



# Nowhere to call home?

**What happens next?**

It's a tough time for you, but there are  
options and we're here to help.



**OXFORDSHIRE  
COUNTY COUNCIL**





# **IT CAN FEEL LIKE A BIG DEAL GETTING HELP – BUT WE KNOW THAT SOMETIMES STUFF JUST HAPPENS.**

**When it does, you need someone on your side. That's what your social worker and Oxfordshire County Council are here for.**





### **What's happened up until now?**

**We've worked together and now know you can't be reunited with your family, so you need to understand what comes next.**

And that's what we need to focus on.

Giving you security and putting things in place to help you move on with your life. That means making sure you get what you need and what you're comfortable

with so you can make your future whatever you want it to be.

Finding somewhere safe to stay is really important. Getting that security so you can work, learn and have fun will make a real difference for you.

**We can use a law called the Children Act 1989. It means we can find you somewhere safe to live. But to do this, there's another step in the process. We need to work out which bit of that law is the right bit to use in your situation.**







## *So what does that mean?*

What you need may be different to what someone else your age needs. So first we'll have a conversation about that.

You'll hear legal names like section 17 and section 20 to describe that help – but it's

really just about making sure that what we do for you is right for you.

While it may not feel it sometimes, the law helps us put in place certain things that you can count on. So you can be safe.





# STEP 1 – TALK TO YOUR SOCIAL WORKER

They will explain the two bits of the law we can use to help you. You won't get to decide on your own because there are so many things we need to consider, but we really want to know your thoughts because it's your life.

Each one is a list of things that we will commit to for you. Because they are the law, they must happen and you can expect them to happen.

**Your social worker will talk to you to work out what would work for you and importantly what each means for you.**

- ☐ The bit of law called section 20 is called looked after child. Using this means we work together to share the responsibility for you until you are 18.
- ☐ The bit of law called section 17 is called child in need. If we use this, it means you stay responsible for your own care but with our help. This is only an option in certain circumstances and your social worker will assess your situation to see if it's right for you.

If you need support because you have additional needs or a disability, this would also be explored to help us work with you.

# STEP 2 – MAKE SURE YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU UNDERSTAND

Some of the help you'll get is about getting you sorted now, but some is looking to your future. It's important to think about it all.

You are entitled to receive advice from others if you want to. This is known as independent advocacy and they can help you understand and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the information you have been given.

Ask your social worker for more information on this if you feel you need it.





# Section 20

## WHAT WOULD WE COMMIT TO NOW?

- ☐ Finding you somewhere to live – with foster carers or living somewhere where we can still give you support.
- ☐ Advice and support from a social worker and others in the social care team who you will meet regularly.
- ☐ Regular health appointments.
- ☐ Check-ins to see how things are going with your education, training or employment.





## WHAT WOULD WE COMMIT TO IN THE FUTURE?

- ☐ Making sure you have a written plan for your future. This would focus on what you want to do and achieve.
- ☐ Support with finding somewhere to live when you leave our care.
- ☐ Advice and support until you are 21 (possibly later if you go to university).
- ☐ Making sure you understand what support you are entitled to going forward – there are lots of things that can affect this and it will often be personal to you.

**You can change your mind when you're under our care.** That is known as signing yourself out of care which means you are saying you no longer want our support. Make sure you understand what that means before you do anything.

**In this case there is also a piece of law called the Housing Act 1996. In occasional circumstances, we might find that we can use that as a way of ensuring you have somewhere to live. But there are other considerations that we would need to take into account for this too. Your social worker can explain more about this.**











# Section 17

## WHAT WOULD WE COMMIT TO NOW?

- ☐ Finding you somewhere to live – this could be in a hostel or somewhere where we can still give you practical support.
- ☐ Advice from different people who can help with different things – for example housing.
- ☐ Help on how to get into education, training or employment.
- ☐ Help to apply for benefits and manage your money.

## WHAT WOULD WE COMMIT TO IN THE FUTURE?

- ☐ Making sure you have a written plan for your future. This would focus on what you want to do and achieve.
- ☐ Helping you become independent. The support from the social care team will end when you are 18 years old or before if you no longer need it.
- ☐ Making sure you understand what support you are entitled to going forward – there are lots of things that can affect this and it will often be personal to you.





# Step 3

## SO WHAT'S NEXT?

**ONCE YOU'RE HAPPY THAT YOU'VE GOT  
THE RIGHT PLAN FOR YOUR SUPPORT,  
WE CAN GET THINGS MOVING.**

If you and your social worker think using section 17 could work for you, the information will be shared with the team who can find you somewhere to live independently.

If using section 20 is decided on, the information will be shared with the team who can find you somewhere to live with support.

**Remember: Sometimes other professionals might be involved in decisions but we'll make sure you have a chance to share what you think.**

It's important to remember that we need to share your information so we can help you, but that now you are over the age of 16 you don't need the consent of your parents.





# “ I’VE CHANGED MY MIND? ”

Don’t worry. If you decide that the decision isn’t right for you then let your social worker know as soon as possible and they’ll have another chat with you.







# WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

## *Useful information*

Add in here names and any contact details for people you might need to call.



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