

Review of Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care



***REVISED DRAFT* Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care**

All children have rights and if you are in care you also have another, special set of rights. If you can't live with your parents then the adults who are looking after you must do what is best for you and respect these rights – even if you don't know about them.

Rights are things that you can expect to have and experience. Rights must not be taken away from you, no matter who you are, what you do or where you are from.

I have the right to be safe and well cared for

This means:

- knowing that people care about me
- not being hurt or made to feel bad
- not being scared of people I live with
- not being moved around a lot
- having adults check in with me to make sure I am safe and happy
- being well cared for and protected from harm by the adults who look after me

I have the right to be heard

This means:

- having a say about the things that affect me (such as where I go to school, what clothes I wear, the sorts of food I eat, who I hang out with and how I spend my time – if it is safe)
- having my opinion asked for and listened to when adults are making decisions that affect me
- knowing who to go to if I have a problem or want to complain about something
- having someone I can talk to who can help me have my say
- being included and having a say about plans for my future

I have the right to be myself and to be treated with respect

This means:

- being able to feel good about myself and who I am, no matter what my sexuality, gender identity, culture or religion is
- being treated fairly
- being included
- feeling valued
- not being discriminated against or judged for who I am or what I believe in

I have the right to connect with my culture

This means:

- knowing what my cultural heritage is
- being a part of my culture and participating in cultural activities
- connecting with my Country, community and cultural services
- learning my language, stories, songs, dances and traditions
- feeling proud and strong about my culture

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I have the right to have contact with people who matter to me

This means:

- knowing about my family and why I am in care
- seeing and keeping in regular contact with my family, friends and other people who are important to me – if it is safe
- having regular contact and support from my worker
- joining groups or sports teams where I can be with my friends or make new friends

I have the right to good health and wellbeing

This means:

- getting a health check when I first go into care
- seeing a doctor, dentist or other health care worker when I feel I need to
- being supported to see a counsellor or getting help with my mental health
- getting specialist care if I have a disability
- getting healthy food and time to exercise and play every day
- relaxing, having fun and joining in activities that interest me

I have the right to privacy

This means:

- having my own space where I can be on my own if I want
- having my own bed
- having my own personal things kept safe
- knowing what information is being shared about me, who it is shared with and why it is shared

I have the right to a good education

This means:

- going to a school or training that is right for me
- having the tools that help my learning (like a laptop, the internet and textbooks)
- getting extra support if I need it, especially if I have a disability or learning difficulties
- having my potential recognised, with opportunities to develop my talents and interests
- learning life skills, like cooking and budgeting
- getting the foundation, support and guidance I need to get the job I want to do in the future

I have the right to get the support I need so I'm ready to leave care and feel good about my future

This means:

- being at the centre of planning for my move out of care
 - having a safe place to live when I leave care
 - being able to learn the skills I need to live as independently as I can
 - being able to go on with study, training or work when I leave care
 - knowing where I can go if I need help after I leave care
 - having people in my life who 'dream big' with me, stand by me and help me to see what is possible
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If you need someone who can help you, or you want to make a complaint, you can...

- speak to your carer
- speak to your worker
- speak to the supervisor at your worker's office
- speak to the Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People on 1800 275 664
- lodge a complaint through the Department for Child Protection complaints line on 1800 003 305

This is who you can call if you need extra help:

Headspace (for young people over the age of 12) 1800 063 267

Kids Helpline (24 hours) 1800 551 800

Crisis Care (Department for Child Protection after hours) 13 16 11