

A YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE To Being Looked After



My Numbers

My Name	
My Foster Carer Telephone number	
My Social Worker Telephone number	
My Social Worker Manager Telephone number	
My Independent Reviewing Officer Telephone number	
Date	

Introduction to this Guide

Introduction by members of the Children in Care Council

Hi. We are members of the Junior Children in Care Council and the Don't Whisper Senior Children in Care Council. We have put together this Guide for you. It contains information that we believe you will need to know. It is not meant to answer everything. We want you to know everyone is different and we all have different experiences.

Things will get better but it won't be overnight. All the workers and professionals are here to help, make sure you make use of them as they are here for you. Have a look at the contents and check out the various sections in your own time. There are some useful links and information about people who will be supporting you.

Remember you are important, and you matter. Your health, well-being, achievements, ambition and aspirations are too. You are not on your own. Come to the Children In Care Council (CCiC) where you can meet us and others, make new friends and have a laugh. Together we can help the professionals get it right for us.

From members of the Junior Children in Care Council and the
Don't Whisper Senior Children in Care Council

May 2019

Positive Messages

for young people
from young people



'coming into care was the best decision I've made in my life – I'm happy!'



'learning to manage and cope with bad news in a better way'



'I've gone to college – and got my qualifications!'

'meeting all the people who work to support and care for me'



'I'm now doing my traineeship in business administration'



'look I've got an unconditional offer from City University – I am so proud'

From time to time, you may be feeling...

stressed HAPPY
scared shy ANXIOUS
not listened to
relieved isolated
expectation not met
separated
I'm not alone

It is ok,
don't forget
to talk
to someone

Our Pledge to You

For Children age 11 and younger

Redbridge Council think it is very important to make sure that all children in care have a better life and will work hard to achieve this.

We will take good care of you, keep you safe and be a good parent to you. We will listen when you tell us what you like and don't like.

The Redbridge Pledge will help us to make sure you grow up happy and have a good life.

The Redbridge Pledge is the promises made by Redbridge Council to all children in care.

1

We will give you **A Young Person's Guide to Being Looked After** when you come into our care which gives you information about everything you need to know about being in care. It will give you important telephone numbers of people you may need to contact.

2

Your Social Worker will come and see you at least **once every 4 weeks** and you can talk to them on your own every time they come. You will have their telephone number, email address and you will know where they work so you can speak to them when you need to.

3

We will talk to your teachers to help you do well at school. You will have a plan called a Personal Education Plan or PEP which will tell us what help you need at school. If you feel that you are being bullied at school, we will work with you and the school to make sure this does not happen.

4

When we arrange to come and visit you we will make sure it is not within your school time so **you can be there**. Apart from your Personal Education Plan meeting, which talks about your education, we will hold all other meetings away from your school.

5

We will tell your carer the things they need to know to be able to look after you and to make sure you are safe and well.

Before you go to a new carer we will tell you all about them and where they live. You will get to meet your carer before you move there except if you have to move in an emergency or where your parents do not agree to this. If you need to come into our care with your brother or sister, we will try and make sure that you are placed together if this is what you want and is right for you both.

6

We will make sure that **your carer** takes you to see your doctor, optician, nurse and dentist **when you need to visit them**. We will provide you with a "Health Passport". This holds important information about your health history and your health needs.

7

We will make sure that you know if you can see your family and when and where this will be.

8

We will make sure you get to meet **other children in care** where you live and in other places so you can help each other and talk about the things you like and don't like.

9

You will know how much pocket money you will get and we will help you to **save your money**. The amount of pocket money you will receive will be agreed at your placement planning meeting. The Local Authority expects your foster carer to save a minimum of **£10 per week for you**. This money must be kept in a savings account for you. Your savings will be kept for you until you leave care.

10

We will do our best to make sure you don't have too many different social workers and move too many times. If you feel unhappy with the way we are looking after you, we will provide you with an Advocate who will help you to speak out or speak out for you.

Our Pledge to You

For Children and Young People age 12 and older

The Redbridge Pledge is a commitment from Redbridge Council to all children and young people who are in care or are leaving care in Redbridge.

The Redbridge Pledge is the promises made by Redbridge Council to all children in care.

1

Before moving into a new placement, you will receive information about the placement and the area it is in. You will have a proper **introduction to your carers** unless you have to move in an emergency.

2

We will give you information that you need at every point in your journey, from care to adulthood, presented in a way that you want including information on legal entitlements and **the service you can expect to receive from us at different stages in the journey**. We will make it clear to you what information about yourself and your time in care you are entitled to see. We will support you to access this when you want it, to manage any feelings that you might have about the information, and to put on record any disagreement with factual content.

3

If it is safe for you and something that you want, we will help and support you to **stay in contact** with your family and other people that are important to you.

4

We promise to make your **care plans and pathway plans** clear about the support you will receive from Redbridge. Together, we will talk about what this will be (for example where you live, what school or college you go to) and who will be responsible for making sure your plan is working for you. We will provide support to you set out in current regulations and guidance and this will include **information, advice, practical and financial help and emotional support**.

5

We promise to make sure you feel safe where you're living and are happy there. We promise to keep you safe from those who may try and harm you and we will provide someone to speak to you independently if you have been missing from care. We will work very closely with schools and partner agencies if we hear that you are being bullied or discriminated against in any way.

We promise that you will meet with your social worker and your personal advisor on your own to talk to them about what is happening in your life.

6

We promise to **help you know what your rights are** which means what you are entitled to as a child in care in Redbridge. We promise to tell you what plans we are making for you and we will always listen to what you feel is important. We can put you in touch with the **Children's Rights Advocacy Service** if you feel you would like someone independent to talk to about your rights and the plans we make with you. They can speak up for you or help you to speak up yourself if there is an issue you feel you need to make representation about. We have a **'Children in Care Council'** who have been set up to hear your views and influence decisions on your behalf about being in care in Redbridge.

Our Pledge to You

For Children and Young People age 12 and older

7

We promise to support you through your education. We will draw up a regular **Personal Education Plan (PEP)** with you to encourage you to achieve your ambitions and help you get the best results you can. We will celebrate and promote your achievements with you. When you have completed your education at school, we will prepare you as much as possible to pursue an **apprenticeship**, continue into **6th Form**, or apply to go to **college** and then onto **university**.

8

Your health is important to us. We will make sure that you are registered with local health professionals you need to see for example, local doctors, opticians, dentists. We will provide you with a "**Health Passport**". This holds important information about your health history and your health needs. We will also provide you with a leisure pass and a MyMax card, www.mymaxcard.co.uk, to help you access facilities in and out of the Borough.

9

We will work alongside you to prepare you for your move into **independent living when you are ready**. We will do everything we can to ensure you are happy and feel safe when doing so. We will help you think about the choices available and to find accommodation which is right for you. We recognise that at different times you may need to take a step back and start over again. We will do our best to **support you until you are settled in your independent life**.

10

We promise to be a **lifelong champion**. We will work together with the services you need, including health, housing and education as well as helping you gain employment. We will treat you with courtesy and humanity whatever your age when you return to us for advice or support. We will trust and respect you and we will remain your supporters in whatever way we can, even when our formal relationship with you has ended.

11

We promise to involve you in staff recruitment, training and in foster carers reviews so you have **the best people working with you**.

12

We will provide **opportunities for you to meet and socialise with children and young people in and leaving care locally and nationally** to support each other, share experiences and work together to improve services in the future.

Looking After You

We will do our best to keep you near to your home so that you can continue to see your family and friends and keep going to your own school.

Wherever you live it is the responsibility of Redbridge to make sure you are safe and well. Did you know that not all children and young people live in a foster home. Here are some examples of the different homes where they may live.

- family or close family friends
- foster carers
- or in a Residential Home

Family and Friends

Some children and young people are cared for by someone in their own family like their grandparents, uncle, aunty or a close family friend. These family members or friend will be assessed like foster carers as they will need to show that they can care for you and meet your needs. Everyone wants to see you grow and develop to become a confident and independent young adult.

Foster Carers

Foster carers look after children and young people in their own original home. There are lots of foster carers who have been specially trained and assessed to ensure they have the skills needed. You are very important and we want to make sure you are well looked after. They are responsible for looking after you while you live with them and you should be treated the same as any other member of their family and feel part of it.

Living in a Residential Home

A residential home is when you live with other young people and you are looked after by some adults on site. The adults are employed to work at the residential homes and will work as a team to offer you support during the day and nights. You will have a "Key Worker" who has the responsibility for looking after you and making sure you feel safe and secure.

SECTION 1

Who does what?



Information about the professionals you may meet

- **Social Worker**
- **Foster Carer**
- **Supervising Social Worker**
- **Corporate Parent**
- **Children's Participation Officer**
- **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)**
- **Children's Rights Service**
- **Designated Teacher**
- **Specialised Nurse for Children Looked After**

Social Worker

You will have a social worker who will be responsible for your care. They are there for you.

Your social worker will visit you and will explain to you how long you may be living in your new home for. They will work with you, with the help of other professionals, such as your school and health workers, to put together a plan for your future.

Your social worker will ask you about your wishes and feelings. This will include asking you how you are feeling about the changes in your life, what you want to do, how you want things to happen and what support you need.

When your social worker comes to visit you they will come to where you live, but at times, they can also meet you at a different place if you like. Did you know you can ask for extra visits too?

They will visit you every 4 weeks and talk to you about how things are for you. You can let them know how school is going, if you have been well, and anything else you may want to talk about. They will ask about your hobbies, things you are interested in or things you would like to do in your spare time.

They will make sure that you are safe and looked after properly. You can ask them any questions you have. If your social worker does not know the answer they will find out and get back to you. Their visits will be written up and kept as a record to help with making decisions about how best to meet your needs. Children and young people have a right to see and have a copy of the records. You can ask your social worker about this.

Your social worker where possible will support you to keep in contact with friends and family.

Foster Carer

What is foster care?

Children and young people live away from home when they cannot live with their own families. It's living with a different family in a different home.

What are foster carers like?

Foster carers are people you will be living with. They are carefully checked and trained to make sure they can offer you a safe and comfortable home. Some foster carers live alone whilst others are a couple. Some will have children living with them already. In Redbridge, children and young people are given a profile (information) of the foster carers, telling you about them before you move in.

Will my foster parent be right for me?

There is a team, whose job is to know each foster parent. Your social workers will look for foster carers who are the right ones to care for you. They will try and find families that share your language, culture and religion. Our job is to make sure you have a safe and caring family while you are living away from home.

What do foster carers do?

They provide a home for you and they keep you safe. They listen to your concerns or worries and talk to you about how to keep safe both at home and outside. They will talk to you about relationships and help you to make positive choices. Foster carers help you to do well at school and college and help make sure that you are healthy. They will also help you think about the things you may want to do like playing sport, making music or following other interests. Your foster carers will give you pocket money and show you how to save money. They will take you to interesting places and help you to enjoy yourself and have friendships.

Living in foster care

Your foster parent will welcome you into your new home, want to find out about you and hear what questions you may have, so you can get to know each other. They will spend time talking to you about the family routines as weekends will have a different routine than the weekdays. You can discuss these things together.

What is expected of you?

- show respect to all
- join in family activities and events
- come home at the time that has been agreed
- go to school and do your homework and coursework
- let your foster carers know where you are going

What can I expect from my foster parent?

- they will attend meetings and advocate for your needs
- they will make time to listen to you and support you with anything upsetting you
- they will celebrate with you your birthdays, achievements and holidays
- they will make sure you attend all your health appointments, include your opticians and dentist checks
- they will provide you with nutritious healthy food and snacks
- they will support your education and schooling and encourage you to do your best
- they will agree and tell you what pocket money you will receive each week and what money is being spent on you and what is being saved for you

Supervising Social Worker

The role of the supervising social worker (SSW) is to assist and monitor foster carers in their role of looking after foster children and young people. Although part of their job is to give support to foster carers, their first responsibility is to the children and young people and to ensure that they are receiving good quality care.

Corporate Parent

Redbridge Councillors act as the Corporate Parent to children and young people in the care of Redbridge. The role of the Corporate Parent is to ensure that the services provided by the Council as a whole to support children and young people in care achieve positive outcomes.

Children's Participation Officer

The Children's Participation officer works directly with you and all children and young people to ensure your voices and experiences are shared with your Corporate Parents, some of whom, will have the authority to make decisions that affect you. This is achieved through various means. It includes organising the Children in Care Council meetings where elected members and senior officers will be invited to attend to get to know you and hear about things that are important to you. The Children's Participation Officer will keep in contact with you through emails, text and letters. This is to keep you updated with new developments as well as creating opportunities for your voices to be heard as a group or as an individual to improve the support you received and matters that affect you.

At these meetings you will learn about your rights and have your voices heard. Members of the group will collect feedback, experiences and ideas to share with the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel.

The Panel members are made up of elected members (people who have been voted in by the residents of Redbridge), Executive Director, Children and Young People officers. The Children in Care Council members work collaboratively with the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel to improve the service and support you receive.

The Children's Participation Officer will also organise Activity Days, events, run skills development workshops to get you all together. If you are living outside of Redbridge they will write to you and make sure you have their contact details as well as keep you informed of new developments that affect you.

Independent Reviewing Officer

The Independent Reviewing Officer leads the review meeting to discuss with you your progress in care; this will help to decide your long term plan.

Children's Rights Service

The Children's Rights Service will help you to sort things out if you are unhappy or worried about decisions being made about your life.

Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher ensures school staff help and support you to learn, achieve and enjoy at school.

Specialised Nurse for Children Looked After

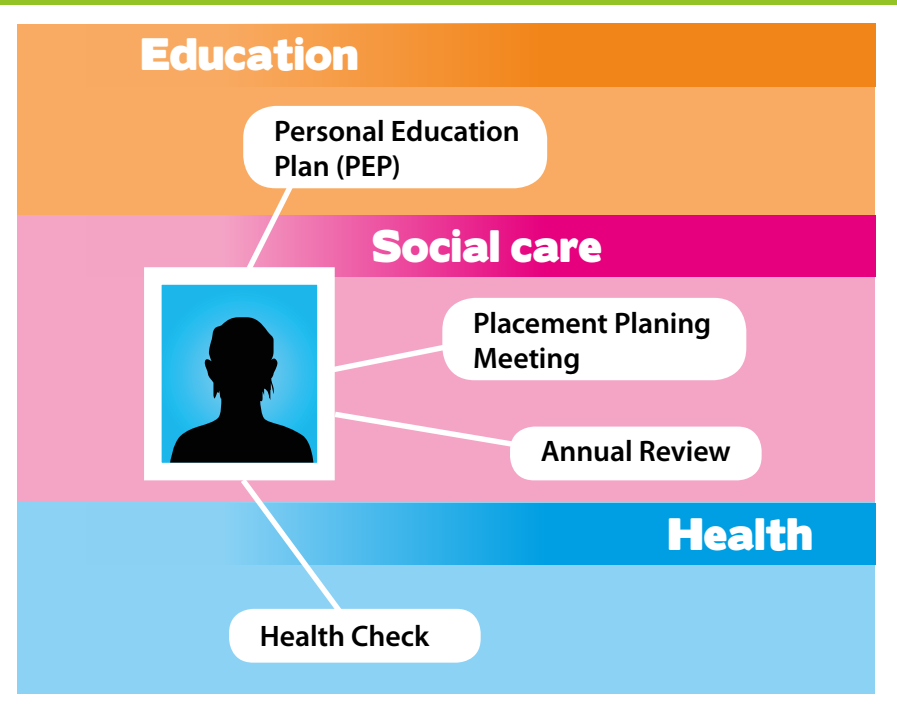
The Nurse will help you to keep well and stay healthy by making sure you see a doctor, dentist and optician regularly. The Nurse will also support you to take care of yourself; personal hygiene, eating good food, exercise and have enough sleep.

SECTION 2

Meetings and Plans



Information for young people about different meetings and the plans that are developed



Placement Planning Meeting

When you come into care, you may feel that there are lots of meetings and people talking to you and about you. These meetings are really important so that you are listened to as well as making sure you understand what is happening in your life.

The Placement Planning Meeting should happen within 5 working days after you have come in to care.

The meeting will be attended by your foster carer and their supervising social worker (yes your foster carers have a social worker as well). The meeting will be all about you and your day to day care; things that you like to eat, activities that you like to do, as well as things that you don't like will be discussed in the meeting. The aim of the meeting is to ensure that all of the people involved in your care are clear about your needs and how these can be met.

Care Plan

Your care plan has information about how the different services will support you and what should happen in the future for you.

This plan should include your views and wishes and should be agreed with you. The plan will allow you to see what is happening in regards to your health, education, and the views of your parents or carers. There is a section about your identity such as your religion, culture, racial background. Your social worker will talk to you and explain how you can keep in contact with your friends and family, if it is safe for you to do so.

There is a section that will talk about your interests and hobbies and how these can be continued. Your care plan will also look at your personal development. Depending on how old you are you may be supported to keep your room tidy, help around the house, or as an older young person you will get support with learning how to cook, manage your money, understand how to pay bills and buy your own clothes.

Health Plan

Your health is very important. Being healthy does not just mean eating lots of vegetables and not being sick. It's keeping your teeth clean, regular eye tests, having your immunisations up to date. When you become looked after, you will have what is called a "Health Assessment" by a doctor or Nurse for Looked After Children (LAC Nurse) and young people. We will help you to keep well and stay healthy by making sure you see a doctor, dentist and optician regularly.

This should happen before the Looked After Review. If you are 5 years old or over your assessment will take place once a year, if you are under 5 it will be every 6 months. Remember you can also ask for advice or talk about your health with the LAC Nurse. You may have the health assessment on your own or bring someone else with you. If a nurse is undertaking the health assessment it may be in school or at home at a time to suit you.

You have a right to refuse any part of the health assessment.

With your co-operation the nurse draws up a health assessment summary and future health plan for you. This is an opportunity to discuss any health concerns you have, personal hygiene, eating good food, exercise and having enough sleep. You may want to discuss problems at home or school, or friendships and relationships which may be affecting your health and wellbeing.

The LAC Nurse will provide information about the following services.

- health and safety
- drugs and alcohol advice
- immunisations
- c-card registration
- sexual health and contraceptive advice
- pregnancy testing
- lifestyle choices
- chlamydia screening
- counselling services

Pathway Plan

When you are 15 years and 9 months old you will have a Pathway Plan. The Pathway Plan is a key document which details the services and support you will need, when you are looking to move to independent living.

At this stage you will be supported to engage in a transition programme, Preparing for Adulthood, specially design to help you build on the skills and knowledge you will need for when the time comes for you to move out and live independently. You will be given a Preparing for Adulthood Skills Workbook to work through with your carers. This will include learning useful skills like how to cook, manage your money, how to shop and how make an appointment. You will also be invited to attend the Preparing for Adulthood Skills Programme which will be delivered within Redbridge. If you live out side this area an equivalent will be sourced for you as much as possible. Your skills development and responsibilities will need to be reviewed to capture your progress.

See Section 5 for further information.

Case Review for Children Looked After

Case Review, is a review meeting, for you and everyone to talk about how you are getting on and the plans that are being made with you. You, your parent/s (if appropriate), social worker and foster parent will be at this meeting. There may be times that other people are invited, like your teacher or advocate if you need someone to support you.

There is always an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) at reviews. It is their job to lead the discussion at the meeting and help decide your long term plans. They will make sure that you understand what is happening. They will talk to you before the meeting starts. They will ask you if there is anything you would like to talk about at the meeting and tell you exactly what will happen in the meeting so that there will be no surprises. Remember your views are very important. There will also be an opportunity for you to chair your own review, as long as you are comfortable doing so.

You will have your first review when you have been looked after for 20 working days or 28 days if you counted the Saturdays and Sundays. The next review meeting will be three months later. The review meeting will then take place every six months. You will be appointed an IRO within five days of becoming looked after by Redbridge. Your IRO will contact you soon after the 5 days.

It is very important that you go to your review meeting and talk about your views and what you want and think is important to you. If you cannot attend, make sure you talk with your social worker or fill out your consultation form to make sure your views are included in the decisions that will be made. Once everything has been discussed, decisions about how to get the best results for you will be made. These may include how long you are going to be living with your foster carers, how you are going to remain in contact with your friends and family, whether you need additional support with schoolwork to achieve the best you can or whether you have an interest or hobby.

Everyone (including you) will decide what things should be done and who will do them, to meet your needs. The Independent Reviewing Officer will write all of this down. Those who attended the meeting will get the Minutes, note of the meeting. This will form your Plan, as it is all about caring for you.

You can ask your social worker for a copy. A copy will be kept so that when the next meeting is held, they can look and see if what was decided has happened. At the next meeting changes may be made to make sure that your Plan is up to date and still what you need and want. Your views and opinions about decisions that affect your life are important.

Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel

Redbridge Councillors act as a Corporate Parent to children in the care of Redbridge. The role of the Corporate Parent is to ensure that the services provided by the Council as a whole to support children in care achieve positive outcomes.

The five priorities for children in their care are:

- enabling children to have the best start in life and tackling children and young peoples' problems
- enabling children and young people to be safe and promoting their well being
- enabling children and young people to make good progress in education
- enabling young people to make a successful transition to adult life
- ensuring the children and young people of Redbridge receive high quality services

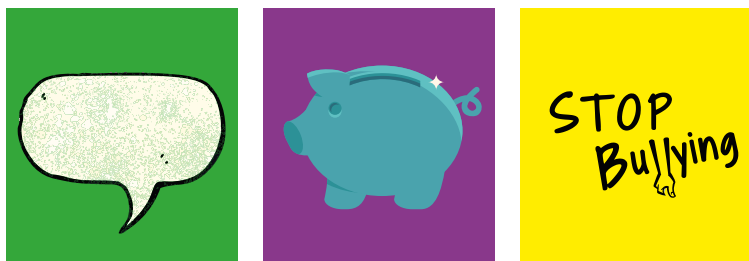
In order to exercise this responsibility, Councillors must be:

- well informed about the children for whom they are responsible
- think about how they are affected by Council decisions
- listen to what children and young people say
- be a champion for children and young people

In Redbridge, this corporate parenting responsibility is carried out by the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel meets with looked after children so that they can say what they think about the care that they are receiving.

SECTION 3

Your Voice, Rights, Entitlements and Participation



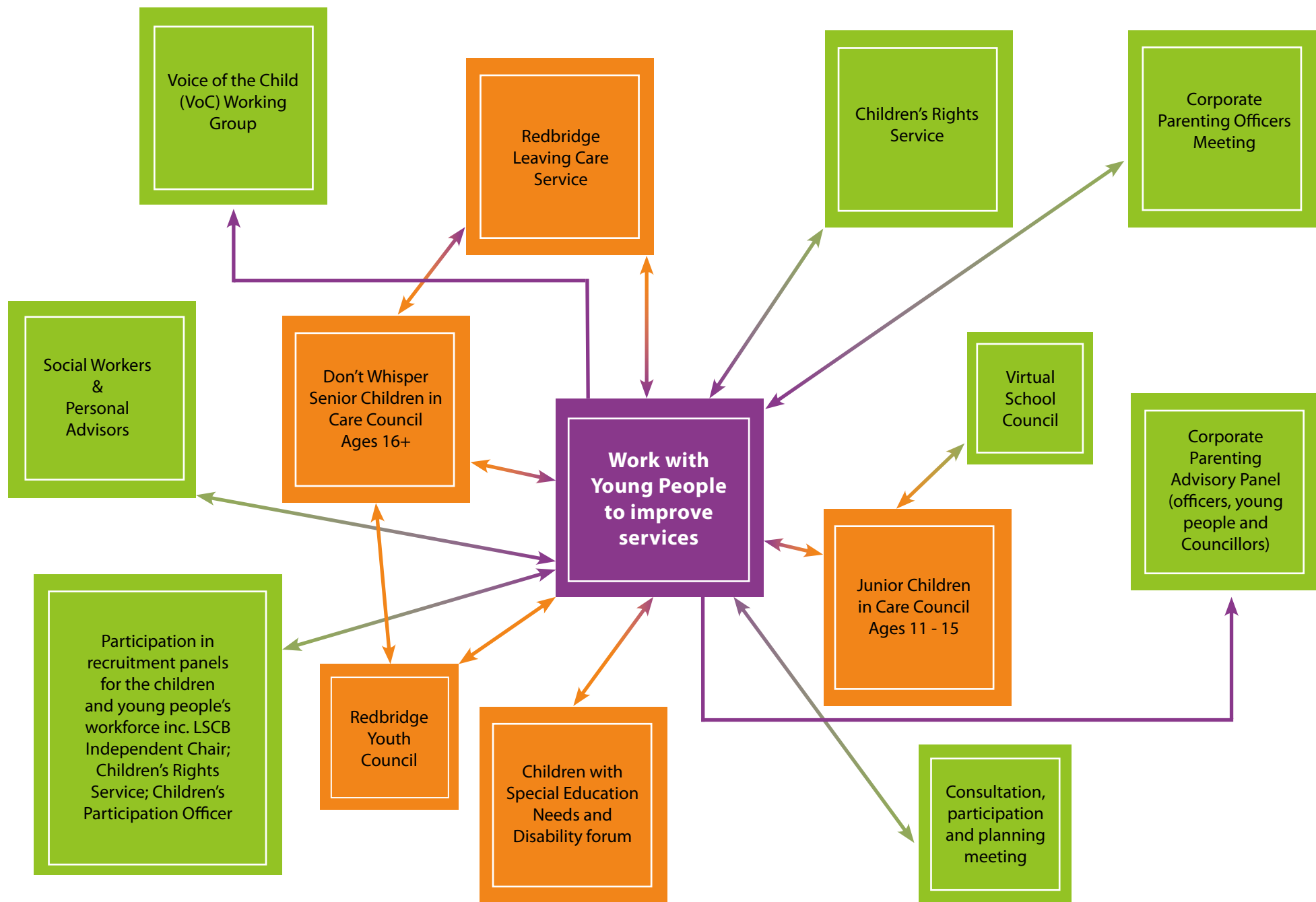
- **Your Voice**
- **Children in Care Council**
- **Children's Rights Service**
- **The role of an Independent Visitor**
- **Savings**
- **Pocket Money**
- **Your Records**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Bullying**
- **Compliments and Complaints**

Your Voice

It is important for you to tell us how things are going for you, and for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel to listen to you and act on them appropriately.

Changes and improvement that have been made as a result of what children and young people have said and what the Corporate Parenting officers have done:

- discounted access to leisure and cultural facilities through the "My Max" card
- Redbridge Vision Leisure Services offer to all children living within Redbridge, who are living away from home, FREE use of Redbridge Cycling Centre, gym pass and swimming at the four leisure centres
- Young people are trained to be on interview panels for Children's Services recruitment
- A Young Person's Guide To Being Looked After
- A Health Passport
- Preparing for Adulthood Programme
- Preparing for Adulthood Skills Workbook
- A Guide to be a Care Leaver



Children in Care Council

What is it?

The Children in Care Council is a place where you all can meet up, get together to learn about what's happening in the borough, work on new projects such as designing leaflets, participate in feedback sessions sought by decision makers and senior officers, on policy and service delivery.

Who is it for?

It is for you. It's for all children and young people who are looked after. Every area in England has a Children in Care Council. Every area in England has one. It's a space for you to meet others, to have fun and make new friends. Through these "get togethers" there are opportunities for everyone to develop skills as well as sharing the skills you already have.

There are two groups, the Junior Children in Care Council (JCICC) for those aged 11 – 15 and Don't Whisper group for those aged 16 - 24.

If you live too far to travel to the Children in Care Council you are welcome to contact the Children's Participation Officer whenever you wish. They will also keep in contact with you as well as send you the quarterly newsletter. It will give details of updates, new developments as well as your work if you wish to send them in. Throughout the year the Children's Participation Officer may text, email, send letters and or call you. You are all welcome to contribute to the development of the Newsletter. Your views and opinions are valued so keep in touch.

Why does it take place?

It's about giving children and young people a voice about their lives and how services can support. It is another way for children and young people to inform the decision makers and senior officers about what is good in their lives and what needs to be improved. Service providers and guest speakers are invited to these "get togethers" for you to develop a better understand about the service and for services to hear directly from you who are in receipt of them. It's a great opportunity for you to influence how services are to be delivered.

When does it take place?

The two groups, the Junior Children in Care Council (JCICC) and The Don't Whisper Senior Children in Care Council, meet fortnightly throughout the year, except for a break during Christmas and a change of programme during school holidays.

What now?

For more information of when and where the next session will take place or any other questions, please contact the Children's Participations Officer, details can be found in Section 6.

Children's Rights Service

Did you know that you have rights? Here a few of them:

- the right to have a safe place to live
- the right to have an education
- the right to be treated with respect
- the right to be asked what you think and feel about decisions being made about your life and for your views to be seriously considered

This last one is the most important right for you. This doesn't mean the adults have to do everything you say, but they do have to take your ideas seriously. If they disagree with your ideas they have to explain to you clearly why they can't do what you have asked for.

What to do if you are not happy?

If you are unhappy about anything, first talk to your foster parent, social worker or Independent Reviewing Officer. If you feel that you can't talk to them or that you have not been listened to, you can contact the Children's Rights Advocate; whose job is to help children and young people to get their voices heard.

The Children's Rights Advocate can help you if:

- you want some help in saying the things you need to say to people making decisions about you. (Like your foster parent or social worker)
- you are unhappy about the way you are being treated by your social worker, carer or anyone else
- you are worried about the decisions being made
- you need information about your rights
- you want an advocate to be with you at meetings

Examples of issues children and young people have asked the Children's Rights Advocate to help with:

- I want more contact with my family
- being told they are moving me from my children's home but I don't want to
- not getting the financial support, I think I am entitled to
- the social worker is not listening to my views
- I'm not getting on with the foster parent, can you help me raise this?
- I'm worrying about the plans being made for me
- I dislike the way my foster parent is treating me
- I can't relate to my social worker
- I want to stay with my foster parent after 18
- I want to make a complaint and need help

You can contact the Children's Rights Advocate or ask someone else to make the contact for you. The Children's Rights Advocate will arrange to meet you and help to sort out your problem.

Remember the Advocate is there to support you and make sure people listen to you. The Advocate can keep what you say confidential (except if you indicate that you or someone else is in danger of being hurt). Contact details can be found in Section 6.

The role of an Independent Visitor

An Independent Visitor (sometimes called an IV) is an adult who volunteers to spend some free time regularly with a young person like you. They are not paid to do this - they do it because they like to help and support young people. They are carefully chosen to make sure they are safe and matched to young people, for instance they often share the same hobby as a young person.

They usually visit the young person once or twice a month. Young people and their Independent Visitor spend time talking; they sometimes go out together to places like the cinema, park or football, depending on the young person's interests.

Here are some things young people have said about their Independent Visitor:

- 'my IV has helped me know about different places and look towards the future'
- 'I like having an IV because I can talk to them about stuff and when I'm angry I can tell them my problems'
- 'my IV understands me and is easy to talk to'

If you would like an Independent Visitor ask your social worker or Independent Reviewing Officer for more information.

Savings

All foster carers are required to open a bank account in your name. Your foster carers will also open a Savings Account for you it will not be in your name. They will pay £10 each week into your savings account. This money is not available to you on a daily basis. You will receive bank statements which should be kept by you or your carers, and be available for viewing when requested. Savings are built up over the time to enable you to have a 'pot' of money when you reach the age of 18 as you start your life as an adult. If you change homes, the savings amount will also move with you and your new foster parent will continue to add to your existing savings.

Guide for Children and Young People ON POCKET MONEY AND SAVINGS

Age	Pocket money per week	Savings per week
0-4	£5*	£10 per week
5-10	£5	£10 per week
11-15	£10	£10 per week
16-17	£15	£10 per week

*As under 5's will be too young to be given pocket money, the weekly amount will be added to the child's savings

These amounts will be reviewed in March each year

Things you need to know about your savings

- Savings will be placed in a savings account until you leave care.
- You will be able to check how much has been saved for you at any time by asking your carer, social worker or personal adviser to show you the account. Your Independent Reviewing Officer will ask to see the savings account at every child care review to make sure that the correct amount is being saved for you.
- If your pocket money has been withheld it will be placed in this account and you will not be able to receive it until the age of 18.
- You can add to this savings account if you wish to.

Things you need to know about your pocket money

- The pocket money is for you to spend how you choose.
- You might want to save some pocket money for something special. If you do, you can have this money when you choose, as it is separate to the savings your carer will put aside for you.
- Your pocket money will not be withheld unless:
 - you are using the money irresponsibly e.g. buying illegal substances, gambling;
 - you deliberately break things;

If it is to be withheld this will be discussed and agreed by your social worker or personal advisor and your carer. You must be informed of the reason why, for how long and what you need to do to change the arrangement. Any withheld pocket money will be placed in your savings account.
- you will not be expected to use your pocket money for planned leisure activities such as cinema, bowling or club membership. Your carer will usually pay for this.
- If you have a planned activity where you will be out at a meal time, your carer will give you money to buy food. You will not be expected to use your pocket money.
- Your carer will buy the toiletries you need, but if you want to upgrade to something more special, you can use your pocket money or request it as a birthday gift.

You will also receive birthday and festival gifts or money. Information on this can be provided by your social worker or personal advisor.

Pocket Money

Every week your foster parent will give you pocket money. The amount will depend upon your age and what was agreed in the Placement Planning Meeting with your social worker. Sometimes you might get small amounts throughout the week, or a weekly amount to last the whole week; you might want to talk with your foster parent about what suits you best. You can choose to have some of your pocket money put aside if you want to save for something, talk with your foster parent / social worker about how they can help you. This is separate to your weekly savings.

Your Records

You will have a record which will keep the information of all the meetings and visits that have taken place.

These will include your:

- Care Plan and all changes that have been made to them
- visits by social worker
- contact agreement
- Health Assessments and Reports
- Personal Education Plans and school reports and copies of your achievements
- review meetings
- all legal documents. This will be different for each child or young person. It may include a Court Order, immigration papers

You have the right to see your records. Your social worker and Independent Review Officer will be able to tell you how to do this. Your records are confidential and are kept safe and secured. The records are usually kept until your 75th birthday as it may be something you want to look at in the future.

Bullying

Bullying can be anything from name calling because of your race, culture or disability or for any reason, making things up deliberately to get you in trouble, hitting you, taking or damaging your belongings or stealing your money.

If any of these things ever happen to you or anything that upsets you, **“please tell someone”** about it. Don't be scared by threats. If you don't tell someone things may get worse. You should speak to someone you trust such as your foster parent, social worker, a teacher, the Children's Rights Officer, Children's Participation Officer or you can call Childline. They will do the right things to make it stop.

Compliment and Complaint

We do want to know all the good things about you, that you are happy; and the staff have done a good job. You can give a compliment by completing the on-line form on Redbridgei.

If you are not happy about something, you should talk to your foster parent, social worker, Independent Review Officer and the Children's Rights Officer, who's details are listed in section 6. If the issues are not resolved, you can consider making a complaint. The Children's Rights Advocate, can help you to make a complaint, or if you prefer to make a complaint on your behalf.

SECTION 4

Education



- **Your Education and School**
- **The Virtual School**
- **Bursary**

Your Education and School

Your education is very important to us and we will do our best to make sure you are supported to do your best. Your foster parent, social worker, and your teachers all know how important education is for you and they will give you whatever help and support you need. In every school there is a special teacher called the Designated Teacher. Like your Review meetings, you also have meetings to talk and plan for your education. This is called a Personal Educational Plan (PEP) meeting, the PEP has information on how you are doing and what you need to help in your education.

If you are having any problems or difficulties at school, you should talk to your foster parent and social worker who will help you. You will also be able to get support at school from the Designated Teacher.

The details of the Designated Teacher can be found in the PEP.

The Virtual School

The Virtual School is an additional resource which is there to support and challenge all those involved in your education. All children and young people who are in education, post 16, including university are part of Redbridge's Virtual School.

The Virtual School Team is working to raise the educational achievements and attendance of children and young people in care. The Virtual School tracks educational progress, supports, monitors work to help you achieve your dreams. They will also support and advise the professional team.

The Virtual School is there to ensure you have access to good quality education, providing you with improved life chances.

We expect that you should:

- have a school place
- have a current Personal Education Plan
- attend a full time educational placement
- achieve your dreams

It is our responsibility to:

- promote the attainment
- raise awareness of the importance of education and lifelong learning
- help create opportunities for you to achieve success in your chosen career
- work closely with all agencies to improve educational opportunities for you

The Virtual School is made up of a Head Teacher, support staff and Higher-Level Teaching Assistants. Someone from the Virtual School will attend your Personal Education Plan meetings so you will get to meet them on a regular basis. The Virtual School also arranges activities such as theatre trips and residentials, so watch for their letters.

Bursary Fund

You are entitled to get a bursary (money) to help with education-related costs if you are aged 16 to 19 and are studying at school 6th form, college or on a training course, including unpaid apprenticeships.

What is a bursary for?

A bursary is money that you, or your education or training provider, can use to pay for things like, clothing, books and other equipment for your course, transport and lunch on days you study or are attending training.

Who can get a bursary?

You must be under 19 at the start of the academic year and be studying at a school 6th form, college, or on an unpaid training course. You could get up to £1,200 if one of the following applies to you:

- you're in or recently left local authority care
- you get Income Support or Universal Credit in your name
- you're disabled and get both Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in your name
- if you're a parent you'll also need to be living away from your own parents to qualify.

When and how to apply?

It is important that you apply as soon as possible. Once you know where you will be studying or training. Apply directly to the Student Services within school, college or training provider and ask for a Bursary Application Form. Complete the form and return it back to them. The school 6th form, college or training provider will process your application. Check with your school 6th form, college or training provider if they require you to reapply for a bursary for each year of your course. Ask your social worker for a letter to prove who you are and where you live.

Additional information

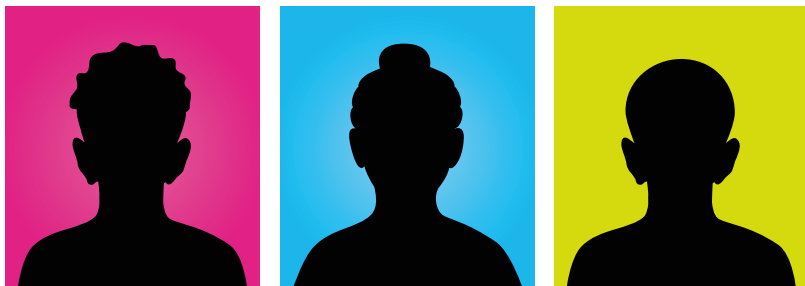
Remember the bursary is to help pay for things you need to stay in education. We all want you to do well. There will be an expectation that your attendance and behaviour is at an acceptable level – this is set by the 6th form school, college or training provider. Payments will be stopped if your attendance falls below the required level or if your behaviour and conduct is not satisfactory.

You think a decision is unfair

Speak to Student Services if you're unhappy with a decision. Follow their complaints process if you can't resolve the problem.

SECTION 5

Becoming Independent



- Pathway Plan
- Preparing for Adulthood Skills Workbook
- Preparing for Adulthood Skills Programme
- Leaving Care Service

Pathway Plan

Although you've been working on it your whole life (maybe without knowing it) when you become 15 and 9 months old you will officially begin to plan for adulthood. With the support of those around you, you will develop your own Pathway Plan and start working on it. This will help prepare you for independent living when you are 18.

To equip you as much as possible we have a transition programme in place to offer you additional support during this time.

The transition programme consists of;

- completing the **Preparing for Adulthood Skills Workbook**
- attending the **Preparing for Adulthood Skills Programme**
- a **Guide to Redbridge Leaving Care Service**

The transition programme will offer you the opportunity to work at your own pace as well as bring you together to learn in a group setting with others who are also transitioning into adulthood. This will enrich your experience and offer you a space to grow together. The Children's Participation Officer will invite you onto the transition programme and let you know the dates of the workshops. We want you to feel confident and supported as you take on additional responsibilities towards your independence.

Preparing for Adulthood Skills Workbook

You will be given a '**Preparing for Adulthood Skills workbook**' to get you started on the right path.

It is intended as a tool for you and your foster parent, with the support of your social worker, to work together to evidence your development. It is required that you complete the workbook within a set time. This will be negotiated according to your abilities. The sooner you completed it the sooner you will be able to put more of your skills into practice. On completion it will prove you have fulfilled the basic competencies needed to live independently.

The Workbook will offer you the opportunities to enhance your current skills, learn a few new ones and have fun at the same time whilst you are still living with your foster carers. You are encouraged to take some photos along the way to evidence your progress. Not only will it be something to look back on but also it will form evidence for your Silver Youth Achievement Award, a nationally recognised award to add to your CV.

Preparing for Adulthood Skills Programme

Just so you don't think you are on your own, we have put together a **Preparing for Adulthood Skills Programme** which will bring you and other young people together. These will include workshops on First Aid, Money Management, Events Coordination, Do It Yourself (DIY), and Budgeting to mention just a few. The programme will run throughout the year and alongside your Workbook.

Together it will enhance your Pathway Plan to form the foundations on which you will build upon once you become a care leaver and join the Redbridge Leaving Care Service.

As you approach your 18th birthday your social worker will introduce you to a Personal Advisor who works in the Redbridge Leaving Care Service. They will work with you instead of your Social Worker once you are 18. There will also be a Connexions Personal Advisors available to support your future education and career plans.

Guide to Redbridge Leaving Care Service

You will be given a Guide to Redbridge Leaving Care Service which will contain information you will need to know when you turn 18 and become a care leaver. It will give you an introduction to the service and inform you of the professional team who will be supporting you as you start of your life as a young adult.

Redbridge Leaving Care Service

If you were looked after by Redbridge for 13 weeks between your 14th birthday and at least one day after your 16th birthday, you will be eligible for support from the Leaving Care Team from when you are 18 to 24 years old.

As part of Redbridge Leaving Care Service you will have access to:

- an allocated Personal Advisor
- continue to build on your skills by supporting you to complete Redbridge Leaving Care Life Skills Programme
- groups and "drop in" services to enhance your independent skills through various training sessions
- visits by Personal Advisors to your home every 8 weeks
- a Pathway Plan which is reviewed 6 monthly or earlier if there has been a significant change in your circumstances
- support with accommodation including permanent council housing
- financial entitlements as well as additional support when required
- Birthday and festive money accordance to your entitlements
- out of hours support for emergencies from the Emergency Duty Team and/or accommodation providers
- education and careers advice to reach your dreams

If you were not looked after by Redbridge for 13 weeks between your 14th birthday and at least one day after your 16th birthday, your Social Worker will explain what support you will receive once you are 18.

SECTION 6

Key Contact and Information

Contacts for you in London Borough of Redbridge

Brook Advisory Centre

For sexual health and wellbeing advice
0808 802 1234
www.brook.org.uk

Children's Participation Officer

Children in Care Council
020 8708 3448
Email: chi.doan@redbridge.gov.uk

Children's Rights Advocate

020 8708 5811
Email: janet.edwards@redbridge.gov.uk

Complaints Department - Redbridge

020 8708 5268 / 020 8708 5174
Email: Childrens.Complaints@redbridge.gov.uk

Connexions Service

020 8708 2600
Email: Connexions@redbridge.gov.uk

FIND

0800 587 7500
find.redbridge.gov.uk
www.info4carekids.org.uk

Fusion

Young People's Dugs & Alcohol Service
020 8708 7801
Email: info.fusion@wdp.org.uk
www.wdpyoungpeople.org.uk

Redbridge Adoption Service

020 8708 7459
Email: adoptionteam@redbridge.gov.uk

Redbridge Council

Main Switchboard for all council enquires
020 8554 5000

Redbridge Domestic Violence One Stop Shop

Free support and information from a range of support services
07939 255 014

Redbridge Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS)

Specialist Community Health Service for children and young people
0300 555 1182 / 0300 300 1624
New-tr.rbcypspa@nhs.net

Redbridge Fostering Service

020 8708 7528
Email: fostering@redbridge.gov.uk

Redbridge Leaving Care Team

0208 418 4950
Out of hours: 0208 708 5600 or your accommodation provider

Redbridge Youth Service Hainault Youth Centre

020 8500 8071

Specialist Nurse for Looked After Children

020 8708 8202

Local Sexual Health Information and Advice

www.youngpeoplefriendly.co.uk
www.comecorrect.org.uk

Victim Support Redbridge – young people worker

020 8550 2410
vs.redbridge@vslondon.org

Virtual School Service

020 8708 3939
Email: Class@redbridge.gov.uk

Other useful contacts

Become

The charity for children living away from home and for care experienced adult
020 7251 3117
Adviceline 0800 023 2033
advice@becomecharity.org.uk

Children's Commissioner for England

The Office of the Children's Commissioner
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
020 7783 8330
Freephone 0800 528 0731
Help at Hand
help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Child Exploitation Online Protection Thinkuknow

Provides advice on how to keep safe on line. Find out what's good, what's not and what you can do about it. There's also a place which anyone can use to **report** if they feel uncomfortable or worried about someone they are chatting to online.
www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Childline

A free 24-hour counselling service for children and young people up to the age of nineteen. It is a private and confidential service where you can contact a counsellor about anything - no problem is too big or too small.
0800 11 11
www.childline.org.uk

Kidscape

For children and young people from 6 to 19, anyone who has concerns, specifically to prevent bullying and child sexual abuse
08451 205 204
www.kidscape.org.uk

NSPCC

Offers a combination of services to help protect children, support families and work together with services to safeguard children.
0800 11 11
www.nspcc.org.uk

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester M1 2WD
0300 123 1231
www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Children's Society

Works directly with the most disadvantaged children.
0300 303 7000
www.childrensociety.org.uk

**Working together to support
children and young people**