

## Other Useful numbers

### CoramVoice

Lots of advice, help and support for young people in care. They can take up your complaints too.

**Always Heard helpline: 0808 800 5792 (free phone)**

**[www.coramvoice.org.uk](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk) Email: [help@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:help@coramvoice.org.uk)**

### ChildLine

24 hour helpline for children in distress.

**0800 1111 (free phone) [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

### The Children's Commissioner for England

Advice & help for Children in Care or living away from home

**Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London SW1P 3BT  
0800 528 0731**

[help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

**[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)**



# A Young Person's Guide to Foster Care



## Welcome to Family Fostering

This booklet is yours to keep, please keep it as it has lots of really useful information that you may need while you are in foster care. If you need any help reading or understanding it please let us know.

### Meet the Team



Hi, I'm Debi Atkin.  
I'm the Registered Manager.



Hello, I'm Teresa Morgan.  
I'm the Service Manager.



Hi, I'm Krista McAllister.  
I'm the Office Manager.

Alternatively you can speak to someone independent to your Foster Carer, Social Worker or Family Fostering.

Ofsted are there to help you share your views and if necessary make a complaint, in confidence if need be. It is your right to contact Ofsted who oversee all Fostering Providers and follow up all complaints.

### Ofsted

(Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)

Piccadilly Gate,

Store Street,

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

## What if I have a problem or I am unhappy?

We want to make sure you are in a safe, caring and happy home. If you have any problems at all it is usually best to first speak with your Foster Carer or Social Worker, but if you feel unable to do this or have tried and the issue has not been resolved you can contact Family Fostering.

### The Children's Officer for Family Fostering is:

Teresa Morgan - Tel: 07815 532 569

Email: [teresa.morgan@familyfostering.org](mailto:teresa.morgan@familyfostering.org)

### The Children's Champion for Family Fostering is:

Jayde Storey - Tel: 07378 338 726

Email: [jayde.storey@familyfostering.org](mailto:jayde.storey@familyfostering.org)

**You can also contact us at:**

[speakup@familyfostering.org](mailto:speakup@familyfostering.org)

The Marlowe Innovation Centre

Marlowe Way

Ramsgate, Kent. CT12 6FA

01843 598647



Hi, I'm Lauren Hollands.  
I'm the Administrator.



Hello, I'm Chantelle Lacey.  
I'm a Supervising Social Worker.



Hello, I'm Chantal Wayman.  
I'm a Supervising Social Worker.



Hi, I'm Jayde Storey.  
I'm the Children's Champion.

### **What is Foster Care?**

Over 64,000 children and young people live with foster carers in the UK. There are lots of reasons why young people may not be able to live with their own family. When this happens they usually move to foster care to make sure they are looked after and kept safe. Whatever the reason for you being in foster care, it is not your fault and not because of anything you have done.

### **Can I see my friends and family?**

We understand how important friends and family are. Make sure you tell your social worker who you want to see, so they can try and make sure this happens. Sometimes family contact has to be supervised, this is to ensure everyone is kept safe.

### **What is a foster family?**

Foster carers may be single, married or in a relationship. They may or may not have their own children and may come from many different backgrounds, faiths and cultures. Foster carers are carefully chosen and trained to help ensure they provide very good care and keep children safe. They do all the things that parents should do, such as making sure you eat healthily, setting rules and helping with things like going to school.

### **What about pocket money?**

You will get pocket money every week. The amount you get depends on your age. You may get a separate amount for clothes, depending on how old and responsible you are. Sometimes, if you are working or have other income of your own, your pocket money is put into savings for you. Family Fostering and your foster carer also saves money for you. This money is for when you reach adulthood.

### **What about activities and holidays?**

Your foster carer will encourage you to continue with hobbies and activities that you are interested in and/or encourage you to try new ones. Family Fostering will also provide activities for you to join in. We encourage all foster families to have a holiday every year with the young people in their care. Where this is not possible we will look to provide you with the opportunity to join a supervised activity holiday with other young people.

### **Will I have to share a bedroom?**

No, you should have your own room and privacy. You may be able to share a bedroom if you are with a brother or a sister.

## What about school?

Your social worker will try to work out if it is best for you to stay at your current school or move to a new school. School is very important as it is the place where important relationships are made with friends and teachers. Make sure you let your social worker and foster carer know how you feel about school. Your form teacher will know that you are in foster care, but it is up to you if you want to tell anyone else.

You will have a personal educational plan (PEP) which identifies your strengths and weakness in school and identifies what support will help you achieve your full potential. If you have any problems or difficulties please tell your teacher, social worker or foster carer.

## Bullying

Bullying is not just being hit; it's being called names, people saying horrible things to you or people taking things from you. It can happen at school, when you are out with your friends, online or through your mobile phone. If something is not right or you think someone is trying to hurt you or make you feel scared and frightened, please tell somebody you can trust. This could be a friend, a teacher, your social worker or your foster carer. If you feel you can't do this, you can always contact us or use the links at the back of this booklet to help you.

## What about what I want?

Your wishes and feelings are very important. Your social worker should regularly ask how you are feeling and what you need and we will too. Family Fostering is a service for children and young people and aims to provide the best care and support for all the children and young people it cares for. If you have any ideas as to how we can do better please let us know.

## How will I be looked after in my foster home?

There are certain ways you should always be treated. No matter what you have the following rights:

- The right to be kept safe, secure and protected
- The right to be listened to and treated fairly and equally
- The right to information/advice, healthcare and education
- The right to enjoy your religion and culture
- If you are differently abled you have the right to any additional help you need

## What about sleepovers with friends?

If you are invited to stay overnight at a friend's house, you will need permission, so talk to your foster carers as soon as you can. If they have met your friend and their parents, and are confident that you will be safe, they can usually give permission for you to stay. If not they will need to ask your social worker to give permission.

### **What will my Foster Family expect from me?**

Every family has a safer caring agreement which includes rules and expectations. You will have your own copy of this and your social worker and foster carer will want your opinions as there may be room for negotiation. If you feel any rules are unfair or if your rights are not being upheld please make sure you tell your Foster Carer, Social Worker, Supervising Social Worker or Children's Champion.

### **What does my social worker do?**

Your social worker is specially trained to work with young people. It is their job to make sure you are kept safe and are well cared for. They should visit you regularly and talk to you on your own about what is happening in your life. It is really important that you tell them if there is anything worrying you.

### **What is a Children's Champion?**

Our Children's Champion is like a youth worker. She is there to provide you with additional support and help whilst you are in foster care and to make sure your views are always heard and respected. She also arranges lots of activities for you and your foster family.

### **What does the supervising social worker do?**

Every foster family has their own social worker and they are called supervising social workers. They are specially trained and work for Family Fostering. It is their job to make sure your foster family is looking after you properly and that both you and your foster family have the support needed. They will visit your foster family at least once a month and will talk to you from time to time to make sure you are happy and well cared for.

### **Who decides what will happen?**

A meeting will be held either just before or just after you move in to make sure all of your needs are fully considered. Your social worker, foster carer and supervising social worker will attend and it is important you attend too. It includes things like what time you have to be home by/go to bed and who makes decisions about overnight stays, school trips and having your hair cut.

Regular meetings are held to check how things are going. These are called reviews. Your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will lead these meetings and will want to meet with you to find out how you are doing. It is really important that you share your views. The IRO's job is to check that your plan is being followed and they will make recommendations if things need to change.