

Stepping forward together

Children's Guide Three Borough Shared Services



This booklet belongs to

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I am this many years old

.....

Your foster carers work for the Three Borough Shared Services.



“Hi! I’m Rory, I’m here to tell you what foster care is. This booklet is yours to keep and to use, whenever you want to find something out.”



Why do I have to live with a foster carer?

When a child cannot live with their own family, they can move into a foster home where they will be safe. Children live with foster carers for all sorts of reasons, but it’s not because of anything you have done.

What about what I want?

Your social worker should find out what your wishes and feelings are. They should take them into consideration, depending on your age and understanding.

What is a foster carer?

Foster carers are special people who have been carefully chosen to look after children.

Foster carers do all the things parents do, such as setting rules and helping you with things like going to school and making sure you eat the right food.

Wishes and feelings

Wishes are what you want to do, what you want to happen or what you want someone to do for you.

Feelings are about being happy, sad, OK, worried or frightened about something even if you don't understand what is happening.

What does my own social worker do?

Your own social worker is someone who likes children and works for children's services. It is their job to make sure you are OK, so you should think of them as someone who is there to help you.

Your own social worker will visit you regularly and talk to you about what is happening in your life. They care about you and you can talk to them about anything you are worried about.



What does the Fostering supervising social worker do?

Your foster carers have their own Supervising Social Worker. Their job is to make sure your carers are looking after you properly and have all the help they need. They will also talk to you to make sure you're happy and well cared for.

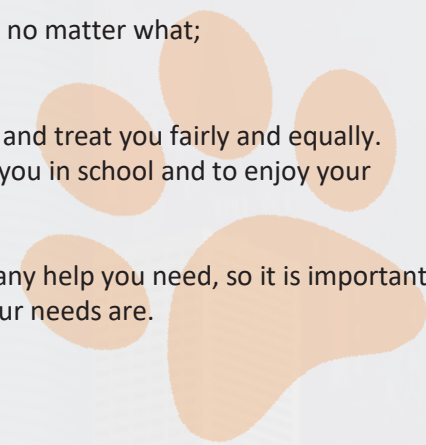
You can write down the contact details of your own social worker and the Supervising Social Worker on page 13, at the end of this guide.

How will people look after me in my foster home?

There are certain ways you should be treated no matter what; You should be safe, secure and protected.

The adults caring for you should listen to you and treat you fairly and equally. They will help you to be healthy and support you in school and to enjoy your religion and culture.

If you have a disability, you have the right to any help you need, so it is important that you let your social worker know what your needs are.



My foster carers' rules are:

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“Every family has rules. These are about how to treat each other, about listening to each other and keeping safe. What are your foster carers' rules? You can write them down to help you remember.”



“My foster parents are Susan and Billy. They have a daughter named Alice. Can you draw your foster family?”



A large, empty white rectangular area intended for drawing a foster family.

Who decides what will happen?

While you live with your foster carers, there will be meetings called 'reviews', where all the important grown-ups in your life will get together and make a care plan for you.

Before the review, you will be asked what you think and what your views are. You may be asked to write this down or to tell your social worker. If you are old enough, you may also take part in the meeting.

If you have any worries in between these meetings, you can talk to your social worker or the person who is in charge of the reviews, who is called the Independent Reviewing Officer.

What about school?

If you are already at school, we will try to work out whether it's best for you to move to a new school or stay at your old one.

School is very important because it's where you learn to make new friends and where you can take part in activities and hobbies after school.

Your teacher will know that you have gone to live with a foster carer, but it is your choice if you want to tell other people. If you have any problems, difficulties or are being bullied, you must tell your teacher, social worker or foster carer.

"These reviews are all about you so you can say how you feel or what you would like to happen."



Colour in this picture of my friend Leon...



When will I see my family?

Just because you live in a foster home doesn't mean that you have to lose touch with your family. Your foster carer understands how important your family is to you. This may include seeing your brothers and sisters and other members of your family either in your foster home or at another suitable place.

Your social worker will speak with you about when you can see your family and how often. Tell them who you want to see so they can try and make sure this happens.

How long will I have to stay?

Your social worker will make a plan for you. This is called your 'care plan' or a 'child plan' and includes everything that's important to you such as your school, your health and when you see your family and friends and how long you will stay with your foster family.

Tell your social worker if there is anything in the plan that you don't like as they may be able to change this. If you ever feel worried about your future, tell your social worker and they will do everything they can to help.

Your carers will not mind if you ask them all sorts of things...

- “What if I don’t like the food?”
- “Can I have friends over?”
- “Will I have to move again?”
- “What time do I have to get up in the morning and go to bed at night?”

“I know moving into a new and different family is not easy, but your social worker and your foster carers want to make sure you are in a safe, caring and happy home.”



“Sometimes you will feel happy, sometimes sad and sometimes worried. That’s OK!”

What if I have a problem or I am unhappy?

We want to know if you have any problems at all, whether you are worried about something in your foster home or if you just don’t like the food the foster carer gives you.

There are lots of ways you can tell us what you think or if you are worried or want to make a complaint and can’t tell your social worker, foster carer or teacher.

You may want an advocate who is someone independent who you can visit to get your views across, for example in a meeting or to make a complaint about how you are being cared for.

You also have the right to talk directly to the organisation called Ofsted if you live in England or CSSIW if you live in Wales.

Find their phone numbers and the numbers of other organisations on page 13 of this guide which you can call to get help or advice.

Your foster carer is not allowed to hurt you in any way and nor is anyone else. If you are worried about anything at all, please don’t be afraid to speak up as there are lots of people who care about you and want to help.

Who can I contact for help?

Write down their full names, telephone numbers and email addresses.

My own social worker is:

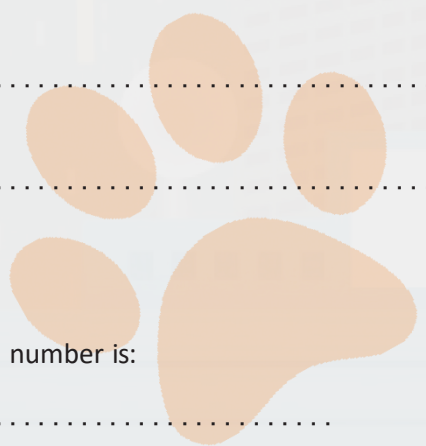
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My foster carer's social worker is:

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My supervising social workers mobile number is:

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Ofsted

Ofsted is the government body responsible for upholding standards in foster care. They inspect and regulate fostering services such as the Three Borough Shared Service

Address: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Phone number: 0300 123 1231

Email address: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office of the Children's Commissioner

Address: The Office of the Children's Commissioner, Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

Phone number: 020 7783 8330

Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Other numbers



