

Childrens Guide



What is being in residential care?

It means that your social worker believes that living in a residential home is the right place for you right now whilst you are supported to work through some of the difficulties you may be experiencing.

The team at Aspen House will support you on your journey and our hope is that you can return to your family or a foster family.

What do we do?

We support boys who have struggled in foster care or at home in your family. We help you whilst your social worker and other professionals try and resolve the issues facing you and your family.

The team at Aspen House will help you understand what has happened and to support you if you feel sad or upset. We will assist you with your education and support you to develop independence skills. We are there to listen, talk and have fun. We will plan the future with you.

What is going to happen to me?

The plan is always to help you go home to your family, as long as it is safe for all. Social workers will talk to you regularly to keep you informed of what is happening. Within four weeks of coming into care, there will be a meeting called a 'review' to look at how you are. You will be asked what you think and invited to attend. If you find it hard to talk with lots of adults in a room, you can speak to the 'reviewing officer' on your own before the meeting. Or you can ask for an 'Advocate' to be there with you to help you put your views across.

The review meeting makes sure that the plans for you are working. The adults will make changes to the plan if things can be better. They will invite people such as your parent, teacher, key worker or residential carer etc., to hear what they think about your care, but most importantly, they want to know what you think too. You can ask your social worker for an Advocate. Your foster carers will have their social worker as well. You can ask your social worker for an Advocate.

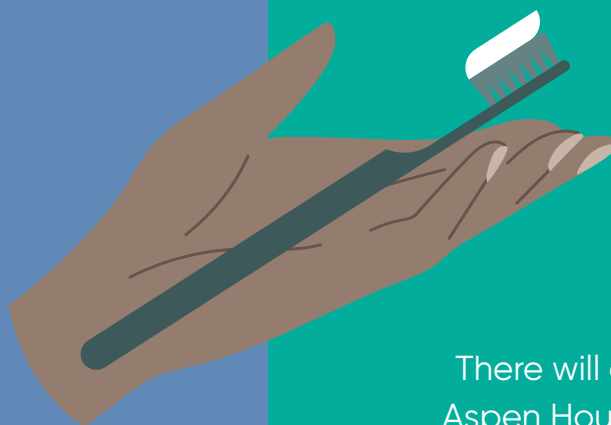


How long will I be here?

Some young people remain in residential care for a short time; others need to stay for longer. Your social worker should give you some idea of how long this could be.

Your social worker will be working hard to get you into a family environment, but only if they know that it will be safe to do so.





Who else lives at Aspen house?

There will only ever be five young people live at Aspen House and they will be a boy like you. The age range can vary to young people at the end of primary to secondary school age.

There will be care workers to help and support you every day, and you will have your own key worker.



What does the Care team know about me?

The social worker will need to tell the care staff the important information about you and your family. If you are worried about this, talk to your social worker, they are there to help you. Your social worker is the person who makes sure that you are getting what you need.

The care staff will keep a record of the essential things that happen to you, such as achievements in school, when you may have had a stressful day and special celebrations. You will be able to see what is being recorded about you daily.



When can I go home?

Sometimes, parents have asked Social care to look after their children while they sort out some problems. If you are one of these young people, you can return home as soon as your parents can care for you.

For other young people, Social Care has decided to intervene to ensure the young person is safe. If this applies to you, Social Services will need to ask the Court to help them decide if it is safe for you to return home. Some young people will remain in care until they are 18 years old.



Why can't I go home?

Some families have problems which prevent them from looking after their children. It can be very upsetting and hard to understand. Please talk with the care staff about how you feel, and they will, and they will help to make sure that everyone involved in your care knows this too and that your social worker knows any concerns that you have.

Sometimes the Court and Social Care agree that children cannot return home if it is not safe.



When can I see my family?

As soon as you come into care, your social worker will talk to you about seeing your family. They along with all the staff at Aspen House will support you to keep in touch with your family and your friends. How often you see them and where you will see them will depend on the reasons you are in care.

Is it my fault?

No. All families suffer stress at some time, and unfortunately, your family has needed some time to sort this out. It is important to remember that everyone has problems when they are growing up, not just young people living in care.

Young people often think that it is somehow their fault when things go wrong at home. Children are **never** to blame for the things that adults do (even if they believe they have been badly behaved).



Do I have to change school?

Social Care will try to make sure that you carry on at your school if this is what you want so that you can see your friends and carry on with the activities you enjoy.

However, sometimes this is not possible.

When will I see my social worker?

Every young person at Aspen House will have someone from Social Care they see regularly and can contact if they need to. It could be a social worker, support worker, or mentor. You should see your social worker at least once a month at first.

If you want to see your social worker; talk to your residential carer. They will phone your social worker for you. You should also keep your social worker's telephone number in a safe place so that you can call them directly if you want to talk in private. You can also send them an email.

Fill in your social worker's details in this guide. If you do not feel happy, then you must speak with another adult you trust.



SOCIAL WORKERS DETAILS

Are there rules at Aspen House?

Are there rules at Aspen House? Like all homes, Aspen House does have rules that you will be asked to follow. Most of the rules will be about keeping you safe or making sure that everybody in the home gets on together.

- **Be polite**
- **Be kind to each other**
- **Take care of your clothes and belongings**
 - **Do your homework**
 - **Come straight home from school**
 - **Don't bully or hit others**
- **Don't take other people's belongings**

Sometimes you might forget the rules or not be able to keep them all of the time, and your carer will talk to you about what has happened.

Staff within Aspen House have to follow rules as well, but the most important one is that no one is allowed to hit young people or hurt them in anyway. Care staff must make sure that children are always kept safe.



Your Rights

You have the right

- To be treated with respect
- To receive praise and recognition for your achievements
 - To be protected and kept safe
 - To be listened to and consulted on plans or decisions made about you
- To have help in expressing your wishes and feelings
- To access health, education, and recreational activities
 - To have help to keep contact with all relevant people in your life (The only exceptions may be where we think that contact may not be safe for you)
 - To make a complaint
 - To speak to an Independent Advocate for advice and support.
 - To celebrate your birthday and special occasions
 - To practice your religion

Your Responsibility

It is your responsibility to try and behave as well as you can. Nobody is perfect, carers at Aspen House know that it can be difficult living in a new environment. However, you should at all times try to be respectful and not harm or endanger anyone in the home.





What if I am unhappy with something?

If there is something that you are not happy about, it is important to tell someone. You may be unhappy about something your carer or someone else in the home has done. It may be something that is happening when you visit your own family or at school.

We believe everyone should be treated with respect. If you believe you are not well cared for, you should talk to someone, you trust.

You could:

Talk to your carer or social worker or another adult you trust, like a teacher. You can talk in private, and they will be very discrete in sorting the problem out. You could talk about it at your next review.

If you want to complain about something

You can talk to:

Your social worker

Your social worker is always the right person to talk to if you have any concerns about your placement.

Ofsted

You can get in touch with us at enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk or 0300 123 4666 to complain about a childcare provider.

Childrens Commissioner

Children's Commissioner for England protects the rights of children in England you can contact them on 0800 528 0731



Ascent Children Services

Mark Pomell Registered Individual on
0203 757 0070/07867 415 172 or
markpomell@ascentchildrenservices.co.uk

The Children's Complaints Officer in your local authority by phoning. The Complaints Officer will look into the complaint and give a full report in writing. They will do their best to provide a full reply within ten days. They will explain to you what they have done. If you are not happy with this, tell us.

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