

Looked After Children & Young People - Health Care

Should you be registered with a doctor?

Yes, your foster carer, key worker or social worker should arrange this for you.

Will you have regular check-ups?

- Yes, you should see a doctor as soon as possible after you are placed with foster parents (or in a children's home).
- The regulations say that because you are living away from your parents you should be seen by a doctor at least once a year or twice a year for children under 5 years.

What if you need to see a doctor at other times?

Your foster carer or key worker will make arrangements for you to see your doctor.

Should you see a dentist regularly?

Yes, you should see your dentist every 6 months. Your foster carer, key worker or social worker will arrange this.

What if you need medical or dental treatment?

The doctor or dentist should talk to you about it and explain what is involved.

Will other people such as your parents or social worker need to know?

- If you are over 16 you normally have an absolute right to confidentiality.
- If you are under 16 and you think you are old enough to decide about medical treatment by yourself, you must tell the doctor that you do not want other people to know, and explain why. It is still up to the doctor to decide if he or she agrees with you. If the doctor chooses to tell someone else such as your social worker, he or she should tell you before and give you the reasons.
- If your doctor has told your social worker about your request for medical treatment, your social worker will have to decide whether to tell your parents, and should find out how you feel about it beforehand. [Link to What do I need to get permission for and IYSS Pregnancy.](#)

What if you don't want the treatment?

- You should discuss this with your social worker or looked after children's nurse who will then discuss your feelings with your doctor or talk to the doctor yourself.
- Your social worker may consult your parents.
- Even if you are over 16, your parents and/or your social worker may have the right to 'overrule' your decision.
- If you disagree with the treatment, the Department for People may apply to the court for an Order requiring you to have the treatment.
- This is a very complicated area, and you should talk to your solicitor or a Children Panel solicitor. You will be able to put your views to the court through your solicitor. It is quite likely that a Children's Guardian would be appointed to represent your interests.

What about emergency treatment?

If you need treatment urgently (for example to save your life) the doctor may be able to give you treatment whether or not you, your social worker or your parents have given the go ahead.

Do you have to see a Counsellor or Psychotherapist?

- Your social worker or the court will only arrange for you to see a counsellor or psychotherapist if she thinks it will help you.
- Their job is to help you and there is nothing to be ashamed of in seeing one of these people.
- If you find you are not being helped you should tell the person you are seeing and try to explain why.
- You should also tell your social worker.
- Ultimately, no one can force you to have this treatment.

Can you see any report written about you by a doctor?

- The doctor may agree to give you a copy of any report that they have written.
- That will depend on whether the doctor feels you are mature enough to understand what is contained in the report.
- If they refuse, you should consult your solicitor or social worker who can help you challenge the doctor's decision.

What differences are there if I am accommodated under Section 20?

- As your parents still have full parental responsibility for you, they should be kept informed about any medical treatment you have or need.
- They need to give permission before you have your check up when you first go into care and every year after that, and they should be invited to go with you.
- If a doctor feels that they can't keep your treatment confidential, then usually both your parents and your social worker will be told; but this will depend on your age, particular circumstances and the nature of the treatment.
- If you decide you do not want treatment recommended by a doctor, dentist, counsellor or other medical professional, your parents will be consulted.
- They may be able to override your decision, but Social Care cannot do this without the court's permission.