

## 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)**

**Text / Whatsapp: 07758 670369**

[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 and we hope you find it helpful. It has lots of information that you might 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 and I'm the Head of Service.



Hi, I'm Teresa and I'm the Service Manager



Hi, I'm Judith and I'm the Registered Manager.



Hi, I'm Chantelle and I'm a Senior Supervising Social Worker.



Hi, I'm Chloe and I'm a Supervising Social Worker.

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

Teresa Morgan

The Marlowe Innovation Centre

Marlowe Way

Ramsgate, Kent. CT12 6FA

Tel: 07815 532 569

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

### You can also email family fostering at:

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

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 about activities and holidays?**

Your foster carer will encourage you to continue with your hobbies and activities and encourage you to try new ones. Family Fostering will also provide activities for you to join in.

Foster carers are expected to take their young people on a holiday every year. Where this is not possible we will look to provide you with the opportunity to join a supervised activity holiday with other young people.

### **Can I stay over with friends?**

Overnight stays with your family have to be agreed in advance with your social worker. If you are invited to stay overnight at a friend's house, you will also need permission, so talk to your foster carers as soon as you can. If they are happy with the arrangements for this and believe you will be safe, they can usually give you permission. If they are not sure, they will have to ask your social worker to decide.

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

We want to make sure you have 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 please contact Family Fostering or another organisation listed on the following pages. Remember you can always request to see your file and records, just ask your Social Worker about this!



Hi, I'm Aoife and I'm a Supervising Social Worker.



Hi, I'm Laura and I'm a Social Worker Assistant.



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



Hi, I'm Emeli and I'm an administrator.



Hi, I'm Amy and I'm an Administrator



Hi, I'm Rebekah and I'm the Business Development Assistant

## What is Foster Care?

Over 69,000 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.

## What is a foster family?

Foster carers may be single, married or in a relationship. They come from many different backgrounds, faiths and cultures and may or may not have children of their own. They are carefully selected 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:

- ◆ Care for you and keep you safe
- ◆ Listen to your views and feelings
- ◆ Provide tasty and healthy food
- ◆ Help you attend and do your best at school,
- ◆ Provide activities and encourage you with your talents and interests
- ◆ Make sure you attend all your health appointments including dentist and opticians.

## 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 pocket money?

Your foster carer will give you your pocket money every week. The amount you receive will depend on your age. As you become more independent and responsible you may also receive your weekly clothing allowance. If you are working or have other income, your allowances may be put into your savings account. A separate amount is also saved for when you reach adulthood.

## 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 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 with you from time to time to make sure you are happy and well cared for.

### **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 for young people 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.

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

There are certain ways you should be treated no matter what. You have the right:

- to be safe, secure and protected
- to be listened to and treated fairly and equally
- to information/advice, healthcare and education
- to enjoy your religion and culture
- to the help you need with any disability you have

### **What about what I want?**

Your wishes and feelings are very important and should always be taken into consideration. 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 provides the best care and support for all. If you have any ideas as to how we can do better please let us know.

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

We understand that family and friends are very important. Your social worker will speak with you about when you can see your family and friends and how often. Make sure you tell your social worker or foster carer who you want to see so they can try and make sure this happens. Sometimes contact with family and friends needs to be supervised, this is to ensure everyone is kept safe.

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

Every family has rules. For example, not hurting anyone in the home (including pets), bedtimes and coming home times, what programmes/games/DVD's you may or may not be able to watch or play. Your social worker and foster carers will want your opinions on rules and consequences as there may be room for negotiation.

**You might find it helpful to write down your foster carers rules**

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**Please speak to your foster carer, social worker or supervising social worker if you feel any rules are unfair or if your rights are not being upheld.**

**Who decides what will happen?**

When you move in with your foster family a meeting takes place 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 the meeting 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

Further 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 make recommendations if things need to change.

**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.