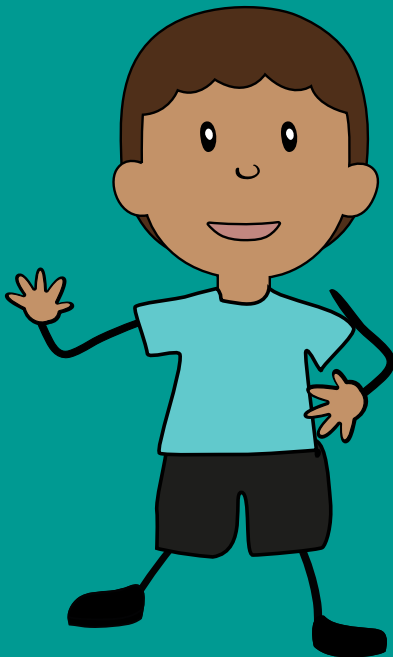


Children's Social Care

A child's guide to **FOSTER CARE**



Your carer will read this booklet with you

My name is

.....

I can ring or text my IRO on

.....

I amyears old.

My foster carers are called

.....

.....

My social worker is

.....

.....

I can ring or text my social worker
on

.....

My Independent Reviewing
Officer (IRO) is

.....

We also have a website with lots
of information about being being
in foster care.

Check us out!

www.care4us.co.uk

You can put a photograph of your
carers here, or draw a picture!

Our promise to you

We will make sure you have the best foster care if you cannot live with your family or someone you know.

This means we will make sure you are:

- Healthy
 - Safe
 - Can achieve well at school and enjoy activities that you like to do
 - We will help you stay in touch with your family and the people you know who are important to you (where possible) in a way that keeps you safe
 - We will carefully match you with carers that can look after you the best - understanding your religion, hobbies, and what you like and dislike
 - We will help you to have your say in decisions which affect you.
- We will help you to express your wishes and feelings about your foster care and this will help us make sure you get the right care to meet your needs.
 - We will ask you how things are going in your foster home and if you have any worries we will help you sort them out.



What is foster care?

Foster carers are special people who can look after children who cannot live at home. They will look after you and make sure you fit into the foster family. They will make sure you go to school and help you in all things.

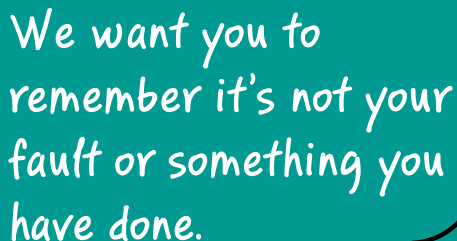
Why do I have to live with a foster family?

If it's not safe to live at home, with your family or someone you know, you will live with a foster family. There are lots of reasons why some children live in foster care. You will get to know your reason by talking to your social worker. They will help you understand.

What is a Social Worker?

They are someone who works for the Children and Young People's Service, they like children and it's their job to help you. You can trust your social worker. You can talk to them if anything is upsetting you.

Your social worker will come and see you every month at least, and check you are happy with how you are being looked after. If you are sad about something, talk to your social worker as they care about how you are getting on. You or your carers can ring them if you need to see them more often.



We want you to remember it's not your fault or something you have done.

What about seeing my family?

We know it's really important for you to keep in touch with your family and people who are important to you and your carers will help you with this. Your Social Worker will arrange Family Time which says how often you get to see them - and they have to stick to that unless you are unhappy with it!

What about what I want!

Your carers and social worker have to listen to you and what your wishes and feelings are. You get to say how you feel and this will help towards making a care plan about how best to look after you.

Many children have someone who helps them when they are worried and they are called an Advocate. They can help you with problems. Your carers can get one for you or you can give them a call).

We have a pledge - a promise that all the people working with you will listen to you. So speak up and tell us how you feel about your care. Because we care! Your carers have to listen to you and help you get involved in making decisions. Your carers should keep their promise to do what's best for you and make sure your views are listened to.



Who says I have to be in foster care?

For some children a judge will have decided you should be a child in care as they think its best for you. It's all written down on a piece of paper called a Care Order. The judge can make the **BIG** decisions

How will my foster carers look after me?

Your **RIGHTS** are:

- To be safe, secure and protected.
- For adults to listen to you and treat you fairly and equally.
- To be given information, advice, healthcare and an education.
- To enjoy your religion and culture.
- If you have a disability, you have the right to any help you need.
- For more on rights, get in touch with your advocate or Participation Worker.

Spending money

- You will receive pocket money that you can spend each week or save.
- You are also entitled to money for your birthday, Christmas or religious festival which will be paid to your carer to buy the things that you would like.

The exact amounts are on
www.care4us.co.uk.



How long will I be in foster care?

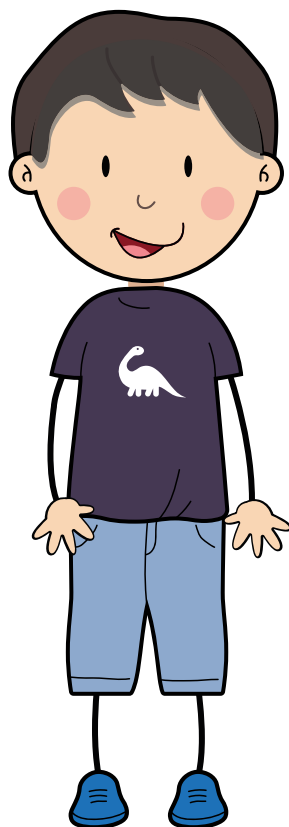
When you first come into foster care, you might feel scared or upset, or even happy straight away because it's all new. We hope you will start to settle in to your foster home and feel better.

When you live in foster care for a bit longer you will have a 'review'. This is a meeting about you and how you are getting on in your foster home. Your social worker will make a plan with you. This is called your 'care plan'.

Children can attend their reviews and say how they feel about being in foster care and what they think will help them to do well.

If you have any worries in between these meetings, you can talk to your social worker or the person who is in charge of the reviews, who is called the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). You will also get your own special contact card for your IRO, so you know what number to call them on.

We have a booklet to help you have a say in your review.



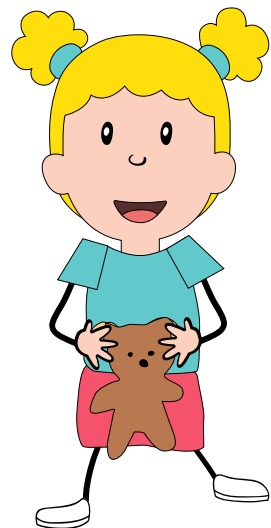
What are things like in foster care?

I made new friends and get to see my brother and sister. I like everything about my foster carers

I got to go on holiday with my carers

My foster carers help me at school and I do Majorettes, Gymnastics, Art, Theatre and Martial Arts!

They help you to do stuff and teach you how to look after yourself like going to the dentist.



What about school?

School is very important because it's where you learn about subjects, growing up, making new friends and allows you to take part in activities and hobbies after school. OK, sometimes you might find it boring BUT it can lead to great things.

Your teacher will know that you have gone to live with a foster carer, but it is your choice if you want to tell other people. If you have any problems, difficulties or are being bullied, you must tell your teacher, social worker or foster carer.

Your foster carer will help you with homework, support you with any after school activities you want to do and will attend your parents evenings.

Ask if there is anything you don't understand. If you think something is unfair - tell your social worker they will help you work things out.

This is your life

Your social worker and foster carer will help you put together a life story book once you have settled into your new home. This will help you understand your reason for being in foster care and help you feel more positive about being looked after. It's your book and it's something that you get to keep forever.

What are the rules?

Your foster carers will tell you how they expect you behave. Like looking after the home, being kind to others and following the rules. For example, they will have some rules about bedtime, going out, seeing friends, being polite and kind and trying hard at school.

What am I allowed to do?

Fill in the answers with your carer

Am I allowed a pet?

Am I allowed a sleepover?

What time do I have to go to bed?

What times are mealtimes?

Can I help myself to food?

What activities/clubs can I do?

We want to know if you have any problems at all, your carers and social workers are there to help.

Talk to them, be honest, this is the best way to solve a problem.

There are lots of other ways you can tell us what you think or if you are worried or want to make a complaint and can't tell your social worker, foster carer or teacher.

- An advocate is someone who is not working for Children and Young People Services, so they can speak out for you. They will make sure everyone hears what you want. They can come and speak to you in private if you cannot talk about a worry to anyone else.

VoiceAbility

If you have a problem or feel you are not being listened to Voiceability could help. Talk to an advocate, scan the QR Code or phone **0300 303 1660**



We even have a complaints officer to help you work things out.

Sometimes it is hard to tell people you live with that you are unhappy or that you do not like something that they do. If you want to talk to someone other than your carers you can call:

**Children's Complaints Officer:
01924 302840**

Your foster carer is not allowed to hurt you in any way and neither is anyone else. If you are worried about anything at all, please don't be afraid to speak up as there are lots of people who care about you and want to help.

Advice and help for children in care or living away from home

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/>

or call **0800 528 0731**.

The Children's Commissioner
for England

33 Greycoat Street,

London SW1P 2QF

020 7783 8330

[info.request@childrens](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

[commissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:commissioner@gsi.gov.uk)

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



Have your say!

All you have to do is:
Tell us what you like about this guide or
don't like - which bits are awesome,
or what's boring?

With thanks to all the children in foster care in Wakefield who helped to write this guide. We hope it has answered some of your questions. For more info don't forget our website! at www.care4us.co.uk



Did it help you?

Ask your carer to text your ideas
to Guidefollowed by your name and
age and comment to **07920 503473**



This booklet is Children in Care Council (CiCC) Juniors approved!
That means children your age helped to write this booklet.