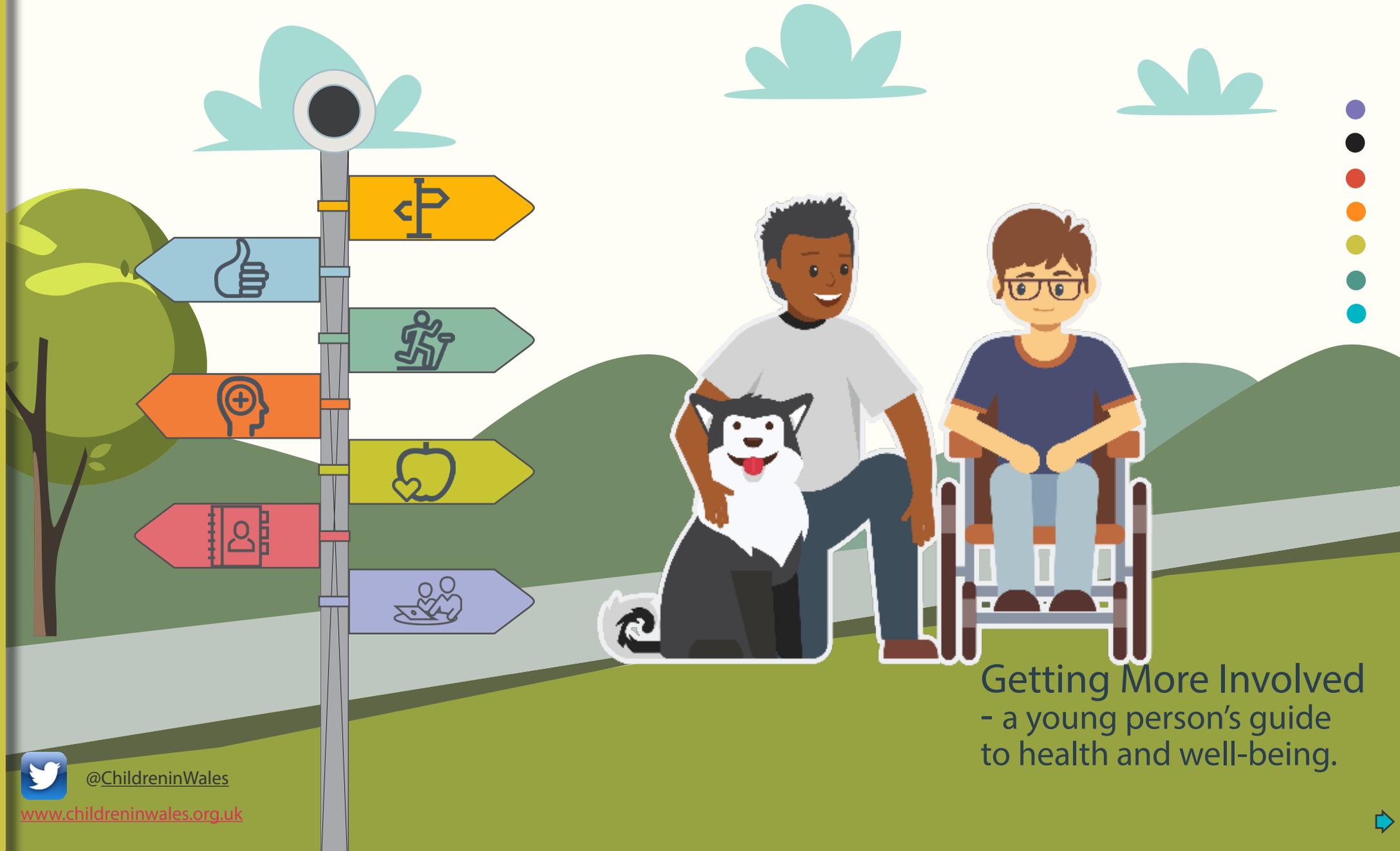




# Your guide to health assessments and health plans



Getting More Involved  
- a young person's guide  
to health and well-being.



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## Getting More Involved

### - a young person's guide to health and well-being

This guide is designed to help you to understand health assessments and health plans. It will:

- Explain what a health assessment is
- Tell you what a health plan is
- Explain why a health assessment is important
- Explain how to get some help or advice if you need it
- Tell you a bit about the law
- Tell you how to get an advocate if this is something you need

We asked care experienced young people about their experiences of health assessments and these have been used to inform this guide.



## Words and phrases we use

**Looked after Children's (LAC) nurse** - a specialist nurse who works only with children and young people who are in care. They usually meet with you to complete your health assessment and regularly review your health and well-being.

**Health assessment** - a process of finding out more about your health and well-being and what you need to be as healthy as possible. During your health assessment, you will usually meet with a health professional to have a discussion about your health and well-being.

**Health professional** - could be a registered doctor or registered nurse, a health visitor, school nurse or midwife.

**Community Paediatrician** - a specialist doctor who may complete your first health assessment and may request to see you again if there are any health concerns.

**Advocate** - a person who will help you to share your wishes and feelings and tell you about your rights. Your advocate can attend meetings or appointments with you if needed.

**Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)** - the person who chairs your LAC review meetings. They have an important role in deciding what happens in your future.

# What is a health assessment?

*"I don't want my health assessment to be too serious. Just having a cup of tea and knowing my LAC nurse helps a lot."*  
Care experienced young person, aged 14

If you are a child or young person in care you have a right to good health care. Every child or young person in care has a right to have a health assessment and a health plan.

A health assessment is a way of finding out more about your health and well-being and what you need to be as healthy as possible. It gives the professionals who support you all the information they need to support your health and well-being in the best possible way.

It is usually completed by a health professional, a LAC nurse, school nurse or health visitor - depending on who knows you the best and which area you live in. After you have a health assessment, it will be written into a report called a health plan.

A health professional must ask you about your mental health and how are you feeling about things.



Your health professional will also check how you are generally. Things you might discuss may include:

- Your day to day health and how you feel generally
- Your dental and eye health check ups
- Checking your immunisations (injections) are up to date
- Your mental health and well-being
- Advice and guidance on keeping healthy in the future
- If you have been ill in the past, your health professional may ask you about your family history
- As you get older, your health professional can tell you how to make appointments with a doctor, dentist and optician.



You have a right to talk about anything that you feel is important during your health assessment.

# Planning for your health

Once you have had your health assessment, this is written into your health plan.

Your health plan will tell others including your carers and social worker about your health and well-being and how best to support you to be as healthy as possible.

The health professional completing your health assessment will respect your right to confidentiality and will talk to you about how you would like things to be written in your health plan.

You have a right to a copy of your health plan, depending on your age and understanding. Your health professional will ask you about this during your appointment.



## What does the law say about health rights?

In Wales we have a law called the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**. Your social worker must work together with health professionals to make sure that you have good health care and are as healthy as possible.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act says that all children and young people who are in care must have a health assessment and have their health and well-being checked on a regular basis.

The **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** is a list of children's rights that the Welsh Government has committed to.

**Article 6** under the UNCRC says that you have a right to life and to grow up to be healthy

**Article 24** says that you have a right to good quality healthcare and good food and water.

**Article 12** says that you have a right to say what you think should happen and be listened to.



# What to expect from your health assessment

## Step 1: If you go into care

You should have your first health assessment during the first 20 working days of being in care. Your first health assessment will provide a profile of your health and well-being.

Your carers should make sure you are registered with a doctor and a dentist.

## Step 2: Your health plan is written up

You can ask for a copy if you would like. Article 13 of the UNCRC says that you have a right to information.

## Step 3: Your LAC review meeting

Your health professional may attend to talk about your health plan. You should have a copy of your health plan and know what to expect.

## Step 4: Ongoing review of your health and well-being plan

If you are over 5 years old, you should have a health assessment and your health plan reviewed at least once a year. This can be done more frequently if you have a health or well-being issue you want to discuss.

# How often will I see a health professional?

You should have your first health assessment before coming into care or within the first 28 days of being in care.

After this, health assessments must take place:

- At least once every 6 months for children under 5 years old
- At least once every 12 months for children and young people 5 years and over

You have a right to ask to see your health professional sooner if you have a health and well-being issue that you want to talk about. You may also have your health and well-being reviewed more regularly if you have an ongoing health issue.



*"Don't just speak to me in medical terms, explain things slowly and give me time to ask questions." Care experienced young person, aged 16*



# Your questions answered

## Where will I meet with my health professional?

Your health professional will usually try to meet you at your home or at a local health clinic. Your health professional should think about where the best place is for you and where you will feel most comfortable.

If you meet with a school nurse to have your health assessment they may see you for a brief appointment at school or arrange to see you outside of school.

## What if I want to ask questions?

Your health assessment is an opportunity for you to ask questions if something isn't clear or you want to know more about something.



## How do I speak to an advocate?

Every child and young person who is in care has a right to have an advocate.

An advocate will stand up for your right to be heard and let others know your wishes and feelings. Your advocate can attend a meeting with you or talk to you about options when making decisions.

If you would like the support of an advocate, you can speak to your social worker, IRO or health professional and ask for an advocacy referral. You can also refer yourself if you prefer. The MEIC helpline can give you more information about how to get an advocate.

You can call the MEIC helpline for free on 0808 80 23456.

## Can I bring somebody with me to my appointment?

You can take somebody with you to your appointment if you wish. It's important that you feel comfortable as it's your health assessment. You may also want to take an advocate with you.

# Your LAC review

## Will a health professional attend my LAC review?

After you have your health assessment your health professional will write up your health plan. Your health plan will tell others what they need to do to support your health and well-being.

Your health professional may attend your LAC review meeting to discuss your health plan.

## What will happen with my information?

You should be kept informed about where your information is going and who it will be shared with. Your health professional should tell you about what exactly will be shared with your carer, your social worker or others at your LAC review meeting.

The health professional completing your health assessment may need to share some of your information with your carers - so that they have the information they need to look after you properly.

## What about my rights to privacy?

Article 16 under the UNCRC says that every child and young person has a right to privacy.

The information that you share is your information and won't be shared unless you want it to be. However, if your health professional is concerned for your safety or another person's safety they may have to tell somebody else to make sure that you are protected.

Your health professional may also share information from your health plan with your social worker or other professionals who work with you if you need to access extra support. Your health professional will talk to you about what will be shared and give you a copy of your health plan.



## Steps forward

If you would like to know more you can always speak to your health professional, your social worker, your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) or your carers.

If you would like the help of an advocate you can contact the MEIC Helpline for free on 0808 80 23456.

It is also important that you know more about health and well-being so you can look after your own health and well-being in the future.

You can find out more about eating healthily and exercising on our website.

We also have a helpful guide about mental health you can check out on our website.

These are available online at [www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children/](http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/resources/looked-after-children/)

