

# A guide

# for me





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# A guide for me

We have thought about what questions you may have and what you need to know when you live away from your mum or dad. We have put this guide together for you. It is a place to write, draw and think about some of the things that matter most to you.

We hope this book will be helpful but it is also really important that you talk about any worries you have with your trusted adults.

We would really like your feedback about our work, if you have any thoughts on how we could improve this guide please contact our Young Director, Bethany Swann ([bethany.swann@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:bethany.swann@n-somerset.gov.uk)).



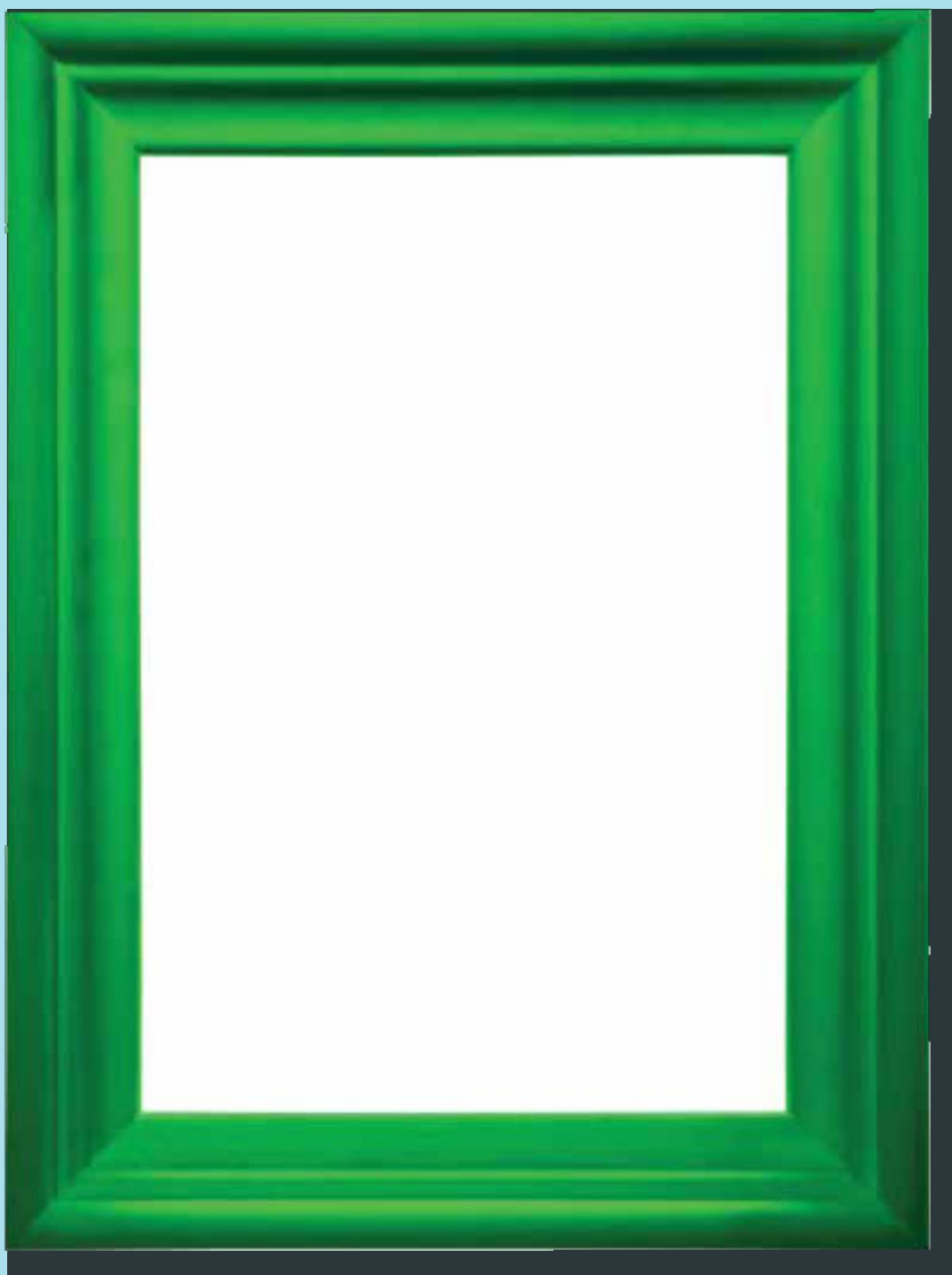
Sheila Smith  
Director People and  
Communities

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

# This is me

Stick in a photo or draw a picture of yourself.



# What's it like living away from your mum or dad?

- You will usually have your own bedroom. You will only share a room with another child or young person if you have said it is okay or you want to be with your brother or sister.
- If you are not happy about where you sleep we want you to tell your foster carer and they will help to change it.
- Your carers will make sure you have everything you need such as clothes and shoes, toothbrush, shampoo, books and everything you need for school.
- You will be given pocket money every week. We will encourage you to carry on with activities you enjoy and any clubs you go to. Please tell us if there is anything you would like to do.
- We will help you to stay in touch with your family and friends. Visits to see your family will be arranged. This is often called Family Time.

## Our Commitment to you

- We have made a promise to look after you and in doing this we will make sure you feel cared for and safe.
- Your carers are responsible for making sure you go to nursery, or school and will be there to help you with your homework, getting you books and uniform and all the other things you need for school.
- We would like to know what your favourite food is, and also the food you don't like. Please share this with your carers.
- When you are young, your carer will be given money to buy you new clothes and other things you need. As you grow up, you may choose to use the money to buy your own clothes.
- We will help you with your hobbies and interests. Your carers will help you plan and celebrate birthdays, name days and other festivals. You will be able to have your friends round for tea, and go to their homes. Your carer will decide when you can stay overnight at friends' houses.
- Your carer will pay for you to do activities like dance classes, music lessons and football. If you were doing these before, they will help you to keep them up.
- Your carer will make sure that you go to a dentist, doctor or nurse when you need to. If you have any questions or worries about your health – then you can talk to your carer so that they can help you.
- Your carer will listen to your feelings and what you want, and try to help you. They want you to be happy, healthy and to have fun.

# Understanding why you have come into care

Your social worker will talk to you about why you are not living with your mum or dad at the moment. They will spend time with you drawing pictures and talking about what has happened in your family so you can understand why you are living away from your home.

You will be able to ask questions you don't know the answer to. If they don't know the answer they will find out for you.



You can write any questions you would like the answer to here.

It might be as time goes on you have more questions. You can always speak to your social worker alone and ask more questions.



# What will my social worker do for me?

- Social workers help children and the adults that care for them and find ways of sorting out any problems in their lives. Social workers help families of all shapes and sizes with all kinds of different worries and difficulties.
- Your social worker will get to know you, they will spend time listening, sometimes drawing or writing and help to answer your questions. Especially about why you are not living with your mum or dad and what might happen in the future.
- Your social workers want to hear about your hopes and dreams, what makes you laugh, what you want to do in the future, how you are getting on at school and your worries. We will help you stay in safe contact with your family, we will support you in following your interests and help you make sense of why you need to be living with carers at the moment. Your social worker will talk to all the other adults who are involved in supporting and caring for you.

# About me

Preferred name/nick name:

.....

Favourite food:

.....

.....

Hobbies:

.....

.....

Favourite place:

.....

3 things I am really good at:

.....

.....

.....

.....

3 goals that I want for myself when I am older:

.....

.....

.....

.....

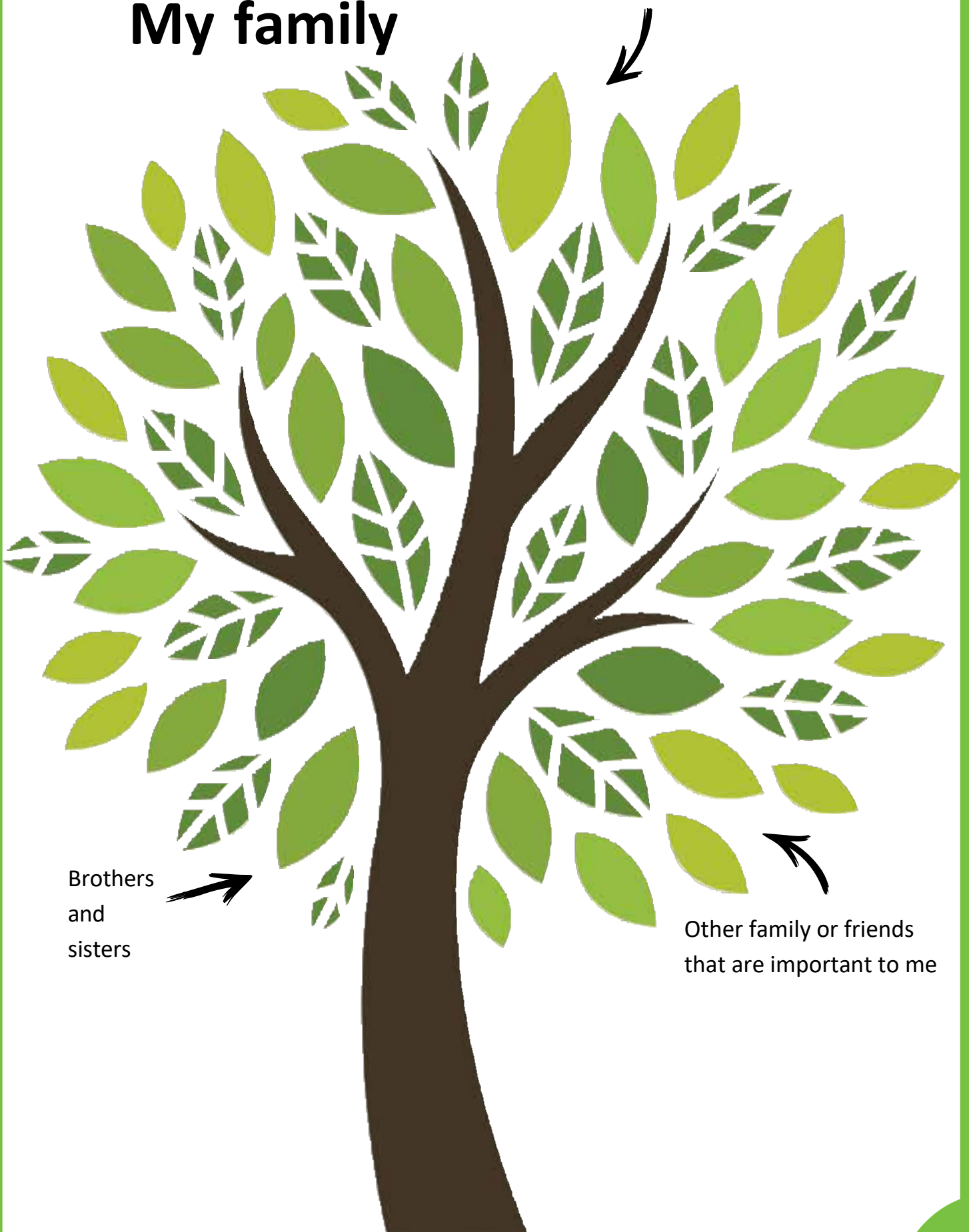
Who can help me reach my goals:

.....

.....

# My family

Parents' names



Brothers  
and  
sisters

Other family or friends  
that are important to me

**Tell us which of your family and friends you would like to see.**

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**Tell us if there is anyone you don't want to see.**

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# My friends

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Pets

**Do you have a pet?**

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**Have you ever had a pet?**

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**If you had a pet, what would you like it to be?**

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# My trusted adults

**It is really important that you have someone who you can trust in your life.**

It is important for us to know who this is so we know who is important to you. Think about who you trust and why you trust them, how you know they will help you and how you will ask for their help when you need it.

**If I need help with anything I know I can go to these people. Name one or two of them here:**

---

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**It's good to share any worries and have people on your side.**

**Make the most of everything and tell people how you feel and what you want.**



# My health

We want you to be healthy all of your life.

Your health is very important and how we look after you now will affect how you look after yourself when you are an adult.

We want you to be:

- fit and active
- eating well
- feeling happy
- feeling calm and know where and who to talk to if not
- visiting the dentist regularly
- know how to keep your body clean
- know how to make good choices as you grow up.

**We want you to be happy, healthy and to feel positive about the future.**

# Your health check

When you live with carers we arrange a health check with a children's Doctor called a Community Paediatrician.

These will be offered to you every year.

- It's your health check and a chance to talk to a doctor about your health and wellbeing.
- You don't have to show your body or answer any questions you don't want to.
- The meeting is private and won't take too long.
- The doctor will talk to you about how you keep yourself healthy.
- If the doctor thinks you need to see another doctor, such as an optician for your eyes, they will arrange this.

**Think about some of the things that you do that keep you healthy and happy**

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# My favourite food

Write or draw some of your favourite things to eat.

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**Food I don't like**

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---

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# My nursery/school

**Name of my nursery/school:**

---

Draw your school

**Name of my favourite teacher:**

---

**My friends at school are:**

---

**Clubs I attend at school (or would like to attend):**

---

# How will I be supported at school?

Each school has one teacher called a designated teacher. It is their job to support the children who attend their school who live with carers.

Ask your carer or social worker to find out who this is at your school.

Not all the teachers will be told all of your personal life.

Your 'designated teacher' at school will know you are not living with your mum and dad. Your social worker will speak to them so they can help you.

## My designated teacher is:

---

This is what your social worker will tell them:

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It is important you have an adult at school who you like and trust and who you feel you can talk to about anything.

## My trusted adult at school is:

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Is there anything you would like your trusted adult to know?

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# Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

- Schools will work together with your social worker and carer to make a plan for you to be able to do your best in school. It is called a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP is updated every six months but it is a good idea to look at it every term and this is what we try and do in North Somerset.
- We would like you to join in for part of this meeting if you want to. Before the meeting you will be asked what you like/ don't like about school and what can be done to support you to do your best. If you think you need some extra help please ask your carer, social worker or teacher.
- If you would really like to learn a musical instrument, or have lessons in a particular hobby, or join a club, then please tell us. The teachers have some extra money to pay for extra things you might need.
- Your PEP will ask you about your friends, what you enjoy about school and if there is anything that makes you uncomfortable, worried or unhappy. The adults in this PEP meeting will want to help you.

# Our Promise for children who are looked after by us

The aim of our Promise is to help you be happy, healthy, achieve your potential and feel positive about your future. We have listened to the feedback we were given by children when they completed the 'Bright Spots' surveys. Our Promise is here:



The poster features the North Somerset Council logo at the top right. The word 'Promise' is written in large, bold, orange letters. Below it, the text reads: 'To all children and young people looked after by North Somerset Council, we promise to:'. There are two columns of bullet points, each starting with an orange dot. The bottom of the poster has a decorative orange border with white line-art illustrations of children playing. At the very bottom, there are four boxes, each containing a name in a cursive font and their official title in a smaller, sans-serif font.

**North Somerset Council's**  **Promise**

**To all children and young people looked after by North Somerset Council, we promise to:**

- find homes for you, where you feel safe and settled
- find carers who you can trust, who support you with your worries and celebrate your successes
- help you to understand why you are not living with your parent(s)
- help you to spend time with your parents, brothers, and sisters if that's what you want
- make sure you know who your social worker is and how you can contact them
- make sure you have opportunities to have fun, spend time on your hobbies and explore the outdoors
- support your education and help you with your homework and learning, college, and career options
- ensure you have an adult in school or college, who you can trust, who looks out for you and celebrates your progress
- always ask your views when there are decisions to be made, putting your wishes and feelings first whenever we can
- help you with relationships with your friends and support you, especially when you are feeling worried, anxious, or sad
- support you to develop skills you will need as an adult, like cooking healthy food, managing your money and washing your clothes

Please tell us if these promises are not being kept, or if someone who cares for you or supports you has done an amazing job keeping these promises.  
Sheila Smith, Director People and Communities, 01934 888 891.

*Sheila Smith*  
Sheila Smith  
Director of People and Communities

*Steve Bridger*  
Cllr Steve Bridger  
Leader of the Council

*Jo Walker*  
Jo Walker  
Chief Executive  
North Somerset Council

*Catherine Gibbons*  
Cllr Catherine Gibbons  
Executive Member and Chair of Corporate Planning Panel

# Supporting you at school

**All children should feel safe and be happy at school. We want to support you to enjoy learning and to make friends:**

If ever you feel you are:

- being called names
- teased
- hit
- threatened
- had your things taken or damaged.

This could be bullying. We don't want you to be bullied and if you are you need to tell an adult as soon as possible so they can help you. Sometimes bullying can happen on the computer, ipad/tablet or mobile phone. Upsetting messages are still bullying.

You should only share your personal information with people you really trust. Being online and using the internet is just like being in the real world – you can chat to people, play games and share pictures. But sometimes things happen which can make you upset. People may say nasty things to you which upset you, or you may see something that you don't like.

**If you are bullied, you must remember that it's not your fault.**

- ALWAYS TELL AN ADULT WHO YOU TRUST straight away if you are upset or worried about something that has happened online.
- Remember to SAVE ANY MESSAGES that have upset you so you can show them to who you tell. Never worry about getting in trouble – you aren't the one who has done anything wrong.
- You may want to chat to someone else about how you feel.
- Child Line - a free number, **0800 1111** - won't show on your phone bill.





# Your rights

## Getting in touch with us

We will listen to you and take what you tell us very seriously. Seeing your social worker.

- Your social worker will make sure that an introduction card is in this pack. It tells you their name and how to contact them.
- Your social worker will see you regularly to check how things are going, and to help you to sort out any issues you might be having.
- You can ask to see your social worker at any time and agree when they will next visit you.
- You can ask that time with your social worker is private, and you can always choose to see them alone.

## Calling and leaving messages

- You can call your social worker at any time, if the person you want to speak to isn't around you can leave a message for them. We will make sure that messages are passed on as soon as possible.
- If you need to speak to a social worker urgently, you can speak to a duty social worker, or ask to speak to the manager.

# Making a complaint

## What is a complaint?

A complaint can range from a disagreement in the home, a decision made that you are not quite happy about or, anything to do with the way North Somerset Council looks after you.

## What do I do if I have a complaint?

Try talking this out with your parent, carer or social worker. If you feel you need the reassurance of a friend, that's ok. We will listen to you and sort things out when ever we can.

## Still not sorted?

Get in touch with the Complaints Manager by telephone, text, email or complete the form in your documents and keepsake box and send it off. You don't need a stamp.

[Emma.smith@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Emma.smith@n-somerset.gov.uk)

You can get in touch with your local MP, Councillor or ombudsman for help. You can get their names and addresses from the Citizens' Advice Bureau or your nearest library.

**Make yourself**

**heard**

A red pushpin is pinned to a corkboard, holding a piece of lined paper. The paper has the words "Everyone Matters" written in a bold, black, typewriter-style font. The corkboard has a textured, brown surface.

**Everyone  
Matters**

## Meetings and documents about you

- You will be asked to attend meetings. Meetings will usually be to plan for your future, and to check how you are feeling.
- If anything about the meeting – including where it will be or who will be there – is worrying you, talk it through with your social worker. We might not always be able to change things, but knowing will help them to support you.
- Everyone at the meeting should explain who they are and why they are there. If they don't do this, or you are not sure, you have the right to ask or to ask someone you trust to ask them for you.

## Important things to remember

- If you feel something has gone wrong or you haven't been treated well, you always have the right to make a complaint – and we will always listen and take your views seriously.
- You can choose someone you trust to help you make a complaint.
- You won't get into trouble for making a complaint. For more details on making a complaint, please see page 32.

## But...

- We like to hear when things have worked well for you.
- If there is someone or something you think is really good, please tell us!
- If you have suggestions, ideas or better ways to do things, we want to hear them please.

It could help other children or young people in the future if we know about things which have gone well or not been so good for you. It meets in the school holidays.

In North Somerset our group for young people's participation is called Children in Care Council.

We welcome everyone who is living away from home to attend our group. We have a participation worker who runs our Children in Care Council.

We do fun activities and talk about what's working well and what we would like to change.

Please speak to your social worker if you would like to be part of the Children in Care Council.

Our Participation Worker, with our Young Director run the groups and feeds back information that young people have told her to our Director, Sheila Smith. Sheila is really good at listening to what young people have to say and we have made lots of positive improvements based on what has been discussed in the groups.

Contact our Participation Worker on [ella.bunting@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:ella.bunting@n-somerset.gov.uk) if you want to tell her what is going well for you or if there is anything we can do differently to support you or you would like to join a group of other children who are living with foster carers. Unite is our Participation group for care leavers.

## **Advocates**

If you want some help making a complaint you can contact our Junction 21 mentoring service **01275 888 745**

## **Independent person**

If your complaint cannot be easily sorted out there will be an investigation. At this stage an independent person will be asked to help.

The independent person does not work for the council and their job is to make sure that the complaint is dealt with fairly.

# What is Family Time?

You, your parents, social worker and court guardian, if you have one, will all decide how often and for how long you will see different members of your family. Sometimes this will be with another adult, who is called a Family Time Worker. Your social worker will speak to you to check you are seeing who you want to see and it is as often as you like.

## What happens at Family Time?

You will be told who your Family Time workers are and they will try to meet you before your first visit to explain to you what will happen. The Family Time worker will be friendly and try to answer your questions.

Either your Family Time worker or your carer will take you to see your family – if you are at school, they will collect you from there.

Your parents/family may bring food or games to play when they see you.

Whilst you are with your family, an adult will stay with you at all times and they will usually make notes of what happens. These notes will help your social worker make a plan for you.



## **Who can I speak to about seeing my family?**

If you have any questions or worries about the time you spend with your family, you can speak to your social worker, your Family Time worker or your independent reviewing officer. They are all there to make sure that you understand what is happening and to listen to any concerns or issues that you have. They will want to know if there is anything that is worrying or bothering you or if you would like to make any changes to who you see from your family.

**Make yourself**

**heard**

## **My questions**

Over the next few pages we will tell you about some other adults who are there to help you and your family. If you have any questions for them you can write them down here.

# Children's support and safeguarding



Becky Hopkins is the Assistant Director for children's Support and Safeguarding. He is responsible for overseeing the services and support for all children and families we work with.

## Our commitment to you

Whilst we are working with you and your family, we will tell you who your social worker is and how often you will see them:

- Involve you in making the plans and decisions about you and your family.
- Treat you with respect at all times and listen to what you say.
- Seek your views on the services we provide for you.
- Keep you informed of what we are doing and of any changes.
- Think about what you need and consider your age, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.

# Social workers in the fostering team

## **Social workers support foster carers and help children's social workers find families to look after children and young people.**

When a family wants to care for a child or young person we spend time with them to make sure they will be kind, caring, fun and keep you safe.

Foster carers are trained to look after children and young people who cannot live with their parents. We spend time at their home talking to their whole family, making sure that fostering is right for everyone in the family and that they will be able to meet all of your needs.

Your foster family will know about your family and how important they are to you. They will know how much you miss your family and will work with your social worker to ensure you are in touch and see each other, unless there is a reason that this shouldn't happen.

Social workers from the fostering team will meet with your carer every few weeks to make sure they are looking after you as we agreed they would.

When you live with foster carers, your care plan and the support offered to you, will be "reviewed" by another social worker. They are called an Independent Safeguarding Reviewing Officer.

## **What will my independent safeguarding reviewing officer (ISRO) do for me?**

We will talk to you about what is happening in your life and make sure that everyone is making the best plans for you.

We will hold a special meeting called your 'review'.

We will meet with you before this meeting to see who you would like to invite. You might like to invite your carers, parents, social workers, a school teacher or a friend to attend this meeting with you.

It is an ISRO's job to make sure that your wishes and feelings have been listened to and that North Somerset are doing their very best to look after you.

We will always listen to you and hear your views in all of the decisions that are made about your future.

We will check if you are happy with your care plan.

We will always ask if you would like somebody to support you at this meeting. You might choose not to attend but instead you could share your wishes and feelings with another adult so they can represent you at the meeting. This could be your ISRO.

If there is anything you are unhappy about you can always contact your ISRO. They will help you to resolve any disagreements or if needs be to make a complaint.

## **Why do I have a review?**

Review meetings are held for all children who live away from their family. They are to check that you have been able to say what you want to happen and to see if your social worker is doing what is best for you.

## **When will I have my review?**

Your first review will be four weeks after to you start living with carers. The second review will be three months later and then you will have a review every six months.

Following these meetings you will be sent a letter from your ISRO telling you what was talked about and the decisions that were made.



# What will my family support worker do for me?

- Help you and also your mum and dad too.
- We may help your family for a long time and get to know you and your family very well.
- We may take you to see your family.
- We work with social workers and tell them things about your family life that help people make choices with and for you.
- We will always listen to your wishes, feelings and might also attend meetings with you.
- We can meet with you to help with any worries you may have.
- We help your social worker provide information about how your mum or dad can look after you, what they are good at and what they need help with.





# Useful numbers and contacts

## Bullying

### BBC

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying)

### Bullying

08088 002 222 • [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

### Childline

0800 1111 • [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

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

## Equalities

### Action for children

0300 123 2112 • [www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk](http://www.thechildrenstrust.org.uk)

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

Support for disabled children and young people

### The Children's Trust

01737 365 000 • [enquiries@thechildrenstrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@thechildrenstrust.org.uk)

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

for children with brain injury

### SARI – stand against racism and equality

01179 420 060 • [www.sariweb.org.uk](http://www.sariweb.org.uk)

### Report hate crime

0800 171 2272

## General advice

### Advocacy – Junction 21

01295 888 745

### After Adoption UK

0800 0 568 578 • [www.afteradoption.org.uk](http://www.afteradoption.org.uk)

### Beat – Adult helpline

0808 801 077 Youth helpline

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

Help, support and information about eating disorders and difficulties with food, weight and shape

### National Children's Bureau

02078 436 000 • [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)

Searchable resource library includes drug education forum and forum for rural children and young people.

### NHS Health Enquiry

111

### North Somerset Council Directory

01275 888 360 • [www.n-somerset.gov.uk/health+and+welfare](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/health+and+welfare)

North Somerset Youth Offending Team

### Rethink mental illness – advice service

03005 000 927 • [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)

Our goal is a better life for everyone affected by mental illness

### The Samaritans

01934 632 555

[www.samaritans.org/branches/weston-super-mare](http://www.samaritans.org/branches/weston-super-mare)

Available 24 hours a day to provide a confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide.

### **Urban 75**

**[www.urban75.com](http://www.urban75.com)** (online magazine)

### **Victim Support**

**0300 303 1972 • 0808 168 9111** Out of hours support line

**[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)**

### **Weston General Hospital**

**01934 636 363**

Grange Road, Uphill, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset BS23 4TQ

### **Winston's Wish**

**08088 020 021 • [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)**

Helping children and young people with loss and bereavement



# Word search Level 1

F	R	I	E	N	D	X	U	G	F
Y	T	L	I	Q	H	L	C	K	A
I	W	I	S	H	E	S	H	X	M
T	E	A	C	H	E	R	I	W	I
S	A	F	E	B	C	J	L	Z	L
P	G	K	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y
Q	F	Z	A	Y	W	V	R	O	T
J	U	L	P	X	T	K	E	M	J
M	N	T	P	I	Q	O	N	U	G
W	V	O	Y	E	Q	U	A	P	J

Children

Friend

Family

Fun

Holiday

Teacher

Wishes

Happy

Safe

# Word search Level 2

Q	U	Z	T	R	U	S	T	Z	Y
H	S	O	K	Y	L	W	B	J	E
S	U	N	S	H	I	N	E	G	L
A	M	T	A	U	S	I	A	P	L
V	M	J	N	E	T	Z	C	F	O
P	E	Q	I	G	E	F	H	R	W
Z	R	W	M	I	N	A	B	T	I
J	P	U	A	O	X	G	I	H	G
A	U	F	L	O	W	E	R	P	H
Y	H	B	I	D	V	P	D	W	K

listen

animal

bird

trust

beach

sunshine

summer

flower

yellow











This publication is available in large print,  
Braille or audio formats on request.

Help is also available for people who require council  
information in languages other than English.

Please contact 01934 634 579

