



Staying Put

Staying with your foster carer
after 18





What is staying put?

In Lambeth, we want as many children looked after as possible to continue living with their foster carers after their 18th birthday, this is called 'a staying put arrangement'. Care leavers can be supported to live with their foster carers up to the age of 21 as members of their family (and sometimes up to 25 depending on your circumstances).

We know that supporting young people who are settled in foster care to remain in their foster placements after their 18th birthday allows them to be better prepared for independence. Lots of young people have very positive relationships with their foster carers. We know that the close supportive network foster carers provide can continue on to support you and provide stability into adulthood having the opportunity to stay within a secure family environment will mean you are more likely to secure positive outcomes and successfully move into adulthood.

To qualify for a staying put arrangement, you will have been a child looked after for 13 weeks or more since the age of 14.

How can we plan together to support you in staying put?

- **Early discussions** – If both you and your foster carers want to explore staying put, it is important you start having conversations with your social worker and Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) early, around the age of 15
- **Planning** – If staying put is agreed, your placement plan should be updated to include planning around your staying put arrangement, you and your foster carers wishes will be central to this. Around the age of 16
- **Agreement** – Your staying put agreement will be written and signed by you and your foster carer and agreements about funding will be put in place when you are 17 years old
- **Arrangement in place** – by the time you are 18 you will be in your staying put arrangement and your Personal Advisor (PA) will support you and this arrangement will be reviewed as part of your pathway plan review. You will still be able to access Lambeth's care leavers offer whilst you are staying put
- **Ending the arrangement** – You or your foster carer can end the staying put arrangement at any time before you are 21. When you reach 21 (or if agreed up to 25) and are still in the arrangement, this will stop but you may continue to stay with your foster carers as an informal arrangement if you and your foster carers agree. Your support from Lambeth Council will stop though.



What financial support can you get?

Whilst you are in your staying put arrangement, you and your foster carers will be able to get financial support from Lambeth Council. This will include:

- As you will be 18, you will be able to claim any benefits you are entitled to, depending on your circumstances, your PA will be able to help you with this
- Your foster carers will continue to get a payment from Lambeth Council to support you
- If your foster carers now providing staying put are in house foster carers for Lambeth, they will not have to pay council tax during your staying put arrangement
- You will be expected to pay your foster carers towards the cost of bills and food from your allowance as you are now an adult. The amount can be agreed between you and your foster carers and will depend on your circumstances; you may be away for some of the time at university, be claiming benefits or working. The amounts you will be expected to pay will be agreed between you and your foster carer with the help of your Social Worker or Personal Advisor.

