



A Young Person's Guide

15 - 18

Hey!

Moving to a new home and being in foster care is a big change, and we know it can feel overwhelming. This guide is here to help answer some questions you may have or help you to understand who is around to support you during the next steps in your life. We hope this guide is helpful and we look forward to getting to know you.



What is a foster family?

A foster family is a family that cares for young people like you when it is not safe or not possible for you to stay with your birth family. They are able to give you a home, help you with meals, clothes and support you during this period of your life.

All our foster families are different but they all complete training and are trusted by us, your social worker and your IRO to keep you safe and respect your privacy and choices whilst guiding you to be the best you can be.

Why am I moving to a Foster Family?

You might be confused why you are moving to a foster family or you may understand that you needed somewhere safe to stay whilst situations were difficult at home, or if your birth family needed extra support. It is important to know that you have not done anything wrong, every young person's reasons for coming into foster care are different and we understand that.

Foster families simply help when young people and their families need extra support.

Your social worker will come to your new foster home with you and will support you to ask and answer any questions you or your foster family may have.

Your social worker will then speak with your foster parent/s supervising social worker, through family fostering who is there to support your foster parent/s and you through the next steps.



Family Fostering
Social Worker

Independent Reviewing Officer **(IRO)**

An independent reviewing officer is a social worker who works separately from your local authority social worker. Any work that is completed by your local authority social worker, family fostering social worker and your foster parent/s will be reviewed by your IRO to make sure it is fair, clear and safe. You can speak to your IRO and ask them questions about your care plan and your foster home if you want or need to.

Summary.

You have an:

IRO

Local Authority Social Worker

Supervising Social Worker (Family Fostering)

They all work together to support you .

Your Local Authority Social Worker

Your Social worker is:

- There to listen to you.
- There to create a care plan with you, this plan stays with you whilst you are looked after by your foster parent/s.
- There to make sure you are healthy and happy at home and school.
- There to explain things to you if you are confused or have questions.
- There to help you see and speak with your birth family, if you and they feel you can do this safely.

You can:

- Ask to see or speak with your social worker.
- Tell them if you are unhappy or need help.
- Speak to Family Fostering or your foster parent/s if you want support speaking to your social worker.



Family Fostering Social Worker

Your Family Fostering Social Worker is:

- There to support your foster family and for you to get to know each other.
- Plan events for you to join and meet other young people.
- Provide you and your foster family with information around your care.
- Help your foster family be the best they can be for you.

Tell us what you enjoy

We want to make sure you still enjoy doing things that make you happy. Can you tell us what it is you like to do/places you like to visit. (Cinema, Swimming Pool, etc)

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

☐

Your Rights Are

- To know why you are looked after
- To be kept safe
- To keep in touch with your birth family
- To access education
- To receive pocket money and savings
- To read your files at 18
- To have a healthy lifestyle



What will my new home be like?

Your foster family's home may feel different to your previous home, but it should always feel safe and supportive. Here's what you can expect:

Your own space: Your foster family is happy to share their home with you and want you to have your own bedroom or space in the home for you to call your own. It is your space to keep your belongings and have privacy.

New family members: There may be older or younger people in the home, it is normal to feel slightly out of place at the start, but don't worry you will find your place and fit in soon enough.

Routine: Everyone has their own way of doing things, it will take time to learn your foster families way of living and their home agreements but talk it through with them and find out what works well for you all.

Home Agreements

As we have said your home with your foster family may feel different to your home before. Your foster parents are supported and advised by Family Fostering to help support you and keep you safe. Your foster family will discuss with you the agreements they have in place around the internet, your devices, your time to be home, how you engage with those who live in the home and anything you bring up that you would like to be agreed as family. Your foster parent/s have a responsibility to keep you safe, sometimes they may say no to things that you were able to do before you came to live with them. We understand this can be confusing and frustrating and are happy to talk to you about this or you can speak to your local authority social worker or IRO.

Your Safe Space

Your bedroom is your safe space where you can relax and enjoy time by yourself or with a sibling if this is what is in place. In your keeping me safe plan it talks about your foster parent/s knocking on your door before entering and not touching personal items that belong to you if you do not want them to. There will be times when your foster parent/s needs to check your room to make sure you are following house rules and keeping yourself and others in the home safe.

Bedroom Safety and Checks

If your foster parent/s do need to check or search your bedroom they will speak to you about this before hand (if possible) and explain the reasons why. It is usually due to concerns for your well-being and safety.

Your foster parent/s will tell your social worker and family fostering social worker if they need to complete a room check. If you have any questions or want to speak to someone about this you can speak to your foster parent/s directly, your social worker, IRO or someone in the family fostering team.

You may also see a social worker from the family fostering team come to your foster parent/s home and complete checks. This is completely normal and they are making sure that the fire alarms work properly, there is food available to you and your bedroom and living space is safe and clean.

Mobile Phone/Technology

Mobile phones are a great way of keeping you safe, they let you call other people to let them know where you are and when you will be back safely. However, it is important to know some of the possible dangers when using mobile phones and technology. Sometimes people we do not know can contact us through our phones, gaming consoles and through apps. Your foster parent/s have gone through training to ensure they can help you use your devices safely and they will talk to you about the home agreements around your devices. For example, your foster parent/s may ask for your phone overnight and at meal times.

If you call your social worker or IRO directly you are allowed your mobile phone to do this.

Who's important to me

Form with six horizontal teal bars, each preceded by a small teal circle, for writing names of important people.



Can I stay in touch with my family?

There may be restrictions around you seeing your family if it means you will not be safe. However, we want to support you to see your family and along with your social worker and foster family we can support you with this. Your social worker will explore all options of contact with you, it could be through phone calls, face times, letters or face to face.

We understand you will feel mixed emotions around this and hope you can talk to your foster family about how this makes you feel and how they can best support you.

Money and Savings



Age of Child	Clothing Allowance (Weekly)	Pocket Money (Weekly)	Mobile top up Allowance Weekly	Birthday Allowance (Annually)	Festival Allowance (Annually)	Long term Savings (weekly)
0-4	£15.00	0	0	£120	£120	£5.00
5-10	£15.00	£5	0	£140	£140	£5.00
11-15	£20.00	£10.00	£2.50	£200	£200	£5.00
16 +	£20.00	£15.00	£2.50	£200	£200	£5.00

Together with your social worker and foster parent/s you can talk about your money, savings and personal allowances for things like activities and clothes. Our family fostering team can also speak to you about budgeting and managing your own money as you get older.

This is an important life skill and we are happy to help explore this with you.

Meetings

You will notice that your foster parent/s will have lots of meetings, sometimes you will be involved in the meetings and sometimes you do not need to. There is lots of paperwork to fill in and forms to be completed, this is all done to make sure you are looked after properly and happy in your foster home. Some of the meetings will have names or nicknames, for example (CIC) Child in care review, or (LAC) Looked after child review. If you ever have any questions about the meetings or paper work speak to your social worker, foster parent/s or family fostering and we can help you to have a better understanding.

The meetings and paperwork will be about:

- Your foster home
- Your schooling or future plans
- Your health needs
- Your wellbeing
- Your family time
- All things relating to you and your life.

Who can attend your meetings?

- You
- Your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
- Your Social Worker
- Your Birth Family
- Your Foster Parent
- Your Family Fostering Social Worker
- Your School/Work place

Your social worker will speak to you about who can and may join these meetings. Your care plan will have details of who is allowed to be part of these meetings.



Your Voice

Your voice and opinions are important, we all understand that you have gone through big changes in your life and we want to make sure you speak to your support network about your thoughts and feelings on your foster home, the meals you eat, your bedroom, the home agreements, your school and your next steps.

You will be invited to join our young persons 'Loud and Proud Voices' forum where you can socialise with other young people who live with foster families and help us to improve how we care for our young people and plan fun events and activities.

What if I don't get along with my Foster Family?

It is important to remember that this is new for you and for your foster family. It takes time to adjust to each other and to the home they are happy to now share with you. You may not agree with their home agreements or simply miss being with your birth family. We suggest: Give yourself time and speak openly with your foster family about any issues or difficulties you are facing. It may be something as simple as changing how you address each other or looking over some of the home agreements you feel are not working for you.

You can always speak to your social worker or Family Fostering social worker if you have tried this and feel it is still not working for you.

What If I want to leave or I don't want to come home on time?

This is a big question and we know that you may have wanted to ask this but may have felt scared or not felt able to. If you are feeling like you want to leave, or feel overwhelmed here is what you need to know:

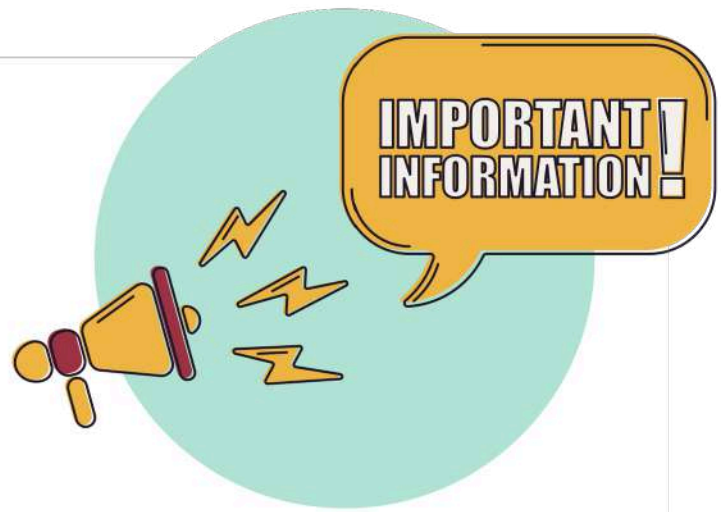
1. Your foster parent's responsibility: Your foster parent/s first and main priority is to keep you safe. Talk to them about how you are feeling and they can try their best to help so you do not feel the need to leave.
2. Missing from home: If you ever leave without telling anyone or do not come home on time they will need to let your social worker, family fostering and the police know. This is not a punishment, they do not want to get you in trouble, they have to do this because you may not always understand fully what dangers you face. The main point is you are important, we all care for you and want you to be safe.

3. Your rights and getting help: You have the right to feel safe and respected in your foster home, even if it may not feel like your home yet. If there is a reason you do not want to be there or you feel like you are not being fairly treated you can speak to Family Fostering, your Local Authority Social Worker, your teachers or your IRO.

4. What happens if I go missing? If you leave and your foster parent/s cannot find you they have to follow our policy to ensure we find you and keep you safe. Remember, this is not a punishment and you can contact any of your trusted adults at anytime after to let us know you are ok.

5. What happens after I return? Firstly, we are just glad you're home and you are safe. Your foster family will talk to you about how you are feeling and try and understand what may have happened to make you feel the need to leave. You will be visited by your family fostering social worker and maybe even your local authority social worker and/or the police. Again, this is not a punishment this is because we all care. You may be asked to complete some paperwork alongside them and we can all share ideas on how to help you stay home and safe.





My Foster Parent/s

Name:_____

Number:_____

Email:_____

My Independent Reviewing Officer

Name:_____

Number:_____

Email:_____

My Social Worker

Name:_____

Number:_____

Email:_____

Family Fostering

Name:_____

Number:_____

Email:_____

Complaints

Even though we care, we recognise that we may not always get it right.

If you feel like things may not be fair or you do not like how you have been treated you can speak to the trusted adults in your supporting network such as:

- Family Fostering
- Your Local Authority Social Worker
- Your IRO
- Your Teachers
- A trusted adult

What if I have a problem or I am unhappy?

We know that it's not easy moving in with a new family and we will do all we can to help make sure you feel safe, happy and well cared for. If you are worried about anything please let us know. We will always listen and try to help you.

Nikki Goldfinch – Registered Manager

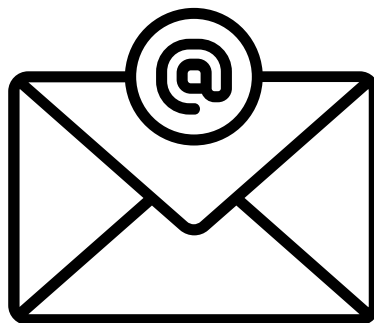
Tel : **07432 401 106**

Email: **nikki.goldfinch@familyfostering.org**

Contact us at:

The Forge
Spratling Court Office Suites
Spratling Court Farm
Ramsgate
Kent
CT12 5AN

01843 598647



You can also talk to Ofsted who are in charge of all Fostering Services and follow up all complaints

Ofsted

Office for Standards in Education,
Children's Services & Skills

Piccadilly Gate,

Store Street, Manchester

M1 2WD

0300 123 1231 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

You can also contact –

Childline

0800 1111

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

help@NSPCC.org.uk

You can speak to Help at Hand as they offer advice and representation for children in care.

If you need assistance from Help at Hand visit
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/>

email:

help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

or freephone **0800 528 0731**

Just remember



You got this!



Take one step at a time



***You are important and your feelings
matter!***



***Your Foster Family, Family Fostering
your social worker and your IRO are
here for you!***



***We are great listeners and can help
your worries feel less heavy***



***Your voice is so important to us, please
share it.***





***The Forge
Spratling Court Office Suites
Spratling Court Farm
Ramsgate
Kent
CT12 5AN
01843 598647***

