

If your parent/s agree for you to live away from your family home, you will be known as a child looked after by Herefordshire Children's Services. During this time your social worker will make sure that all your needs are met. You will also have another worker to speak with and make sure you are being looked after properly.

They are called an Independent Reviewing Officer or IRO for short. They will hold regular meetings to see how you and your family are doing, make sure that all your needs are met and that your social worker is best supporting you and your family. This meeting is called a Child Looked After Review. You are able to attend this meeting and share your thoughts and wishes.

In addition to this to make sure you are healthy; you will be asked to attend a doctor's appointment. This will be with your parents, social worker, and carers.

Your views and wishes

Your views and wishes are really important in these discussions between



your parent(s) and social worker. Your social worker will explain what is happening and why and ask what you think and for your opinion.

A social worker's role is to make sure you are happy and safe. This means that sometimes your wishes cannot be supported and a decision may be made to keep you safe.

When you reach the age of 16 years and above (up until you turn 18 years old) you can consent to section 20 accommodation without agreement from your parent(s).

If section 20 accommodation is not agreed?

If your parent(s) do not agree with you being accommodated, and your social worker and Herefordshire Children's Services are worried about your safety and how you are being cared for, they may need to speak with the Police or a Judge to help make decisions to keep your safe.

If your parents do agree for you to live away from your home, they can change their mind at any time and ask for you to be returned home. If you are over the age of 16 years old your parents can not object to your decision.

Useful contacts:

Kooth.com

The Kooth team are there to provide free, safe and anonymous online support and counselling. The whole team are made up of friendly and experienced individuals who want to help you.

What is section 20 and what does it mean for you?



What is section 20 accommodation?

Section 20 accommodation is a legal term we use for an agreement between your social worker who works for Herefordshire Children's Services and your parent(s) to find you somewhere to live for a short period of time.

Section 20 accommodation is being thought about as it may not be safe for you to live at home at this time and this will allow your social worker to help your parent/s to make changes to allow you to return home.

Section 20 accommodation may also be thought about if you are lost or have no where else to live.

What does s20 mean for you and your family?

Section 20 accommodation decisions do not involve a court or a judge making decisions. This is an agreement between your parent(s) and Herefordshire Children's Services in order to keep you safe and make sure all your needs continue to be met. We all want to make sure that you are healthy, happy, safe, and cared for.

Your parents will be asked to think about Section 20 accommodation with your social worker to think about whether this is the best option for you.

They will consider why you can not stay at home at the moment, how long you will be away from home and how they will keep in contact with you whilst you are away.

If your parent(s) do agree for you to live somewhere else for a period of time, they will still be making all the important decisions for you and your social worker will be in regular contact with them to tell them how you are doing and what you have been up to.

The agreement and you

Whilst you are not at home with your parent(s) they will be working with your social worker. This may be to work with other professionals to make sure that they are healthy and happy, or this could be to help your parent(s) tidy their home and learn new skills to care for you. Your social worker will let you know how this is going.



Types of accommodation

Friends and family

You may be able to live with your extended family, grandparents or aunts and uncles or a family friend whilst your parent(s) get help from your social worker, if this will keep you safe.

Foster care

If you cannot stay with extended family, you may live with someone called a foster carer, these are people and families who look after children when they can not stay at home. They will make sure that you are cared for whilst you live with them.

Residential care

If you cannot stay with extended family, you may live somewhere called a residential home, where you and other young people will live. You will be cared for by a key worker who will make sure that all your needs are met.

