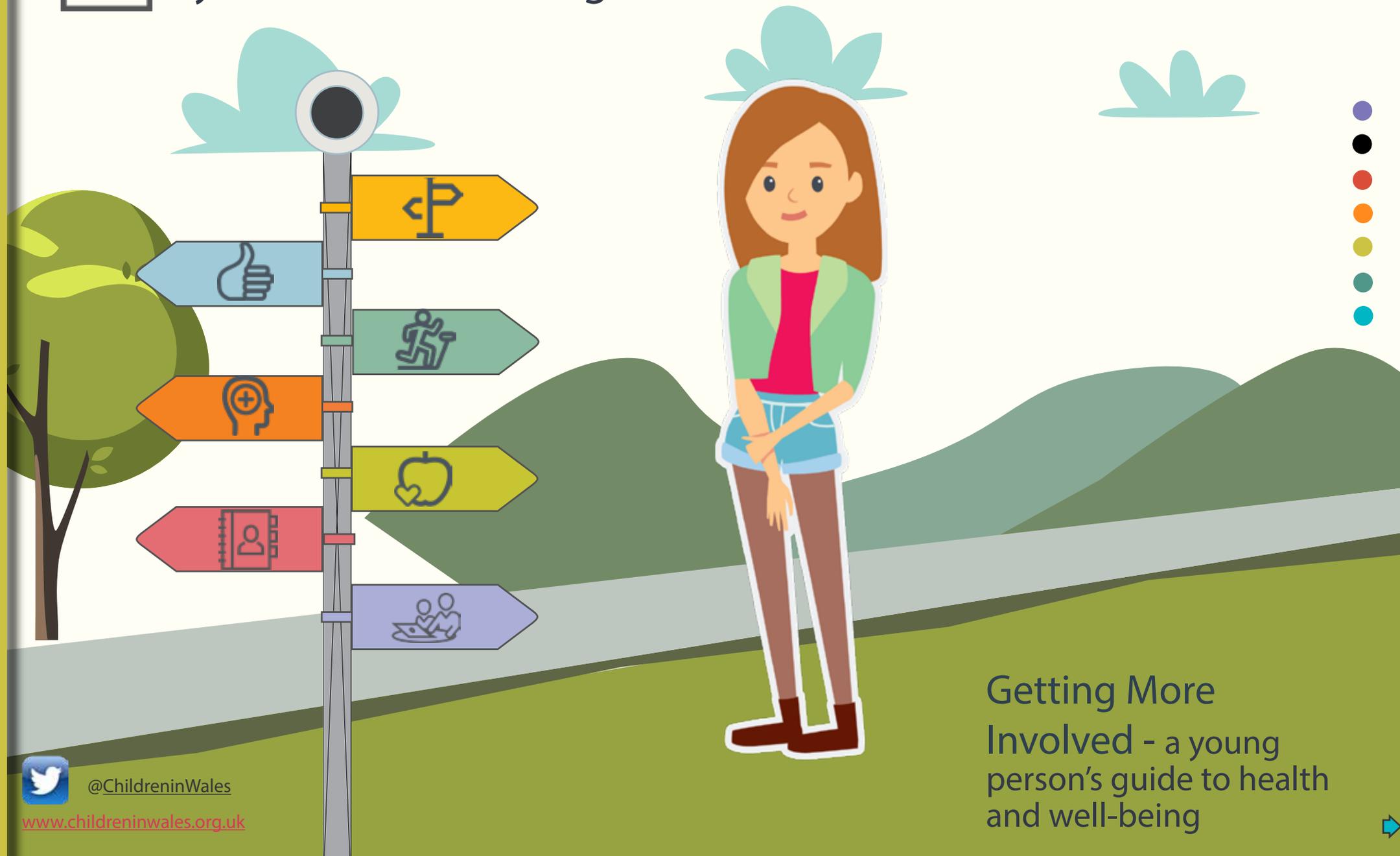




Getting your voice heard in your review meeting



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

Getting your voice heard in your review meeting can be a challenge - especially if you feel like you're in the spotlight. It's not easy to speak in front of adults who make decisions for you.

This guide is here to help - It will tell you why having a voice and speaking up is so important and will give you some practical tips and ideas on how to be more involved in the future.



Your review is your meeting.

It is a chance to review your care and support plan, to check in and see how you are doing in your placement and your education, how your health is, how contact with your family is going and any other issues that are important to you. It is a regular meeting that brings together all the people who are working for you.

This guide also includes some real examples from care experienced young people who have had review meetings just like you.



How often will I have a meeting?

You will have your first review meeting in the first month of being in care and your second meeting will be no longer than three months after this.

Your meeting will then take place on average every six months but you do have a right to ask for a review meeting at any point if you feel this is needed.

Why is having a voice so important?

'Listen to me when I say how I feel and believe me' - care experienced young person aged 16

Article 12 of the UNCRC says that you have a right to have a say and be listened to when decisions are being made in your life. If you want to read more about your rights in Wales you can do so [here](#).



In Wales, we have a law called the **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**. The law says that children and young people should have more of a say in the type of care and support that they get.

One of the important messages in the Act is about **voice and control** - which means that your views and opinions matter and should be heard by the people who are working with you including your social worker, foster carer and independent reviewing officer (IRO).

The role of your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

Your IRO is the person who will organise your review meeting. They will check your care and support plan to make sure you are getting what you need and that you are being cared for properly. Your IRO must think about your **wishes and feelings** so they may ask you about this when you meet them.

Your IRO is not the same as your social worker, their job is to be an **independent person** who can look at any decisions being made and make sure that you are being treated fairly.

If you want to speak to your IRO, you don't have to wait until your next review meeting. **You can contact them at any time** if you are unhappy and want to talk about an issue that is important to you. They can also put you in touch with an advocate if you need one.



What is an advocate?

If you are in care you have a right to have an advocate.

An advocate is a person who can support you to say how you feel and what you would like to happen. If you are new to being in care, you have a **right to meet with an advocate** who can tell you about the service and how they can help.

If you choose to have an advocate, they can attend your review meeting with you (or for you if you don't want to go at all). Your advocate will speak with you before your meeting - so they can find out what you want to say and after your meeting to give you feedback on how it went.

An advocate is independent - which means they don't work for social services.

An advocate is somebody to speak to **confidentially** - which means your information is yours and won't be shared unless you want it to be. However, if your advocate is concerned for your safety or another person's safety they may have to tell somebody else to make sure you are protected but they will always try and speak to you first before doing this.

How to get your voice heard in your review - your checklist

Preparing for the meeting

Before your meeting, you may want to have a think about what you would like to say and write or draw it. Your social worker or carer may give you a booklet to write some ideas down so you could use this if this is helpful.

You can ask to speak to your social worker or IRO before the meeting and have a chat with them. They will also know who will be invited and why they will be there, so you can ask them about this if you wish.

Should an advocate attend with you?

An advocate can read out something you've written or speak for you - and you can just listen if you don't want to say anything. You can refer yourself to an advocacy service in your area or ask your social worker or someone you know to do this for you. You can find out more by visiting www.meicymru.org or calling 080880 23456.

The day of the meeting

Remember that you don't have to attend the whole meeting, you may just want to come in at the beginning or end so you can get an update on what has been talked about.

Your IRO may want to have a quick chat with you before the meeting starts - your advocate can sit in with you if you wish.

There might be a lot of information given so don't worry if you don't remember everything, you can always ask questions after the meeting has finished.

After the meeting

You should get feedback on any decisions made - if you have any more questions you can ask your social worker or IRO.

Remember you can ask for a review meeting at any time if things change and you're not happy.

There may be an ongoing issue that doesn't get sorted straight away and an advocate can help you take this forward if you need this.



These ideas are just a starting point.

You probably have your own ideas about what you would like to say in your meeting



Your note page

You can use this space to make notes and write down your ideas for the meeting.

A large, empty rectangular area with a light gray background and a yellow border, intended for taking notes.

Advice from other young people

"I wouldn't like my meeting to be in school, it's too embarrassing and not very private. It's usually at my placement and sometimes I get to have some extra contact with my Mum after the meeting which is good."

"We get this booklet thing where we write down what we think and how things are going. I think sometimes that's easier, I do that with my foster carer and she gives it to the IRO who can look at it. I may go when I'm a bit older."



"I hate big meetings. I wish they were smaller with less people...I think if you're having a meeting that's about me, I should have a say who goes, and what we need to talk about. I also don't want to my little sister to be sat next to me, I don't want her to hear everything that's going on with me - it's private!"

"I went to one meeting and I didn't feel listened to. Everybody was talking about me but not to me. It upset me... Katie (my advocate) came to see me and she was really nice, she came with me to my next meeting and it was so much better. I didn't feel stuck in the middle of everyone, I had somebody to talk to before and after."