



Atkinson

Young person's guide

A restorative approach
to secure children's care



Welcome to Atkinson



You may be feeling worried about being here. You may never have been anywhere like this before and you may not be sure about what happens next.

This guide is designed to answer any questions you have and give you an idea about what to expect during your stay at Atkinson.

Take time to read through this guide, and if there is something that you are unsure of don't be afraid to ask a member of staff.

We are here to help you. We will:

- treat you fairly
- listen to you and involve you in planning and decision-making
- encourage you to do well and celebrate your achievements
- give you the opportunity to learn and get new skills.

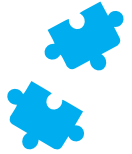
While you are at Atkinson it is important that you:

- listen to and respect the views of everyone
- talk to someone if something goes wrong or you're being bullied.

What is Atkinson?

Atkinson is a secure home for up to 10 young people aged 10-17.

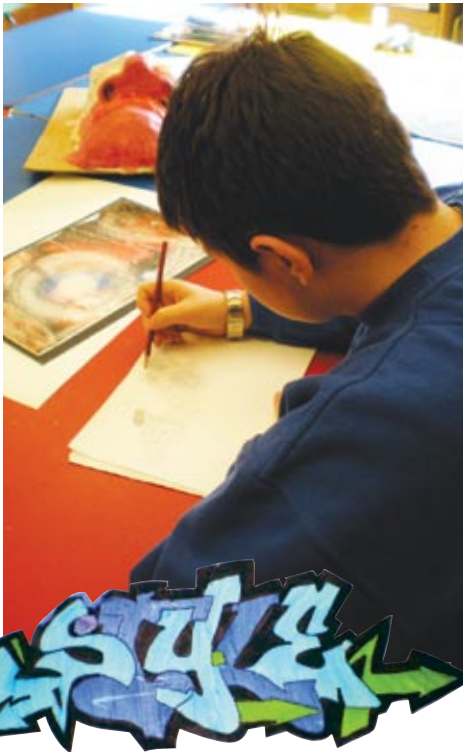




Why have I got to live in a secure home?



You will have been sent here because a court or social care services have decided that it is the best and safest place for you to be. This may be because they think that you are extremely vulnerable and may be a risk to yourself or to others.



What happens when I get here?



When you first get here you will need to go through the admission process and answer some questions about yourself. Then our staff will show you to your room and show you around the rest of the home, introduce you to other young people staying here and get you something to eat and drink.

On the first day of your stay you will need to have a 'medical'. This is just an appointment with a doctor to make sure that you are fit and well.

What happens after that?

You will join in the home daily routine. In the mornings you will get up, tidy your room, shower and have breakfast before starting school at 9am. Once a week we have an assembly to pass on important news or recognise young people's achievements. In the morning you will have lessons in the Atkinson School, followed by lunch and then afternoon lessons.

After dinner you will have time to do homework and get involved in some of the sports and activities available at the home.



At the weekends we encourage you to:

- join in with organised activities
- work with your key worker to discuss issues or concerns you might have
- join in with organised activities happening outside of the home – we call these mobilities
- earn some extra income by volunteering for jobs in the home.



What's the Atkinson School?

While you stay with us at the home you will attend our own school.

In the Atkinson School we believe that through learning you can develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth to help you move forward with your life. We want to help you to develop a love of learning and the ability to recognise your own talents and potential.

You will be supported by your own individual tutor. When you arrive we will arrange a meeting with you, your tutor and your key worker to set targets and review your progress.

The school day is structured in a similar way to other schools, and our curriculum includes core subjects, vocational subjects and personal, social development. We can work with you no matter what level you are currently at and can support you to achieve qualifications which can help you after you leave Atkinson.



We know that some of you will have had bad experiences at school and feel that you can't achieve. Atkinson School is a chance for you to have a fresh start and get the support you need to reach your potential.



the staff

Who can I talk to?

When you come to Atkinson you will have a personal team to look after you. This team includes:

- a keyworker
- a personal tutor
- a case manager from our management team.

Your key worker will work closely with you, your family and your social worker. They will make sure that you are involved in any plans, they will answer any questions you have and will help you prepare to move on when it's time for you leave the home.

Your case manager will keep an eye on you and make sure that things are happening as they should.

All our staff have a lot of training and experience in working with young people with a range of issues from all sorts of backgrounds.

We can arrange for ministers from any religion to come and visit. We also have a representative from Voice, an organisation which helps young people in care, who you can talk to if you have a complaint, or just want to talk to someone outside Atkinson.



Leaving the home and moving on

Although most people look forward to leaving the home, it can also be quite scary and difficult to deal with.

Your key worker and your social worker will support you and help you to have a clear plan in place so you will know where you are going and what you need to do next.

We will help you get ready to leave and can provide things like training in independence skills such as cooking, budgeting, parenting and looking for work.

If you have concerns or want help or support let us know. We are here to help you towards a healthier and happier life in future.



Frequently Asked Questions



This is a quick guide to some of the questions we get asked most often.

Can I have visitors?

Yes. We know that it is important for you to stay in touch with your friends and family. You can have visitors from 4pm-8pm on school days and between 9am-8pm on weekends and in the holidays.

All visits have to be booked in advance and we will give your parents or carers a leaflet about visiting the home when you arrive here.

Visitors, such as your family, may want to bring you pocket money and presents. We will need to check any presents and parcels to make sure you aren't being given anything harmful or illegal. We will look after any pocket money for you to make sure it is kept safe.

You can have two visitors at any one time. Any visitors under 18 must be accompanied by someone older. Visits usually last one hour.

If there is someone you don't want to see please tell your key worker. If you are concerned about seeing someone let us know and a member of staff can support you.

Can I phone my family?



Yes. You will receive a £10 phone card each week. You can make calls from 4pm-8.30pm on school days and between 9am-8.30pm on weekends and in the holidays.

You can phone professionals (social worker or your youth offending worker) at any time from our office phone, but you must ask permission first.

Your family or your worker can phone you on this line, and they will be given the number when you come to stay at the home. We don't allow any mobile phones in the home.



Can I use the internet?

Yes, but only in school for studying purposes.

Can I smoke?

The home is a **no smoking site** to make it a healthy and enjoyable place for everyone who lives and works here.



Do I have to go to bed at a certain time?

Yes. Bedtimes start from 9pm, but the time you go to bed depends on your age.



What food do we get?

We give you a choice of food for breakfast, lunch and dinner everyday. Once a week you can use your pocket money to buy yourself treats. Hot and cold drinks are available all day.



Tell us if you have any special dietary needs and we will try to meet them.

Do I get pocket money?

Yes, you get £5 each week. If you do well in the home you may be able to earn up to an extra £14 each week.

What happens if I need to see a doctor?



We will arrange for a doctor to come and see you at the home.

What stuff can I have in my room?

Your room is your personal space; you can put up pictures and posters if you want to and you will be expected to keep it clean and tidy.

Some TVs and stereos are provided in rooms if we believe that you can look after them properly. If they are damaged they will not be replaced, and you will have to pay towards the repairs.

Occasionally we will search bedrooms in the home. We will do this as quickly as possible and keep your things safe. We will also search your room if we believe you have dangerous or forbidden items in there.



What happens when I want new clothes or a deodorant? Or when I need a haircut?

You will be able to buy a certain amount of new clothes when you need them. If you're not able to leave the home you can tell a member of staff what you need and they will get them for you. Remember that clothes have to be suitable – revealing outfits are not appropriate in the home! You will also have a monthly allowance to get the toiletries you need.

A hairdresser visits the home regularly. If you want a very dramatic change of hairstyle or hair colour, this will have to be agreed beforehand by your parents and your social worker. If it is expensive you will have to pay towards it from your pocket money.



What do I do if someone is bullying me?

We don't want anyone to feel bullied in the home and will make sure you feel safe and supported. If you feel that you are being bullied by anyone talk to someone you trust about it as soon as possible.

We use a method called 'restorative approaches' to make bullies see how hurtful their behaviour is.

Do you restrain young people?

Restraining someone is always our last resort and is used in very few circumstances.

Staff spend a lot of time talking to young people to try and stop restraints occurring in the first place. We only restrain to stop you hurting yourself or someone else or prevent you damaging property or trying to escape. All staff receive training to ensure that they use holds that are designed to be safe and prevent young people from getting hurt.

How do I complain about something in the home?

If there is something you are unhappy about you should first talk to your key worker or case manager and ask them to look into it. You can also ask for it to be put into our complaints book so a team leader or manager can see it.

If this doesn't solve the problem you can:

- ask your social worker to look into it for you
- speak to your Independent Reviewing Officer (your key worker or social worker can get your their number)
- call the Devon County Council customer service team on **08081 683750**
- speak to the person from Voice or call them on **0808 800 5792**





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Atkinson

Devon County Council
secure children's home



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