

What is Fostering?

A guide to fostering for older children by the Homefinding and Fostering agency

Where you can find us and more information:

67 College Road,
Maidstone,
Kent,
ME15 6SX



www.homefindingandfostering.co.uk

Your guide to foster care



If you have received this leaflet, it means that you are being looked after by homefinding and fostering agency carers.

There is some things that you might need to know.

Foster care means you are living with a family that is not your birth family. It might be for a short time or a more permanent home. You might be living in foster care with a brother or sister.

It might be just you

At homefinding we try and find a family that is best for you. One that will suit you. we take lots of things into account when we do this.

Your religion, your culture and staying close enough so you can stay at the same school or college. If that's best for you.

What to expect

In foster care you should have what you need. That is much more than just nice food, clean clothes and pocket money. Your foster family need to be able to give you space when you need it. They should listen to you and realize that is probably going to be a tough time for you. You can ask as many questions as you need. They are not the only people around that you can ask either.

Being in foster care means that lots of people are involved.



Getting to know each other



Getting to know your family

Your new family might do things differently than you are used to. They might have family rules.

But it is important that everyone feels safe about how you behave around each other in the house.

Some examples might be about knocking on each other's bedrooms doors or having rules around using the internet or a phone.

Ask what the rules are if you don't know!

Getting to know you...	Are you frightened of anything?,	Who is important to you
Any clubs you are part of or would like to be part of	What is your favorite things at school	You need to tell us what you like.
What will you miss most about home?	What is your favourite dinner?	

Feedback

How we get your views about your foster family and us:

- Online forms
- Visiting you for a chat
- Speaking to you at events

You will speak to Lauren and Jess when we need to gain feedback but never wait, you can speak to us throughout the year if you want/need to.

If you would like to contact Lauren or Jess, you can through:

Lauren.Stephens@homefindingandfostering.co.uk

Jessica.Davis@homefindingandfostering.co.uk



Who are these people?



It might seem like there are a lot of new people in your life when you come into foster care. But you will get to know them. You can talk to any one of them if you have any questions or worries.

Your Social Worker

Foster family social worker

- **Name**
- **Number**
- You might know who they are already. They help to plan what should happen next.

- **Name**
- **Number**
- You will get to know this person well. They support your foster family and work alongside your social worker.

Independent Reviewing Officer

- **Name**
- **Number**
- They attend the meetings, and you can ask to talk to them if you are worried or have questions about decisions that are being made

My family and friends

These are some of the people I would like to continue to see.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



What will your foster family do?

- The important thing is that the adult or adults looking after you is doing a good job.
- They need to keep you safe and healthy.
- They need to make sure you go to school and have space to do your homework. You should have your own bedroom, unless you share with a brother or sister.
- You should see a doctor, a dentist and an optician, not just when you first move to live with them but every year.
- You should have pocket money and have the chance to choose your own clothes.
- You should have time with your family and friends.
- You should have the chance to be able to talk to someone if you want to, but space and privacy is you don't.
- 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.

School

- We try really 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, and if your foster family can't do that journey, we will arrange for someone from the agency who can. This may be the same person who supports you at your family time.
- 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 continue at any clubs you enjoy and that you still get to see your friends out of school if that is in your interests.



Meetings

Meetings are a necessary thing. Sometimes Young people hate these meetings. They think that people are interfering, or they are a waste of time. Other young people see them as a good opportunity to tell everybody how they feel and it is a chance to ask questions, or make your feelings known.

Going home or staying put?

You will have a meeting with your social worker and your carers called a review. This should happen every six months. At this meeting, it is discussed how things are going. It helps plan for the next six months and longer term. It might be agreed that you should return to live in the family home you have come from, or with another family member. It might be that you just stay where you are.

Bullying

Every organisation that works with children needs to have an anti-bullying statement which provides information to every child and their families and to prevent bullying. We want to do our best to prevent bullying from happening, and we do everything we can to prevent and deal with bullying.

Events and newsletter

As an agency we have lots of events for you and your foster family. You are always welcome to be part of these, so ask when the next ones are. You can also suggest some activities you would like us to organize. You will receive a monthly newsletter telling you about these and other things you may or may not want to be part of, including competitions

Time with your family

It is important that we listen to you about who you do and don't want to stay in touch with.

Contact or family time arrangements are put in place to keep you safe. They may take place at our office, at a contact center or in the community. They will be an organized time that suits everybody. There might be another adult present during this time, making sure that nothing is said or done that might upset you or make you worry.

We will make sure you get to know the adults who may be supervising this time, and they will not make you and your family stand out as different in the community.

Ask your social worker what contact arrangements are being made for you.



Making a complaint

We are all unhappy from time to time about what is happening around us. We all have a right to have those complaints heard.

Complaints can range from something you are unhappy about, such as a bed time or meal choices, to decisions that are being made that you don't agree with or something much more serious.

We will take all our your complaints seriously , and there are number of ways you can raise your complaint.

Firstly see if you can resolve your complaint with your foster carer. You may be able to negotiate a change to rules or routines by having discussions with them and their social worker. You may be able to understand better why those rules seem harsh or ways you can slowly build up to having more independence or changing how you and your foster family live together.

If you do not want to discuss your complaint with them or you feel you are not being heard, then there a number of other people you can talk to. You should know the email address or phone number of your social worker. But if you don't you can always email our manager at gill.fewins@homefindingandfostering.co.uk or phone our office on 01622 765646 and someone there will be able to listen and respond to your complaint.

You can also go directly to Ofsted. You can call them on 03001231231. Their role is to make sure that organisations like ours, provide a high standard of care for children. You can also reach them by emailing enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



Sharing worries or raising concerns

If your complaint, or concern is that an adult you trust has behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed you, there are a number of further processes we have to follow. Your concern will be dealt with sensitively and promptly. Depending on the situation, it might be that other professionals who work with children are involved.

Every organisation that works with children must have a process in place to protect them and we follow that process and take it very seriously. While we investigate your concern or allegation, we will take action to protect and support you.

We want to make sure you have someone you trust you can talk to about it, and that we listen and respond to what you have told us. If you need help understanding what has happened we will do our best to make sure you have that support too.

We promise to explain to you honestly about what action we may have to take to protect you and respond to what you have told us.

As an organisation who works with lots of children and young people we have to have a safeguarding policy.

A safeguarding or child protection policy statement makes it clear what your organisation or group will do to keep children safe.

Need some more information?

Other leaflets we have produced

Childrens policies:

- Bullying
- Family time
- Behavior code
- Sharing worries or raising concerns
- Pocket money and savings
- Equality and Diversity
- Safeguarding statement

Contact leaflet

Dangers of vaping

Why people worry when I go missing





Here are some useful numbers of other people who might help if you are worried or if you don't feel you are being listened to.

Ofsted
Phone 0300123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Childrens Rights service
Phone 08005280371

Childrens commissioner
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Childline
08001111
www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC
08088005000
www.nspcc.org.uk

Our manager Gill Fewins
01622 765747
Gill.Fewins@homefindingandfostering.co.uk

