



STAYING PUT GUIDE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?



the
Fostering
Foundation

Laying Foundations for the Future

IS STAYING PUT RIGHT FOR YOU AND YOUR CARER?

Sticking around requires approval from both your foster carer and you to proceed. Once you turn sixteen, your local authority worker will conduct a needs assessment with you, to plan your journey after care. This assessment acts as a personal guide to determine the essentials for your pathway plan. During this crucial phase, the option of Staying Put will be discussed with you and your carer.

Staying Put discussions with you will start at your first review after you turn 16, with the final agreement documented in your pathway plan. This topic will then be revisited at all subsequent reviews before you turn 18, ensuring you are ready for adulthood and for any unexpected challenges.

So, bring together your team – you, your foster carer, and your social worker – and kick off the Staying Put brainstorming session!



WHAT IS STAYING PUT?

Remaining in your current home after turning 18 is like you holding a golden ticket. Since the law changed in May 2014, local authorities are required to support this arrangement if it is your wish as well as that of everyone around you – you, your carer, and your workers.

It's a mutually beneficial setup that allows you to stay with familiar faces who have been there for you during your time where you have been living. You don't have to rush to leave – you can stay until you're ready, until you're 21, or sometimes longer if everyone agrees. This continuity can ease your transition into adulthood, providing a stable platform to pursue your aspirations or overcome any challenges and develop your independence.

Remember, this rule is specific to foster care and does not extend to other living situations like residential care or supported lodgings.





HOW LONG CAN I STAY?

You have the freedom to relax until you reach 21, but let's discuss your potential future living arrangements as there could be more options available for you as you become more independent. Your big plans and whether staying put aligns with your hopes and dreams, will be the main focus during your pathway planning discussions.

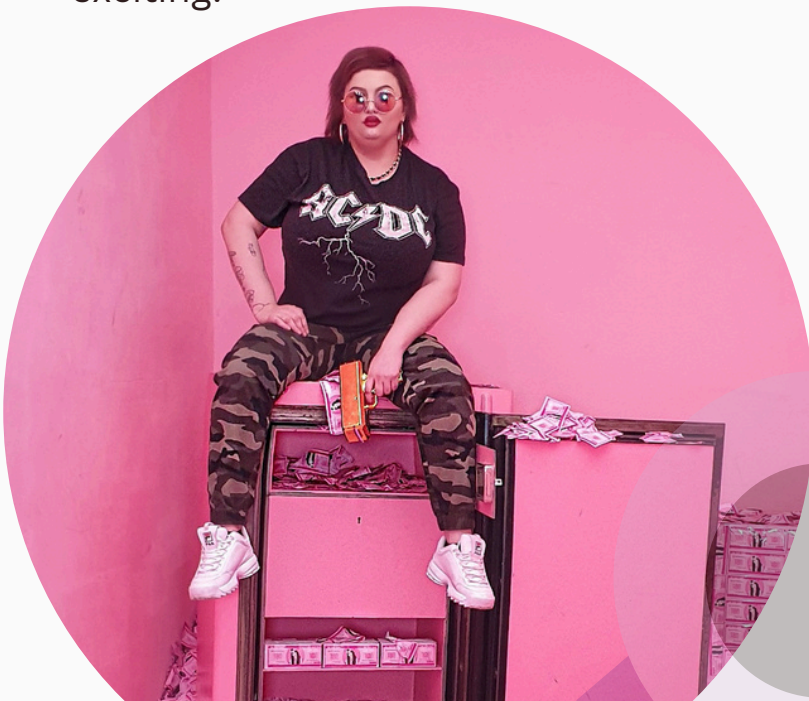
An interesting fact: You can receive assistance from your Personal Advisor (PA) until you are 25 if you request it. However, the age limit for staying put in your current situation remains at 21.

EXPECTATIONS

Let's dive into the world of adulthood!

If you're now an adult and a care leaver, get ready for a plan centered around you developing your independence. This will be done with the support of your carer, Personal Advisor, and Fostering Social Worker to establish a living agreement that works for you.

Your goal? Hone those life skills for a smooth transition into independent living! You may need to contribute towards your expenses as part of the "prep-for-adulthood" program. From clothing to transportation and spending money, it's time to manage your budget like a pro. On the bright side, you may be eligible for benefits like Housing Benefit and income support to assist with expenses. Just remember to spend some nights at home. While this isn't your typical fostering situation, certain guidelines still apply if your carer remains a foster parent. Be prepared for a background check if there are other children in the household. Don't worry - communicate with your support team to address any challenges and keep the journey exciting!



LIVING TOGETHER AGREEMENTS

Living together agreements serve as the essential rulebook for the Staying Put community. It's a collaborative agreement among young people and adults to understand what is expected to maintain peace and harmony. Whether you're experienced in shared living or need some direction, these agreements highlight respect and consideration for each other's requirements.

Covering everything from curfews to overnight guests, these agreements ensure a harmonious living environment. Whether it's a casual conversation or a more serious safety talk, these agreements help maintain positive vibes in the shared living space!



QUESTIONS

YOU MAY ASK...

- ? Smoking. Can you smoke in the home?
- ? Can you have friends over during the day?
- ? Can you have a friend to stay overnight?
- ? Does there need to be an agreement about the carer going into your room?
- ? Do you need to let your carer know where you are and who you are with?
- ? If you are not coming back for the night, is there a time you should phone or text to tell your carer?
- ? Do you have a key to the house? If not, why not? What needs to happen for it to be agreed?
- ? What happens when your carer goes away for a few days - can you stay there?
- ? What are the expectations about doing household tasks?
- ? Until what time can you use the washing machine or get something to eat?
- ? What if you have been working late and have an early start and need clothes washing or to get something to eat?

TIPS FOR KEEPING A GOOD STAYING PUT ARRANGEMENT

Maintain mutual respect for one another, which involves valuing everyone's belongings, space, and privacy.

Maintain open lines of communication by expressing your thoughts and feelings openly and appropriately.

Understand different alternative accommodation choices and be prepared for what comes next.

Get ready to learn and practice independent living skills at home to better prepare yourself for living independently in the future.

If an issue arises, address it with a professional before it escalates.

Consider the reasons for staying, seize the opportunity, and move forward with it.

FOSTERLINE: Fosterline provides confidential, impartial advice, information and signposting. T. 0800 040 7675 www.fosterline.info

NATIONAL YOUTH ADVOCACY SERVICE (NYAS) Offer information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children and young people. T: 0808 808 1001 www.nyas.net

CORAM VOICE PROVIDE Free legal advice and help (advocacy) to young people living in care or who have recently left care. T: 0808 800 5792 www.coramvoice.org.uk

All complaints or allegations can be reported to **TFF:** 0117 967 3744 communications@fosteringfoundation.co.uk

Need this document summarised in another language or format.

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