

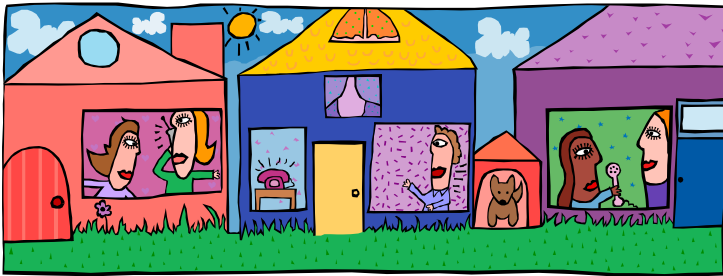


**The Homefinding
& Fostering**

Agency

Your guide to foster care

All children need a grown up or two to take care of them. This is a time when that grown up can't be from your birth family.



Sometimes, coming into foster care for the first time is a worrying time. This booklet is to help you answer some or even all of your questions.

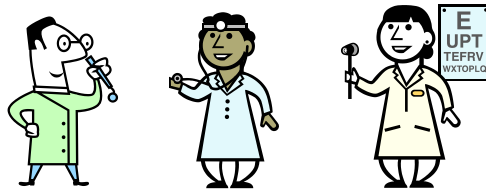
What is foster care?



Living in foster care means living with a different family. This may be a big family with lots of other children, or just you. Each foster family is as different as you. We try really hard to match you with the family that is best for what you need.

What will my foster family do?

The important thing is that the grown up who is taking care of you is doing a good job. You need to know what to expect.



Mainly, it is their job to take care of you. They need to keep you safe and healthy. That means taking you to a doctor, a dentist and an optician. Not just at the beginning, but every year.

They also need to take care of other stuff too. It is important that you feel listened to. They need to understand how you are feeling and they need to try and help you understand too.



In foster care, you should have the chance to be able to talk to someone if you want to and space and privacy if you don't. Not just at the start but also as you continue to settle in a different



home and family.

Who are all these new people?

It seems like there are a lot of new people in your life when you come into foster care. But don't worry you won't be tested on who they all are!

To start with, there will be your foster carer and family. They will have their own social worker who you will meet.

Hopefully you haven't had to change schools.

But that might mean you have your own driver. Another new person!

You will have your own social worker, but you might know who they are already. and they will have a manager.

What are they good for?

You can ask any one of them any questions you might have and



they will do their best to answer.

You should see them regularly, and there is a space at the back of this booklet for their phone numbers if you can't wait to see



them. You will be invited to meetings and asked for your opinion about what is happening to you now, and what you think should happen to you in the future.

So many meetings!

It might seem like a pain, but meetings are an important part of being in foster care. It gives everybody a chance to meet you and talk about you! You are that important.

I know it might be embarrassing, but everybody needs to talk about how you are getting on in every part of your life. It also gives them a chance to



make sure everybody is doing their job properly.

It all gets written down, so no one can forget what was talked about. You are a big part of that. You can say how you feel and have some of your questions answered.

These meetings are called reviews and they talk about the last 6 months and what needs to change or happen in the next 6 months.

What about school?

We try very hard to keep you at the same school. Especially if you are doing well and have friends there. This may mean a longer car journey with your very own personal driver!

A teacher at school will know that you are in foster care, but it is up to you who else knows. If you don't want to let anyone else know you don't have to.



Your foster carer will get to know your teachers and make sure you have all you need for school. Your foster carer will also try to make sure that you go to the same after school clubs you like going to.

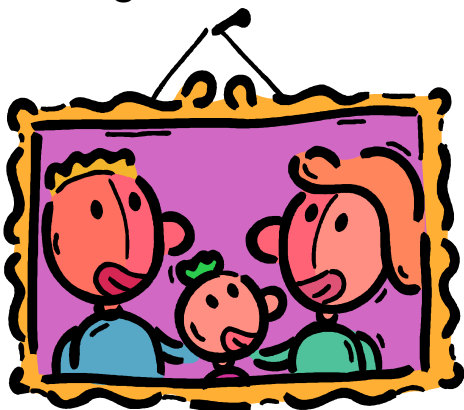
You still have to do your homework. Not everything changes

What about my friends and family?

Friends and family don't just disappear because you have moved. Your foster carer and social worker make arrangements so you can see them. This is called contact.

The arrangements have to be made so it is somewhere right for you. It might be in a different place, and there might be another person there making sure it is a good contact.

It is important that you tell someone if you are unhappy or worried about any part of it. You can talk to your foster carer, or your social worker. In fact it is a good idea to ask your social worker about contact arrangements and what they will mean for you.



Any further questions?

I bet you do have more questions, such as how long will I be in foster care, or questions about brothers and sisters, or will my contact arrangements stay the same. You have plenty of people you can ask. And that is important. You must ask some of those questions. You never know, someone might have the answers!



What if I am unhappy?

Living in Foster Care isn't always easy.

Sometimes decisions are made that you may not understand. Sometimes you may feel unhappy at how you are being looked after, but there are lots of people you can talk to.

You can speak to your foster carer, your social worker or, if you prefer, you can call any social worker at the Homefinding & Fostering Agency 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

You can ask to speak to the Independent Reviewing Officer at your next Looked After Child Review.

Useful numbers

Your social worker or foster carer can help you fill in your useful numbers.

My Social Worker is:

.....

Direct Telephone number:

.....

Emergency out of hours telephone number:

.....

My foster carers' Supervising Social Worker is:

.....

Homefinding & Fostering telephone number:

.....

Have a complaint?

If you are still unhappy, you can make a complaint. Homefinding and Fostering has a complaints procedure.

You can call or email our manager, Gill Fewins on 01622 765646 or email her gill.fewins@homefindingandfostering.co.uk

More details of how to complain are on our website here.

<http://homefindingandfostering.co.uk/complaints-and-compliments>

There are numbers of some organisations that should also be able to help you.

Ofsted:

Tel: 0300 123 1231, Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Post: Chief Inspector, Ofsted National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Children's Rights Service:

Freephone 0800 528 0731

www.right4me.org

Voice :

0207 833 5792 www.voiceyp.org

National Youth Advocacy Service:

Freephone 0800 616101 www.nyas.net

Childline:

Freephone 0800 1111 (24 hours) www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC:

0808 800 5000 (24 hours) www.nspcc.org.uk

