to have contact with family and friends. As long as it is safe for you to do so, you should never be stopped from seeing family and friends without being given a reason that is explained to you in a way you can understand.

Sometimes it will be decided that contact with family and friends may not be good for you. If this is the case, the reasons must be explained in a way you can understand.

If you are not happy about being stopped from having contact with family and friends, you can ask for an Advocate to speak up for you, or you can make a complaint.

If you do not have regular contact with your family, you maybe entitled to an Independent Visitor. This is someone who will befriend you and arrange to see you on a regular basis, to listen and talk with you.

How you go about keeping in contact with your friends may need to be agreed with your Carer/s or Social Worker. For example: through using the Internet or seeing each other once a month on a weekend.

#### **Your Carer/s should:**

**\* encourage you to make new friends and keep in contact with old friends**

**\* make you feel comfortable about inviting friends to the place where you live**

**\* support you in being able to visit your friends, or make other social arrangements outside of the place where you live**





# YOU

## HAVE THE RIGHT

TO BE TREATED AND  
VALUED AS AN INDIVIDUAL

You should be recognised, respected and celebrated for being unique, with your own character, personality, background, experiences, likes and dislikes.

You should not be judged by what you look like, what you wear, how you act, what language you wish to speak, where you are from, what you believe in or your views and ideas. You should be treated equally to others in the place you live, in your school and in the community.

### **Your Background and Culture**

You should be encouraged to speak, learn and express yourself in your preferred language wherever possible.

You should be encouraged to learn about your background and culture, and be able to celebrate it in your views, clothing and what you do.

### **Your Religion**

Your Carer/s and Social Worker have a responsibility to support you to:

- \* Practise the religion of your choice
- \* Have regular access to your religious book/guide (Bible, Koran, etc.)
- \* Have regular access to your place of worship (Church, Synagogue, Mosque, Temple)
- \* Have time to pray in private
- \* Feel comfortable and respected to practice your religion
- \* Ensure that you are able to fulfil all the things you need to do to follow your religion

### **Your Time / Your Space**

You should be able to have time with your Carer/s away from any other children or young people, so that the time spent with them is about you.

You should be able to have a say in where you go and what you do for fun, and be able to enjoy one another's company without others interrupting.

You should be able to have time alone with your Social Worker away from your placement and the others who live there, so that you can talk through any problems you may have.

Above all,  
you should be  
encouraged  
to continue being  
**You!**





# YOU

## HAVE THE RIGHT

### TO BE Healthy

The people that live with you and care for you should make sure that they:

- \* Encourage you to eat a healthy, well-balanced diet
- \* Give you the opportunity to be involved in physical activities, regular exercise and play
- \* Promote regular and reasonable bedtimes so that you get enough rest and sleep
- \* Care for you properly when you are feeling poorly
- \* Make health appointments for you when you need them, and support you in going to them
- \* Provide you with health information that is relevant to your age and situation

Remember, if you have any questions about your health, you should contact a **LAC Nurse** anytime from 9am to 5pm, Mondays to Fridays at the office on: **029 20 864 676** or text/ring their mobile phone numbers:

**07947 828 908**  
or **07946 603 415**

### Seeing a LAC Nurse

To make sure all of your Health needs are met, you will undergo a LAC Health Assessment, which records how healthy you are and what support you may need to improve your health.

Your Health Assessment is done by a LAC Nurse, who is available for contact at anytime should you have questions about your health.

LAC Nurses provide confidential advice and information on:

- \* **Contraception**
- \* **Substance Misuse (such as smoking, alcohol and drug use)**
- \* **Any other issues that young people find they have while growing up**

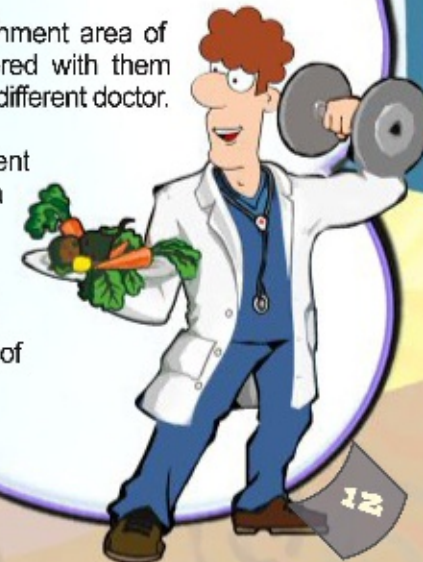
### Seeing a Doctor (also known as a GP)

You should be registered with a doctor local to where you live within 10 days of moving there. If you are living at the same place after 4 weeks, this registration should be made permanent.

If you move to a new home within the catchment area of your doctor, you can ask to stay registered with them even if your Carer/s are registered with a different doctor.

If you move out of your doctor's catchment area, you will have to register with a different doctor local to where you now live.

You have the right to speak to the doctor on your own (or with a friend), if there are things you feel uncomfortable talking about in front of your Carer/s.







**YOU**

**HAVE THE RIGHT**

**TO BE HEALTHY**  
(continued)

### **Seeing a Dentist**

Your Carer/s should make sure that you see a dentist every 6 months for check ups. If you are not registered with a dentist, your carer/s should register you within 20 days of you moving in with them.

If you are already registered with a dentist, you can ask to stay with them even if your Carer/s are registered with a different dentist.

### **Seeing an Optician**

Your Carer/s should make sure you have an appointment with an optician once a year, to not only check out how good your eyesight is, but to also check on the overall health of your eyes.

### **Having a Healthy Head**

All of the adults working for and with you should be able to listen and support you about any worries you may have, and comfort you if you are upset.

They should be encouraging and positive about you and the good things that you do.

If your worries are affecting you or others around you, your Carer/s may decide to ask for professional help to support you through these issues.

You can also ask for help yourself.



# YOU

## HAVE THE RIGHT

### TO AN EDUCATION and OTHER ACTIVITIES

You should be able to learn in an environment that not only encourages you, but also helps you to develop and achieve to the best of your ability.

If you are in a school, you should already have a **LAC Designated Teacher**, who is there to support you with any issues you may be having in school. If you have not been told who your LAC Designated Teacher is, you can ask your Social Worker to find out for you.

You should be supported by your Carer/s to do the best you can in your education by being:

- \* Encouraged to attend school/college
- \* Allowed to study, revise and do coursework/homework
- \* Given a space, such as a desk, to do your work
- \* Given time and quiet to do your work
- \* Given help or advice on your homework when you need it
- \* Praised when you do well or when you try hard and put in a lot of effort



Your **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** is a document that includes your school reports, other education or learning plans, and a list of targets to help you with:

- \* Reading
- \* Study Skills
- \* Attendance
- \* Behaviour in school or other education projects/courses
- \* Getting along with Teachers and other Pupils
- \* Writing
- \* Organisational Skills
- \* Homework

You should be given the chance by your Teacher to have a say on setting your targets and be invited to your **PEP Review** meeting every 6 months, in order to look at your progress and to set new targets. Your Social Worker and your Carer/s will also be invited to your PEP Review, along with any other people involved in your education.

If you would like further information about the kind of support you should have in education, contact:

**HELEN WEST**  
**Education Safeguarding Manager**

Directorate of Education  
Caerphilly County Borough Council  
Penallta House  
Tredomen Park  
Ystrad Mynach  
CF82 7PG

tel: 01443 86664

e-mail: [westhe@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:westhe@caerphilly.gov.uk)



# YOU

## HAVE THE RIGHT

### TO INFORMATION THAT RELATES TO YOU

A lot of information is recorded or shared about you. This can include:

- \* **Why you are in care**
- \* **Your background and past history about your life up until now**
- \* **Files, plans and reports written about you**
- \* **Appointments to do with where you live, with being looked after, and with your education and health**

You can ask your Social Worker or your Carer/s for a copy of anything that is written about you, including minutes (records) of meetings.

Any information that you ask for should be explained to you by your Social Worker in a way you can understand, and any questions you may have regarding this information should be answered in a way you can understand.

You should not be bullied by other children, young people, or adults in the place where you live, in school or the places you go.

There may be times when adults decide they are not able to share with you certain information about you. This may be because the information may:

- \* Involve confidential information about other people that cannot be shared
- \* Place you or others at risk
- \* Upset you too much
- \* Contain misleading information because the situation may change. For example: By not telling you immediately that you may have to move schools, it may be possible to make alternative arrangements to keep you where you are

The reasons why certain information cannot be shared with you should be clearly explained by your Carer/s and/or Social Worker. If you are unhappy with the reasons given, you are entitled to make a complaint or contact an Advocate who can support you to do so.

### Meetings that are About You

When you are in care, there will be many meetings about you to check that you are safe and that all of your needs are being met. Two of the most regular meetings are:

Your **LAC Review**, which looks at your **Care Plan** in detail and how well you have been getting on in the last 6 months. The review covers:

- \* Your views and issues
- \* Your placement (where you live), and how you are being cared for
- \* Contact with people who are important to you
- \* Your education
- \* Your hobbies and interests

Your **PEP Review**, which is a meeting that looks at your education and considers what support you may need in school and college. For more information about your PEP, please refer to Page 16.

When you turn 18 years of age, you are allowed access to all files and information that has been written about you.







When decisions are being made about you, or that affect you, anyone who works with or for you should always listen to your views, wishes and feelings. You should be given the opportunity to have your say and, while you won't always get what you want, people should seriously consider your views, wishes and feelings when making decisions.

**ADVOCACY:**

If you do not feel anyone is listening to you, or you are not being given the chance to say how you feel, you have the right to an **Independent Advocate**. An Independent Advocate will listen carefully to you and, with your permission, speak on your behalf in order to get your issues and point of view across. They will never take the side of other adults.

To ask for an **Advocate**, contact **NYAS** on:



0800 61 61 01 or [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

For more information on Advocacy, visit [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)

**MEETINGS:**

In order to make any necessary changes to provide you with the right support, adults will make decisions at meetings about you, such as your **LAC Reviews** and **PEP Reviews**.

Whilst the views of expert professionals are very important, these meetings can only make accurate decisions if they are aware of your views, wishes and feelings.

Not only should you be invited to these meetings, but you should also be invited to share your views beforehand, so that they can be understood by the person chairing the meeting, and then shared with the people making the decisions.

Make sure you put forward your issues by speaking to the person leading the meeting, or by meeting with an **Independent Advocate** who will speak up for you. You can even ask an adult you trust to share your views at the meeting on your behalf. If you prefer writing to speaking, you can jot down your ideas and views and give them to a person attending the meeting: the chairperson, an Advocate, or an adult you trust.





**COMPLAINTS:** If you are unhappy with something, or you feel that something is unfair, you have the right to make a complaint. You can make a complaint even if it is about a situation that has happened in the past. You can also make a complaint about any adult involved in caring or working with or for you. Remember, an Advocate can support you in making the complaint, or in helping you put across your issues.

Your Social Worker and the other adults working with and for you, should make sure you know how to make a complaint, and should provide you with written information about how to make a complaint. You should never be stopped from making or from finding out about how to make a complaint. If at any point you do not know or cannot remember how to make a complaint, you can ask any adult who works with or for you to provide you with the information.

If you are unhappy, or feel something is unfair about what is happening to you, (or you feel you would like to make a complaint), contact:

**JUDITH MORGANS**  
Customer Services Manager  
tel: 0800 328 4061  
e-mail: [socialservices@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:socialservices@caerphilly.gov.uk)

Judith and her team are also happy to receive positive comments about the people who work with and for you. So if someone has made a positive change in your life, let the team know!

For information on your Rights, more copies of this guide or a DVD of the Digital Stories covering your Rights, contact:

**STEVE BERRY**  
Children's Rights Officer  
tel: 0800 028 1995  
e-mail: [cro@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:cro@caerphilly.gov.uk)  
web page: [www.rightsforme.co.uk](http://www.rightsforme.co.uk)

If you want someone to listen to your issues, (or to speak about them on your behalf through an Independent Advocate), contact:

**NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)**  
tel: 0800 61 61 01  
e-mail: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

If you feel that the people mentioned in this Guide are not listening to you, or they have not provided you with reasonable explanations about decisions made about you, you can contact the **Children's Commissioner for Wales'** office, who can provide advice and support for free on:

tel: 0808 801 1000

You can find out more information about the Children's Commissioner for Wales from [www.childcomwales.org.uk](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk)



**"Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account."**

- Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child







## We Want To Support You To:

- \* have a place to live where you are safe, healthy, cared for and well-supported
- \* have appropriate contact with the people who are important to you
- \* have a say in decisions that are made about you
- \* have your voice heard, and be treated and valued as an individual
- \* be able to make a complaint if you feel something is unfair
- \* have access to education and other learning opportunities that suit you
- \* are involved in hobbies and activities that interest you
- \* have access to information that helps you

This Guide contains some of the things you may want to know about during the time you are LOOKED AFTER. If you do not understand any of the information, or there are other questions you would like answered, you can always ask your Social Worker.

*This publication is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.  
Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.*