

Who's Who: A guide to workers

Social Worker: Your go-to person when you need support. Your social worker should be in regular contact with you and helps to organise a range of things, such as your care plan, PEP and family time.

Young Person's Advisor (YPA): When you turn 18 they become your main contact instead of your social worker. You can talk to them about any support you need as a care leaver and they will oversee your pathway plan.

Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO): They make sure that the local authority (Durham County Council) is looking after you properly and that your voice is being listened to. They will chair your care plan meetings and help you if you want to raise any problems you are having with the services you are receiving.



Virtual School Head: A 'virtual school' is not a building but rather relates to the community of looked after children in a local authority. The virtual head works to make sure that schools are supporting looked after children as best as they can, by giving them guidance and funds. The virtual head will help you get placed into a school if you need to change and make sure you have the right support in place to attend school and do your best.



Designated Teacher: A teacher in your school who supports children in care. Their job is to make sure your school understands your needs (for example, during PEP meetings) and you can go to them if you have a problem or a question when in school.

Looked After Children's Nurse (Designated Nurse): They have responsibility for ensuring your health needs are being met and carry out your health assessments.

Advocate: Someone independent from your local authority who will stand up for your rights. They can support you in important meetings and will make sure that your voice is being listened to, especially if you are unhappy with some aspect of your care. Ask your social worker or IRO if you would like to be set up with one.

Independent Visitor: A volunteer who can act like a 'buddy' to you, by taking you out to do fun things (of your choosing) and being somebody you can talk to. All looked after children are legally entitled to an independent visitor, so you can ask your social worker to set you up with one.

