

MCCARE

YOUR GUIDE TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A general guide for children and young people living in a McCare residential service

You have the right to feel safe, be listened to, have fun, learn, stay connected and be supported to plan your future.

DOCUMENT	Children and Young People Website Guide
EDITION	July 2026

Welcome to McCare

Moving to a new home can bring lots of different feelings. You may feel worried, unsure, hopeful, relieved, excited - or a mixture of these. It can take time to get used to new people, routines and surroundings.

This guide explains what you can expect from McCare and how team members will support you. You do not have to remember everything. You can ask questions at any time, and information should be explained in a way that works for you.



Our promise to you

We will work to provide a safe, caring and welcoming home. We will listen to you, respect who you are and support you to enjoy ordinary life, develop your strengths and prepare for your future.



What you can expect

- To be treated with dignity, fairness, kindness and respect.
- To feel safe and to receive help when you are worried or upset.
- To be listened to and involved in decisions about your life and care.
- To have privacy, personal space and information you can understand.
- To have fun, enjoy hobbies and activities, build friendships and celebrate achievements.
- To receive support with education, health, relationships, life skills and plans for the future.
- To make a complaint, ask for advocacy and speak privately to people outside the service.

Your team and the important people in your life



Team members

A team of trained and experienced people will support you. There will be a manager responsible for the service and team members available to support day-to-day life. Your service will tell you who is on the team and how to contact the manager.

Team members are expected to be reliable, professional and accountable. They receive training, supervision and guidance. If something goes wrong, it should be reported, acted on and used to improve the service.



Your keyworker

You will usually have a key worker. Your key worker will get to know you, meet with you regularly and help you work on the things that matter to you. You can talk about worries, goals, family, school, health, hobbies, money, independence and future plans.



Your social worker and support network

Your allocated social worker has an important role in your care plan and placement. Team members will also work with your family or carers where appropriate, and with schools, health professionals, aftercare services and other people who support you.

Everyday life should feel safe, homely and enjoyable

Your home should be comfortable, clean and suitable for the children and young people living there. You should be shown around, told how the home works and given time to settle in.

- You should have personal space and be able to make your bedroom feel like your own, while keeping it safe.
- Routines, expectations and safety arrangements should be explained clearly and reviewed with you.
- Your food, clothing, health, communication, cultural, language and religious needs should be understood and respected.
- You should be supported to keep in contact with family, friends and other important people, in line with your care plan and safety needs.
- You should have access to education, training, healthcare and the community.
- You should have opportunities for play, sport, music, art, gaming, outings, travel, hobbies, recreation and time with friends.
- Birthdays, festivals, personal achievements and important events should be recognised and celebrated.



Children and young people should have fun

Care is not only about rules, risks or preparing for adulthood. You should have enjoyable experiences, discover new interests, laugh, relax, make positive memories and have opportunities that other children and young people have.

You should be involved in decisions about you



Your care plan and placement plan

Your care plan and placement plan explain why you are living in the service, what support you need, your goals, family contact, education, health and plans for the future. The plans should be individual to you and reviewed as your needs change.

- You should be given information before decisions are made wherever possible.
- Your views, wishes and feelings should be asked for and taken seriously.
- You can take part in reviews or share your views in another way.
- You can ask questions, ask for information to be explained again and ask to see information about you, subject to the law and your best interests.
- You can use an interpreter, communication support, advocate or trusted adult when needed.
- You can give feedback and take part in house meetings and decisions about daily life.



Meaningful participation

Being involved does not mean adults will always agree with you. It means they must listen, explain decisions honestly and show how your views were considered.

Safety first - then development and the future

McCare's Ground to Growth approach means that team members first help you feel safe, understand what is happening and build reliable relationships. From that foundation, they support your learning, identity, skills, participation, independence and future plans.

1. Safety and calm

Team members help make the home physically and emotionally safe. They respond calmly to distress and try to prevent situations from escalating.

2. Clear information

You should understand routines, decisions, meetings, expectations and what will happen next. Uncertainty should be explained honestly.

3. Relationships and belonging

Trust is built through consistency, reliability, listening and repairing relationships after difficult moments.

4. Skills and confidence

You are supported to learn at your own pace, take part in decisions and gradually take more responsibility.

5. Direction and hope

Your goals, education, relationships, transition and future plans are reviewed and supported over time.



Doing with - not doing for

Team members will model, coach, guide and encourage you. They should help you practice skills rather than taking over things you can learn to do safely.

You have the right to be protected



Safeguarding

You have the right to be safe from abuse, neglect, bullying, exploitation, discrimination and harm. If you feel unsafe, or are worried about another person, tell any team member, your manager, social worker or another trusted adult. You can ask to speak privately.

Team members must take concerns seriously and follow safeguarding procedures. They may need to share information with people who can help protect you. Where possible, they should explain what information is being shared and why.



Health and emotional wellbeing

You should be supported to access a doctor, dentist and other health or therapeutic services when needed. Medication and health decisions should be explained to you in a way you understand. Your emotional and mental health are as important as your physical health.



Boundaries and behaviour support

Rules and boundaries should be clear, fair, predictable and focused on safety. Team members should try to understand what your behaviour is communicating. Accountability should support learning and repair - not shame or humiliation.

Any restriction of your freedom or choices should only be used when necessary to manage a serious safety risk, should be the least restrictive option, and must be recorded and reviewed.



Privacy and information

Your personal information should be kept private and secure. Information should only be shared when there is a proper reason, such as supporting your care, protecting you or meeting a legal duty.

Skills for life and planned transitions

You should be supported to develop practical, emotional and social skills for adulthood. Independence is not something that happens overnight, and support should be based on your readiness, strengths, needs and goals - not your age alone.

- Cooking, shopping, cleaning, laundry and caring for your living space.
- Budgeting, saving, banking, understanding bills and using money safely.
- Self-care, health, appointments, travel and using public transport.
- Education, courses, CVs, interviews, training and employment.
- Relationships, boundaries, communication, confidence and emotional regulation.
- Important documents, accommodation, aftercare and future planning.
- Building safe community connections and knowing where to ask for help.



Moving on should be planned

Preparation for aftercare or another placement should begin early. You should know what the plan is, who will support you and what will happen next. Important relationships should not end suddenly just because you are moving on.

SPEAKING UP

Concerns, complaints and advocacy

You can raise a concern, make a complaint, give feedback or say thank you. You will not be punished or treated badly for speaking up.

1. Choose how to speak up

You can talk, write, text, use a complaint form, use your preferred communication method or ask someone you trust to help.

2. Tell someone

You can speak to any team member, your key worker, the manager, your social worker, an advocate or another trusted adult.

3. Be kept informed

Your concern should be recorded properly. You should be told what is happening, what was decided and what action will be taken.

4. Ask for a review or outside help

If you are not happy with the response, you can ask for the complaint to be reviewed and you can seek independent advocacy or contact an external Organisation.



You can speak privately

You can ask to speak to your social worker, an inspector, advocate or another professional without a team member being present, unless there is a clear safety reason.



Standards and inspections

The National Standards for Children's Residential Centres describe what safe, child-centered and effective care should look like. You can ask for a copy or a child-friendly guide, and team members should spend time explaining it. Children's residential services may be inspected, and inspectors may ask about your experience.

INDEPENDENT HELP

Tusla Tell Us and EPIC

You can ask for help from people outside McCare. You can contact these services yourself, or ask a team member, your social worker, family member or another trusted person to help you.

Tusla Tell Us

Tell Us is Tusla's feedback and complaints service. You can use it if you want to give feedback or make a formal complaint about a Tusla team member or Tusla service. You can still use the McCare complaints process for a concern about McCare.

Phone: 01 771 8500 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) **Email:** tellus@tusla.ie

Online: [Tusla Tell Us - feedback and complaints](#)

EPIC - Empowering People in Care

EPIC is independent of McCare and Tusla. EPIC Advocates work with children and young people in care, young people in aftercare and people with care experience up to age 26. An advocate can help you understand your rights, discuss your care or aftercare plan, prepare for meetings, make a complaint and make sure your voice is heard.

Phone: 01 872 7661 **Email:** info@epiconline.ie

Online: [Request an EPIC Advocate](#)

You do not need permission to ask for independent advice or advocacy. You can ask to speak privately. An advocate will explain confidentiality and will work with your consent.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

What this guide is based on

This general guide was prepared for the McCare website.



Important local information

This website guide is general. Each service must also provide the local information that applies to that home or service, including contact details, arrangements, responsibilities and any service-specific terms.

The guide is informed by:

- National Standards for Children's Residential Centres (HIQA, 2018).
- Child Care (Placement of Children in Residential Care) Regulations 1995.
- Child Care (Standards in Children's Residential Centres) Regulations 1996.
- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children.
- McCare's Ground to Growth Model of Care and the attached young person welcome materials.

Useful official information: [HIQA](#) | [Tusla Tell Us](#) | [EPIC Advocacy](#)

Reviewed: July 2026. This guide should be reviewed whenever relevant law, standards, policy or McCare service arrangements change.