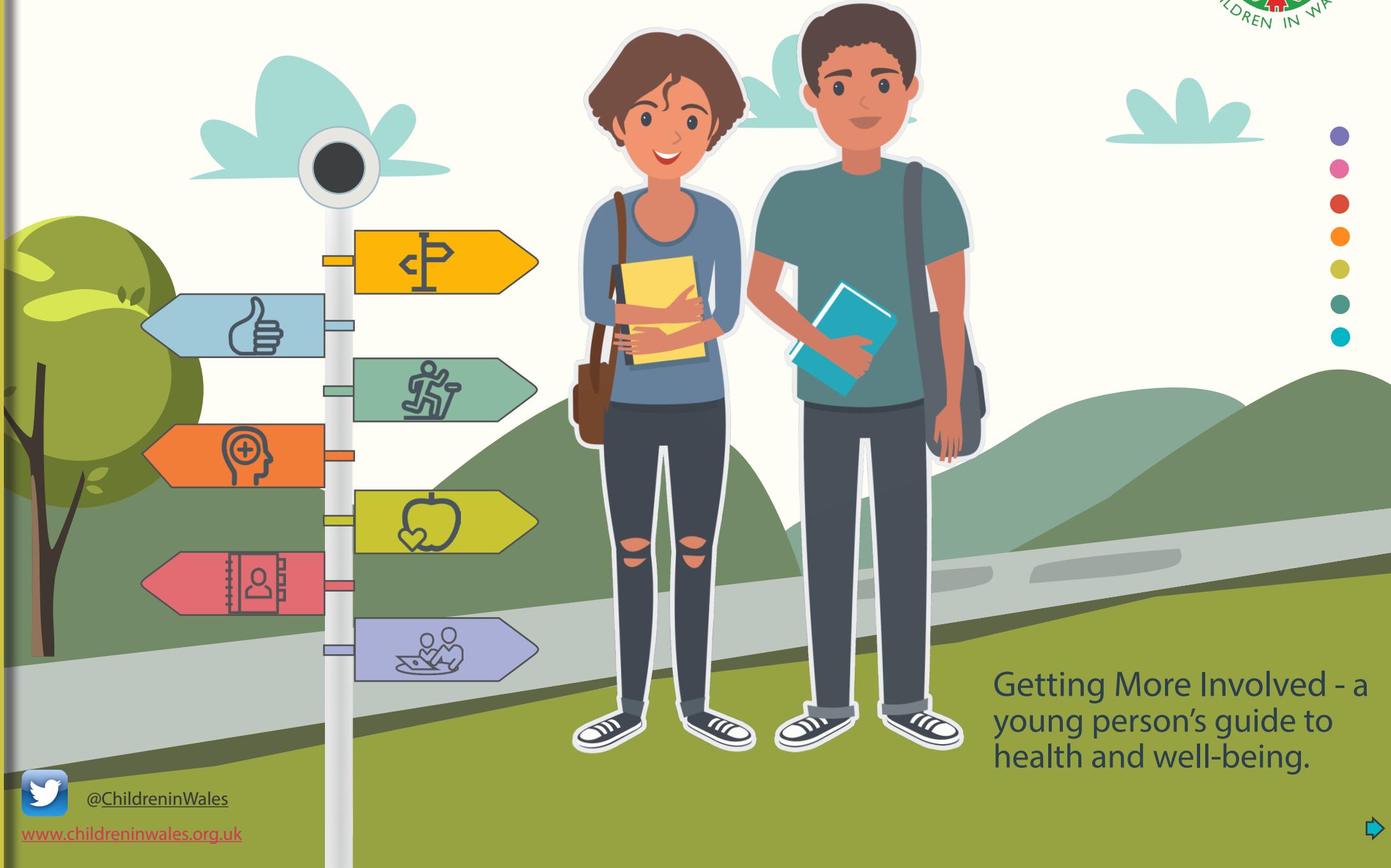




Having a say in your education



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



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Having a say in your education

"Your education is what you need to move you on, to achieve what you set out to do. Your education is everything." - Care experienced young person

This is an education guide for young people in care across Wales. Every young person is going to have a different experience in school, but it is important that you are supported in school to be the best that you can be.

This guide will tell you about your rights to education and the law in Wales. It will tell you what a personal education planning meeting is and how to have more of a say.

It also includes a worksheet with some questions to help you start to think about what you would like to say in any meetings and anything you would like to change.



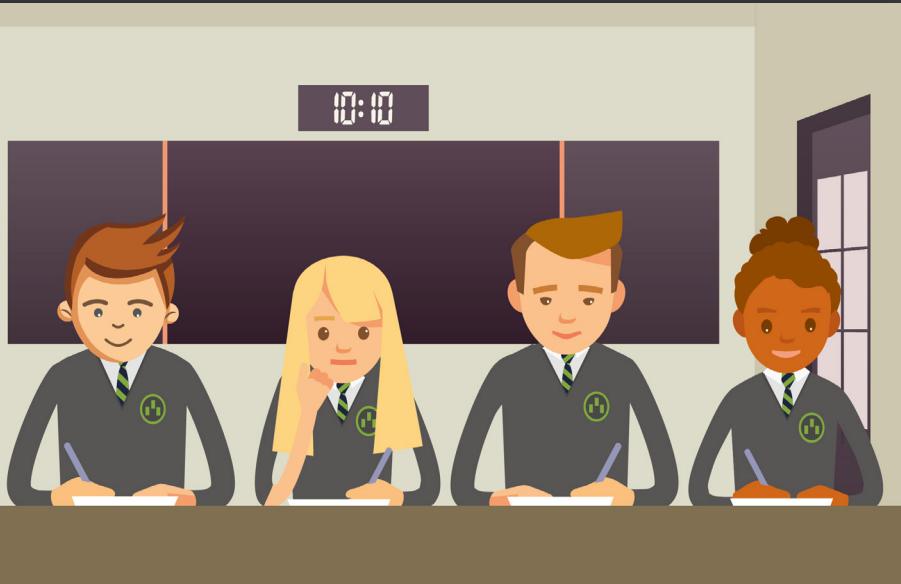
If you need some help or support you will find an advice section towards the end of this guide.

Key words and what they mean

Designated teacher - This is a teacher who has to make sure that you are supported in your education to fulfil your potential. Your designated teacher is expected to have an understanding of some of the issues that young people in care face. You should be told who your designated teacher is at your school and how to contact them if needed.

Advocate - An advocate is somebody who can support you to attend a meeting or speak up about any issue that is important to you. An advocate is independent - which means they won't work for your school or social services.

Personal education plan (or PEP for short) - a written plan of your education and training, what you are working towards and how you are doing.





What does the law say?

You have a right to education. Article 28 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that you have a right to learn and to go to school.

Article 12 of the UNCRC says that it's your right to have a say about what you think should happen.

The Welsh Government wants all children and young people to reach their goals. Everyone should have dreams and opportunities. You can read more about the government's plan to support the education of children who are in care [here](#).



We have a law in Wales called the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) 2014 Act](#).

This law says that every local authority has to make sure that you have [opportunities to achieve in your education](#). If you are in care you will have your own education plan which is also called your personal education plan (or PEP). Your PEP is a record of your education and training.

It should say what needs to happen so that you are able to [fulfil your potential](#).



Your personal education planning meeting (PEP)

Your PEP is a regular meeting to see how you are doing in school. **It is your meeting** and you have a right to attend and say about what you think should happen. It is your chance to meet with your teachers, your social worker, foster carers and other workers to talk about how things are going and what needs to happen to support you better. It is also a chance to talk about your options for your education post 16.

Your PEP meeting ideally should fit in around your lessons and you can take an advocate with you - if you feel you would like somebody to speak on your behalf.



Your advocate is **somebody you can speak to confidentially** - which means your information is yours and won't be shared unless you want it to be.

However, if your advocate or any professional is concerned for your safety they **may have to tell somebody else** to make sure that you are protected but they will always try and speak to you first before doing this.

What makes a good PEP meeting?

"It would be good to have a section at the end of the meeting which looks at the young person's long term goals and aspirations."

- Care experienced young person

"You should have enough notice so that young people can prepare for example: think about what they want to say or if they want somebody to attend with them."

- Care experienced young person



My PEP meeting - what I want to say

Some questions to think about if you are not sure:

- What are the things that are going well in school?
- Is there anything that could be better in school?
- Do you need anybody to help you make things better?
Who is that person?
- What would you like to achieve in the next few months? (It could be something small?)
- Anything else important you want to say?



You can use this page to write down notes/thoughts for your meeting in school



What makes you feel listened to and included?

"For teachers to try and understand what we are going through outside of school."

"Having a safe space to relax really helped me when I needed it."

"More flexibility in terms of options, GCSE's and BTEC courses should be valued in the same way, it shouldn't be a bad thing to focus on more practical subjects if that's what you are good at!"

"For me, I had a teacher who went above and beyond, checking in with me, supporting me and that really helped. It would have been more difficult without that."

"Going to the meetings and being able to have a say - that made me feel more included."



Steps forward

If you want advice or support you could:

- Talk to your teachers, carers, social worker or independent reviewing officer (IRO)
- Or you could speak to your designated teacher or somebody that you trust in school
- You can talk to the school counsellor - your designated teacher can possibly help you to arrange this.
- The Meic Helpline - if you'd rather chat/speak to somebody online, you can contact Meic on 0808 80 23456/meiccymru.org/text: 84001. This is a free service for children and young people up to the age of 25 in Wales. The service is confidential - you can call, chat or text online between 8.00am-12.00am every day. They can also help you get an advocate if you would like one.