

# THE NAME GAME

A GUIDE TO THE PEOPLE YOU'LL PROBABLY MEET IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES, IF YOU'RE IN CARE OR A CARE LEAVER. ALTHOUGH JOB TITLES MIGHT DIFFER BETWEEN COUNCILS, THEY'LL DO THE SAME JOB.

This is from a series of FREE factsheets for young people with care experience, produced by Become.



## Social Worker

**What they do:** In care? Then you'll have a Social Worker. They make decisions about your care and manage your care plan. They should be in regular contact with you and visit you at least every 6 weeks.

**How they help:** They must listen to you and include your wishes and feelings in your care plan. They should explain decisions and ensure you know how to get your voice heard. You should always have your social worker's contact details!



## Personal Advisor (PA)

**What they do:** Over 16 or a care leaver? You'll have a PA. They'll take over your care planning and complete your pathway plan reviews until you're 21 (or older if you're in education or training).

**How they help:** They should stay in regular contact, helping you get into education, training and employment. They also advise on things like housing, money, health and wellbeing to ensure you're ready to live independently.



## Team Manager

**What they do:** They decide who your social worker or PA is and make sure they're doing a good job, while providing advice and approving decisions.

**How they help:** They can attend meetings where important things are discussed. Sometimes getting your views across to them helps make sure things get done!



## Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

**What they do:** If you're in care, you should have an IRO. They'll chair your care planning meetings and ensure the decisions made are acted on. If you have siblings in care, they should have the same IRO as you.

**How they help:** They'll make sure decisions are made in your best interests, listen to you and ensure your views are listened to. They'll also tell you how to make a complaint and will try to resolve any disagreements you have about the services you receive. They'll stand up for your rights!



**BECOME.**  
THE CHARITY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE  
AND YOUNG CARE LEAVERS

**FOR SUPPORT  
AND ADVICE, OR  
INFORMATION  
ABOUT YOUR  
RIGHTS, CALL THE  
CARE ADVICE  
LINE WEEKDAYS,  
10:30AM-3PM**

**Care  
ADVICE LINE  
FREEPHONE  
0800 023  
2033**



### **Director of Children's Services (DCS)**

**What they do:** They're in charge of Children's Services. The DCS must make sure that the service does the best it can, to keep you safe, and make sure schools are of a high standard.

**How they help:** You might never see the DCS but it's their job to check your council gives you the best possible service.



### **Advocates/Children's Rights Officers**

**What's the difference?** If you're in care, you're legally entitled to an advocate. Advocates usually work for independent organisations, whereas Children's Rights Officers work for the council. Their roles are the same though.

**How they help:** They should make sure your voice is heard, listen to you, help you make a complaint, check you're getting what you're entitled to and that you understand your rights, and support you in important meetings.



### **Participation Officer**

**What they do:** They work closely with Children in Care Councils to make sure young people's views on services are heard.

**How can they help?** They often organise fun activities and offer opportunities like training and meeting other young people in care. If you have a problem, they can help you find the right person to talk to.



### **Independent Visitor (IV)**

**What they do:** IVs are volunteers who aren't connected to the council, who befriend and support children in care (like a mentor). If you're in care, the law says that you must be offered the chance to have an IV.



**How they help:** They'll be someone to talk to, give advice, support you and be a friend!



### **Virtual School Head Teacher & Designated Teacher**

**What they do:** They'll check your school/college understands the issues that might affect your education and keep track of how you, and all children in care, are doing. They'll also be responsible for your Personal Education Plan (PEP), which should help you fulfil your potential.

**How they help:** They'll help your school/college support you and meet your needs, checking you're involved in setting learning goals and that there's a smooth transition if you change courses.



### **Designated Nurse**

**What they do:** If you're in care, you should have a health assessment every year (twice a year for under 5's) overseen by the Designated Nurse. They'll work with your social worker to ensure your health needs are met.

**How they help:** They understand issues facing children in care and give advice and support with this in mind.