

Children in Care

# Welcome Guide



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# A welcome from your Children in Care Council

We are **Barnet On Point**, or **#BOP** for short, and we are your Children in Care Council. We want to welcome you to being in care.



**Barnet On Point**

We know it's a scary time and there will be lots of questions in your head. We know how you feel as we are all care experienced young people. Being in care may seem like the end of the world but it isn't. You will get the same opportunities as any other child or young person. You'll be living with people who want the very best for you. They will support you with your education, your health and your own personal needs. They will respect your diversity and they will identify your strengths and support you to develop these in order to be the best you can be.

Knowing who to speak to is important. There are lots of people out there who want to help you.

In this guide is information about the different services that are available to all children and young people in care in Barnet. We hope you find it useful. If you ever want to get in touch with us our contact details are on the back. We wish you the very best.



# About your workers – IRO and Social Worker

This page is for your **Social Worker** and **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)** to fill in with some information on themselves so you know a little bit more about them!

Independent Reviewing Officer:	<input type="text"/>
Telephone number:	<input type="text"/>
Email:	<input type="text"/>
3 Fun facts about me:	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

Social worker:	<input type="text"/>
Telephone number:	<input type="text"/>
Email:	<input type="text"/>
3 Fun facts about me:	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="text"/>

# Questions you may have when you come into care

## 1. Will I see my family?

It is important to us that you are able to see your family as long as it is safe; we call this contact. It may be by telephone, letter, at the family home or at a contact centre.

## 2. What if I don't agree with what is happening?

If you don't like what is happening it is important that you talk to your carer, Social Worker or your Independent Reviewing Officer, or IRO for short. You will see your IRO at your regular reviews. You also have **access to advocacy** – which is basically someone independent from the Council and your carers. If you would like to you can also speak to your Children In Care Council who in Barnet are called **Barnet On Point** or **#BOP** for short. They represent you and work closely with senior people in the Council.

All the contact details for the above are at the back of this welcome guide.

## 3. What about my education?

All children and young people from three years of age will have a **personal education plan (PEP)**. Children can be two and have PEPS as long as they are in an educational setting.

Children and young people are invited to attend their PEP.

The **Virtual School** will support you with your education and make sure that you are on track. Their contact details are at the back of this Welcome Guide.



#### 4. What if I have a disability or health needs?

Your **health** and **wellbeing** are really important to us. You will have regular health reviews and have access to children in care nurses. If you have a disability you will be able to access specialist social workers who will be able to support you to achieve all you want to achieve.

#### 5. What are my rights?

We are serious about ensuring that **childrens' rights** are upheld. Our pledge for Children in Care on the next page is strongly linked to childrens' rights, ensuring that your voice is listened to and acted upon is central to what we do. For more information on rights and entitlements go to: [www.becomecharity.org.uk/help-advice/get-informed](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk/help-advice/get-informed)



# Barnet Pledge

## What is a pledge?

A Pledge is a document which tells you what Barnet Children's Service will do for you during your time in care, and what we need from you.

## Our foreword

As **corporate parents** we want to offer you the best support to help you achieve the best in your childhood, adolescence and adulthood. As with parents we know we will not always get things right but we pledge that we will try our best.

## Care leaver foreword

You will get through your situation no matter how difficult it may be or how it may make you feel. Just know that people do care about you. Being in care will not define who you are, nor will it determine who you will become. You are in control of who you become. This pledge sets out what will be delivered for you by Barnet. Be sure to take full advantage.

- a good education
- feeling a sense of belonging
- keeping healthy
- staying safe
- championing your needs.

To view the full version of the pledge for Children in Care and Care Leavers visit:  
[www.barnet.gov.uk/fostering-adopting-and-looked-after-children](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/fostering-adopting-and-looked-after-children)



## Barnet On Point

**#BOP** is the name given Barnet's Children in Care Council which is a group of young people that **support** and **represent** the views of young people in care and care leavers.



**Barnet On Point**



The Children In Care Council is made up of lots of young people in care and care leavers who are from different backgrounds working on the rights of people in care and care leavers.

#BOP meets fortnightly

- we are working to improve the services which children in care receive in Barnet
- we want to make sure that your views are heard right across the council
- we would like to make sure that every young person knows their rights and has access to beneficial information, using the help of Barnet's professionals
- we want to help you access other opportunities like the NCS or Duke of Edinburgh award schemes
- we get involved with lots of different activities like interviewing staff, inspecting services or going on trips to London or out for dinner – but most of all we have fun! we also have a junior children in care council for young people aged 8 – 13 years.

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If you would like to know more or to get involved please call our Voice Of The Child Team on tel: 020 8359 4373.



# Barnet Virtual School

The Virtual School is dedicated to helping you get the best you can from your educational experience in order for you to have exciting choices in later life.

We monitor how well you are doing through your Personal Educational Plan (PEP) which takes place termly in your educational settings. We would love it if you attend these meetings. It is very important for us to hear your views and opinions on your education and support needs. At these meetings a plan is made for the adults to support you overcome any barriers you may be facing with your learning. They are to also make sure the Pupil Premium allocated to those from Reception to Year 11 is spent in the best way possible. We have amazing Caseworkers whose job is to make sure you achieve the best you can from your school or college experience.

We also organise school trips and activities outside of school to enrich your life experiences.

For more information, please email: [barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk) or alternatively tel: 020 8359 4534.



## Leaving Care Service: Onwards & Upwards



We have a dedicated Leaving Care Team who **offer support** when leaving care with housing, education, training, finance, independent living skills and much, much more.

For more information please ask your social worker to get you a copy of their Welcome Guide.

We offer support with

- Housing/ temporary accommodation
- Housing benefit
- Staying put immigration
- Education and training

Onwards and Upwards, tel: **020 8359 6220**

For more information please ask your social worker to get you a copy of their Welcome Guide. You can contact Onwards and Upwards on tel: **020 8359 6220**

# We are Barnet On Point #BOP and we are your Children in Care Council. We want to welcome you to your website

This website has been created as a place where you can find out about: Support available, services in Barnet and opportunities for children and young people.

We hope you find it useful and we encourage you to check out the Children in Care Council section to learn more about getting involved.

- Chair and Deputy Chair of #BOP

<https://www.itsaboutme.org.uk/>



## Independent Visitor

### What is an Independent Visitor?

Independent Visitors are adults who give up some of their free time to support children and young people who live with a foster family or in residential care. They are there to be on your side, separate from social services and do not get paid for their time.

### Can I have an Independent Visitor?

Yes if you are a child or young person who is in foster care or a children's home and is aged between 5 – 18 years old. It's always your choice to have one or not, unlike other things it's not something you have to do if you don't want to.

## Advocacy in Barnet

### What is Advocacy?

Advocacy means helping you to express your views and making sure that these views are taken seriously. We will help you find out about your rights, so that you can make up your own mind about what you want to happen.

We will help you explain your views and will make sure that people listen to you. We can speak with those who are supporting you, like social workers, teachers or family, to help make sure that you are involved in any plans being made about you.

If you want, we can help you to make a complaint and support you through the process. If you would like an Advocate you can ask your Social Worker to refer you, or you can self- refer directly to:

Action for Children  
The Print House  
18 Ashwin St,  
London E8 3DL

0207 254 9408  
[London.advocacy@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:London.advocacy@actionforchildren.org.uk)

## Your Voice

This section will tell you how you can make a formal complaint as well as compliments.

We realise coming into care can be a difficult and worrying time for children and young people.

Your Social Worker and carer should be doing everything possible to help you understand what is happening and talk through any concerns that you may have.

Any child or young person in care can contact Childline at any time who will offer them advice and support on **0800 1111** and the NSPCC website is [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk).

If you want to give a compliment about a person at Barnet or get something off your chest or feedback about a service you have received then feel free to email it to [HaveYourSay@Barnet.gov.uk](mailto:HaveYourSay@Barnet.gov.uk) or call us on tel: **020 8359 7008**.

If you feel the need to complain then please email [FSComplaints@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:FSComplaints@barnet.gov.uk) or call us on tel: **020 8359 7008**. Any child or young person is able to complain at any time.

We hope this guide has been helpful and has answered some of the questions you may have about being in care. If you have any more questions then please speak to your social worker who will be happy to help.



## List of helpful contacts

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If you want to contact your **social worker**:

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If you want to contact your  
**Independent Reviewing Officer**:

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“If you want to contact someone for  
advocacy or independent advice:  
**Action For Children: 0207 254 9408**

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**Action for Children (Independent  
Visiting): 0207 254 9408**

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If you want to contact your **Children  
in Care Council** who are called **#BOP**:  
tel: **020 8359 4373** or  
email: **haveyoursay@barnet.gov.uk**

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If you want to contact the **Leaving Care  
Team**: tel: **020 8359 6220**

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If you want to contact the **Virtual School**  
for educational issues please contact:  
tel: **020 8359 4534**

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If you want to make a complaint:  
email: **FSComplaints@barnet.gov.uk**

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If you want to send us a compliment  
email: **FSCompliments@barnet.gov.uk**

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If you want to drop us a line  
about anything else:  
**haveyoursay@barnet.gov.uk**



# Notes

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For more information:  
Duty Social Worker tel: 020 8359 2000  
Duty IRO tel: 020 8359 7275  
Action for Children: 0207 254 9408

