



Frequently Asked Questions

These questions have been asked by other young people and may help you understand Staying Put better. Ask your social worker and/or foster carer if you have any questions.

Why does planning for Staying Put start when I reach the age of 16?

What sort of information will be put in my Living Together Agreement?

What happens if I want to have a friend or boyfriend/girlfriend to stay when I reach the age of 18?

What support do I get and what support does my Staying Put carer get when I reach the age of 18?

Why do I need a DBS check?

Do I have to Stay Put until I reach the age of 21?

What happens if I decide I'm ready to leave when I reach the age of 19?

What happens when the staying put arrangement comes to an end?



Foster
a smile 

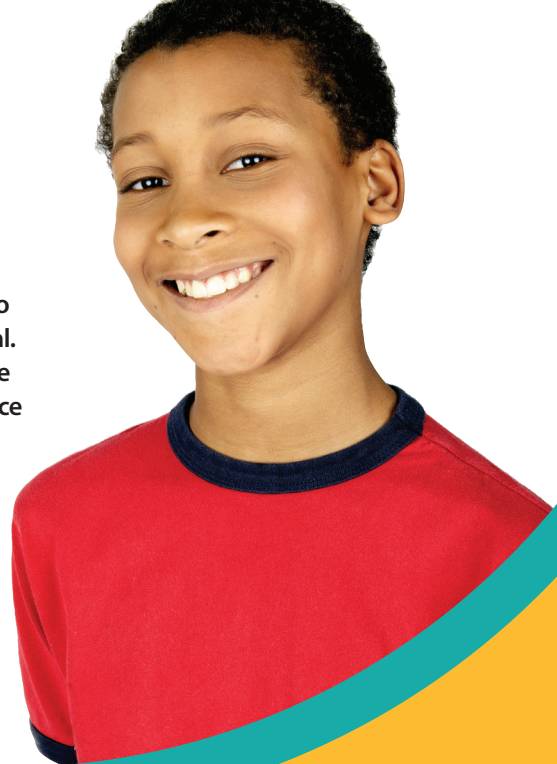
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Hertfordshire

"Staying Put" Policy - A Guide for Young People

This leaflet is designed to help you understand the Staying Put scheme in Hertfordshire. Staying Put is the name given to arrangements where young people remain living with their foster carers once they reach 18.



Why Stay Put?

Hertfordshire Children's Services is committed to supporting care leavers to achieve their full potential. We will help you make the transition to independence and adulthood at a pace that suits you. For example, if you stay with your foster carers past your 18th birthday, you can benefit by:-

- being able to stay with carers who can provide on-going support, guidance and care;
- being able to stay to complete education and training courses and whilst studying at university;
- living with carers where you can develop and improve your independence skills;
- staying with your carers and moving to independent living at a time when you feel ready to manage your own place.

Every young person will have different reasons for staying with their foster carers after they reach 18. What would your main reason be?

Setting Up A Staying Put Arrangement

In order to get all of the arrangements ready by your 18th birthday, planning for Staying Put starts when your 'Permanence Plan' is created, or around your 16th birthday.

Around your 16th birthday your social worker, foster carer and your foster carers supervising social worker will talk to you about Staying Put. You can then tell us what you would want when you reach the age of 18 and where you think you would want to live.

If everyone agrees that a Staying Put arrangement would be a good idea, then planning for your Staying Put will start.

All young people can Stay Put with their carers when they reach the age of 18. The

main requirement is that you want to stay, that both you and your foster carer feel it is a good idea and that your social worker supports the plan.

If you are not sure what you want to do when you reach the age of 16 that is ok. You do not have to make a final decision until around the age of 17½.

If you will be Staying Put, there are a number of issues that need to be organised as you get near your 18th birthday.

Staying Put At Age 18

From age 18, and to help you prepare for moving to independence, your foster carer will bring to an end giving you a pocket money and a clothing allowance. The savings they make for you will end too. You can replace these payments from your pay if you are working or by claiming a benefit if you are in college, on a training course or looking for work. We will help you claim any benefits you are entitled to. Your earnings and benefits will be at least the same, or possibly more than you were given in pocket money, clothing and savings.

We will also help you to claim housing benefit, to partially cover the cost of your Staying Put arrangement.

Living Together Agreements

As you will not be 'in-care' from your 18th birthday, there are also a number of practical issues that will need to be organised. For example before your 18th birthday you need to have a Placement Plan that sets out all of the day to day arrangements for you and the foster care household.

From the age of 18 your Placement Plan will change into a 'Living Together Agreement' This will set out any new or changed arrangements for your foster care household, for example what time you are expected home in the evening and what to do if you may be late, what areas and skills your carer will help you with, the arrangements for friends and visitors. Most of these issues will already have been organised as part of your Placement Plan so shouldn't be a major change.

Disclosure and Barring Checks

Because you will still be living in a foster care household, there are a number of legal requirements that have to be followed, particularly if there are young children living in your home. You will be required to have a Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS). This is generally a formality and something that all adults living in a foster home need.

You can Stay Put until you are ready to move-on, if this is before you reach 21, or until your 21st birthday, or until the education or training course you are undertaking on your 21st birthday is completed.