

## **A Guide For Looked After Children & Young People - What do you need to get permission for?**

### **Can you stay overnight with a friend?**

- You should ask permission from your foster carer (or key worker if you live in a children's home) who will usually be able to make the decision.
- This may depend on any agreements that have been made with your social worker.
- Your foster carer or key worker should check out the arrangements with the people with whom you wish to stay and ensure that contact telephone numbers are available.
- In practice, your social worker may need to make other checks including police checks to make sure that this is a safe place for you to stay.

### **Are you allowed to have a mobile phone?**

- Only if your social worker and foster carer give you permission.
- They will think about who will pay the bill and whether you will use the mobile to speak to people they are worried about.
- For further information about contacting friends and family, please click here.  
[Link to contact with friends and family](#)

### **Can you go away on a school trip or go camping?**

- You will need the permission of your social worker.
- Your social worker may talk to your parents about the trip but it is not necessary to obtain their permission.
- You may feel different from your friends because of this but these requirements are there to protect you.

### **What if you need a passport?**

You or your social worker will need to obtain the forms to apply for a passport. These forms will need to be signed either by your parents or a senior boss in Social Care department. You are entitled to have your own passport, and you will need it for any trips abroad, for example school trips.

### **Do you need permission to go abroad?**

If you plan to go abroad for less than 28 days, only the permission of the Social Care is required. They will inform your parents and discuss the trip with them.

### **What if you want to go abroad for longer than 28 days or live abroad?**

- The permission of the court is required for you to be outside the country for more than 28 days or to live abroad.
- If your social worker agrees with you being outside the country for more than 28 days or living abroad it will normally be social care who will apply to the court for permission.
- If Social Care do not agree with the plan, you may have to make the Application yourself. You would need to consult your solicitor.

### **Can you ask your GP to put you on 'the pill' or get condoms for you without telling your social worker?**

- You can discuss contraception with your doctor but it may not be confidential.
- A doctor is allowed to arrange contraception for anyone, even if they is under 16, without telling their parents or social worker, if the doctor thinks she is able to make her own decisions about this.
- You can obtain family planning services through your doctor or family planning clinic and special clinics are sometimes held for young people.
- Free condoms are often available at Family Planning Clinics and Doctors' Surgeries.
- For further support on teenage pregnancy, please click here. [Link to teenage pregnancies in IYSS](#)

### **At what age is it lawful to have sex?**

- You should know that it is against the law for anyone to have sex (sexual intercourse) under the age of 16
- For further support on teenage pregnancy, please click here. [Link to teenage pregnancies in IYSS](#). [Link to teenage pregnancies in IYSS](#)

### **Can you marry under a Care Order?**

- You can marry when you are 16, but if you are 16 or 17 years old, you must have permission of one or both of your parents.
- If you are under a Care Order, Social Care will also have to agree.
- If your social worker does not agree to you marrying, you could ask the court to make an order allowing you to marry.
- You need to consult your solicitor about this.

### **Can you have a part-time job?**

- Different rules apply in different areas of the country about how long young people are allowed to work.
- The rules also depend on your age.
- You will need to get the permission of your social worker to work and they should be able to help you with the rules that apply in your part of the country.

### **Who decides where you can go and how late you can stay out?**

You should first ask permission from your foster carer (or key worker if you live in a children's home).

If you are not happy with the answer they give you, discuss it with your social worker. If you are still not happy, you can raise the question at your next review or make a complaint. ([see Care Plan Reviews and Complaints](#)).

### **Can you get a tattoo or a body piercing?**

- If you are under 14, you will need the permission of those with **Parental Responsibility** (Social Care, your mother and possibly your father see) for all types of body piercing and tattoos.
- If you are over 14, then you will still need permission for tattoos and some types of body piercing.
- You should always think carefully about it and perhaps discuss it with your foster carer or key worker.
- If your social worker doesn't agree, raise it at your review.
- If you are very determined, you could discuss it with a Children Panel solicitor.
- If you are over the age of 16, it is unlikely anyone would stop you.

### **Are you allowed to keep your letters and emails private?**

- Strictly speaking, you do not have to show your letters or emails to anyone else unless the court decides this.
- If you find letters or emails distressing it might be better to talk about them with your carer or a social worker.