

## **Fosterline Wales Factsheet**

### **When I am Ready**

#### **Introduction**

When I am Ready is a Welsh Government service for 18 to 21 year olds (up to 25 if still in full-time education) who want to stay living with their former foster carer. The foster carer must agree, and must be approved and registered as a foster carer with either their local authority or independent agency on the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The young person must have been in care for more than 13 weeks since their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and must be in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

#### **Why the Welsh Government set up When I am Ready**

Most young adults live at home after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. They benefit from the stability, ongoing support and chance to develop their independent living skills. When I am Ready allows care leavers to benefit in the same way by staying with their foster family. The intention is for care leavers to be better equipped for adult life, before they move on to independence. It is not a scheme just for young people in full-time education.

#### **Who can use When I am Ready?**

Under section 208 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, local authorities have a duty to find out, as part of the pathway assessments and planning, whether a young person and their foster carer(s) wish to make a When I am Ready arrangement.

A young person can only use When I am Ready if:

- they were in a fostering placement with an approved and registered foster carer on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- that foster carer agrees to a When I am Ready arrangement

Disabled young adults can use When I am Ready. However, if they are going to need long term care and support within a family, a Shared Lives scheme may be more appropriate.

#### **Does the foster placement continue after the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday?**

Legally, no. On the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, they legally become a care leaver. They are entitled to support as a care leaver and will have a personal advisor and a pathway plan. The foster carer legally becomes their 'former foster carer', and the foster placement becomes a 'When I am Ready arrangement' and the former foster carer is known as a When I am Ready carer. When I am Ready agreements are not governed by fostering regulations or legislation. In a 'When I am Ready'

arrangement, the carer becomes the young person's 'landlord' and the young adult is an 'excluded licensee'. An 'excluded licensee' can be asked to leave the property without the carer needing to apply for an eviction notice.

In practical terms, there will be little difference as the young adult will still be part of the family. You will have a living together agreement which replaces the placement agreement and lays down expectations for you and for the young adult. Any care leaving grant can be held back until the When I am Ready agreement finishes.

### **Things to consider before agreeing to a When I am Ready arrangement**

#### ***When I am Ready terms and conditions***

**In considering the suitability and commitment of becoming a When I am Ready carer, ask the local authority to provide you with the full written details of how the scheme works, payments and the responsibilities of the When I am Ready carer.**

#### ***Having another adult in the household***

You will need to check that your landlord or mortgage provider is happy for you to have a lodger. You will also need to tell your insurers that an unrelated adult is living with you.

If the young adult is vulnerable and you provide personal care you will need an enhanced DBS for adults.

If you continue fostering, the young adult will need a DBS for children. Be aware that some young adults will have information on their DBS that makes it difficult or impossible for you to continue to have fostering placements in your home at the same time as a When I am Ready agreement

#### ***Will you continue fostering as well?***

A When I am Ready arrangement is **not** a foster placement. If you are not planning to have any further foster placements in the future, you will need to check what would happen to your fostering registration with your agency.

If you are a member of The Fostering Network and are no longer registered as a foster carer because you only provide a When I am Ready arrangement, **it is important to consider taking out retired foster carer membership before your registration as a foster carer ends**, to make sure you are still covered by the legal insurance cover in case of any historic allegations or claims from when you were a foster carer.

#### ***Finances***

The Welsh Government guidance to local authorities is for When I am Ready carers to receive at least the same financial support as the national minimum fostering allowance. Some or all of this comes from the local authority. The young adult may be expected to contribute financially, through benefits and/or wages.

You will be classed as self-employed. If you received qualifying tax relief as a foster carer, you will continue to get it, in relation to money you receive through the When I am Ready agreement

If you receive housing benefit or universal credit housing element, the young adult is classed as a non-dependent adult.

For means-tested benefits, any money you get from the local authority is ignored but any money you get from the young adult is treated as income.

### **Checking and monitoring the living together agreement**

Each local authority needs to say, in its When I am Ready policy, how agreements will be monitored, reviewed and revised, if it is agreed to extend the agreement. See The Fostering Network's Frequently Asked Questions (Resources).

*What happens at holiday time if the young person lives away at university?*

This will be sent out in the local authority When I am Ready policy and should then be confirmed in the living together agreement.

### **Who cannot use When I am Ready**

Young people cannot use When I am Ready if, on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, they were in:

- residential care
- private foster care, or informal kinship care
- a young offenders' institution.

If a young adult leaves their When I am Ready arrangement, they cannot come back under When I am Ready. They may, however, be able to come back under the rules for Supported Lodgings. This rule does not apply if they are away during term time, because they are in full-time education.

### **Resources**

Welsh Government Good Practice Guide

[gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160307guidanceen.pdf](http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160307guidanceen.pdf)

The Fostering Network's guide

[www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/practice-information/when-i-am-ready](http://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/practice-information/when-i-am-ready)

The Fostering Network's FAQ for fostering agencies

[www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/sites/www.fostering.net/files/public/resources//wir\\_faq\\_final\\_version.pdf](http://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/sites/www.fostering.net/files/public/resources//wir_faq_final_version.pdf)

You can get independent online benefits information from:

[www.entitledto.co.uk/help/non-dependants](http://www.entitledto.co.uk/help/non-dependants)

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales/)

## How The Fostering Network can help

The Fostering Network offers advice, information and support. Our expertise and knowledge are always up-to-date and available through our vital member helplines, publications, training and consultancy.

### Advice

Fosterline Wales

Call us on 0800 316 7664 from 9.30am - 12.30pm Monday to Friday.

If you call outside this time please leave a message and someone will call you back as soon as possible.

You can email us or write to us at:

[Fosterlinewales@fostering.net](mailto:Fosterlinewales@fostering.net)

The Fostering Network Wales

33 Cathedral Road

Cardiff CF11 9HB

### Support and resources

Our website is an essential source of information, while our online community brings together foster carers for peer support and advice. You can login to share your experience and get advice from other foster carers. Our online community is a safe and secure area to discuss foster care matters.

[thefosteringnetwork.org.uk](http://thefosteringnetwork.org.uk)

### Training and consultancy

Wherever you are in your fostering career, as a foster carer, social worker or manager, The Fostering Network has a range of training designed to meet your development needs.

For more information contact our learning and development manager, Sarah Mobedji at [sarah.mobedji@fostering.net](mailto:sarah.mobedji@fostering.net)

### About The Fostering Network

The Fostering Network is the UK's leading fostering charity, bringing together everyone who is involved in the lives of fostered children to make foster care the very best it can be.

### Contact

To find out more about our work in Wales, please contact:

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