

# Young Persons' Guide



Designed by Participation Group

**Everything you need to know about living with an Alpha Plus Foster Carer!!**

This guide is updated with information as it changes and is regularly reviewed by our children and young peoples Participation Group.

This guide includes an introduction to staff members as requested by the Participation Group.

Should you have any comments or suggestions to improve the booklet please let us know, better still become a member of the Participation Group - I am sure you will enjoy it!

This guide is available on request in other languages and formats.

Enjoy reading and we look forward to meeting you.

# Our Pledge to Children and Young People

*Small Steps. Big Outcomes*

**nfa group**

## OUR PLEDGE TO YOU, WE WILL:

- 1. KEEP YOU SAFE AND CARE WELL FOR YOU**
  - Ensure you live in a safe and healthy place
  - Listen to you, particularly when you raise concerns about your safety or the quality of your care
  - Ensure that those people who care for you are trained and supported to keep you safe
  - Make sure you are prepared for the next stage of your life – including moving home, looking after your health and taking care of where you live
- 2. HELP YOU GET A GOOD EDUCATION (ACHIEVE AND ENJOY)**
  - Make sure your education meets your needs
  - Help you to attend your education provision and make good progress
  - Have high expectations for your potential
  - Celebrate your educational achievements
  - Help those who care for you have the right skills to support your education
- 3. HELP YOU BE HEALTHY AND ENJOY LIFE**
  - Help you to be physically and emotionally well
  - Support you to take part in clubs and/or hobbies that interest you
  - Support you to make healthy eating decisions and to cook healthy food
  - Help you to socialise with your friends (as long as this is safe)
  - Support you to take part in activities and have fun
- 4. SUPPORT YOUR FUTURE AND YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE**
  - Help you to take part in positive activities
  - Support you to undertake work experience
  - Help you to find employment, an apprenticeship or to study further
  - Support you to take part in an adventure when you reach sixteen

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# Welcome !

Hello and welcome to Alpha Plus.

This is your essential guide to living with an Alpha Plus Foster Carer.

This guide will answer any questions you may have about being in foster care with Alpha Plus. It will tell you:

- \* Who we are and what we do.
- \* What you should expect in your foster home.
- \* What you can do if you are unhappy in your foster home.

# A Message from Anisa

“Hello, I went into foster care one year ago. I was scared because I didn’t know what I was getting myself into but things change.

I had the best and bad time, because I left my family. But it was the first time I felt good about myself.

My foster carer is very nice and sweet. I was welcomed and made to feel part of the family and there is always someone there to help”.

# Contact with Your Family

Your social worker will talk to you about which members of your family you are able to keep in contact with and your foster carer will support you with this.

Social workers sometimes call keeping in touch with your family “contact”. This can happen in lots of different ways, i.e. telephone calls, letters or by meeting up with your family. Your social worker will make sure that you are kept safe during contact. If you have any worries about contact, you should tell your social worker or foster carer. There may be people you want to see more of or those you do not want to see at all.

It’s important that you talk about how you are feeling because your social worker may not know what you would like to happen.

# My Info

Name .....

Address .....

.....

My Phone No .....

My Age .....

My Birthday .....

My School/College .....

.....

My National Insurance No

.....

My Doctor .....

My Dentist .....

Emergency Contacts .....

.....

My social worker is .....

Telephone No .....

My independent reviewing officer is.....

Telephone No .....



# My Foster Family

Names.....

.....

Address.....

.....

Children.....

.....

Pets.....

.....

# Who are Alpha Plus Fostering?

Welcome to the Alpha Plus Fostering Team.

Our Manager is called Gill



Like you, foster carers have a social worker to support them in looking after you.



Helen



Cat



Aoife



Helen K



Jodie

The social workers are supported by office staff



Lynn



Linda



Nicky



Angela



Kathryn

# What other people are involved

**Social Workers:** Your social worker has a very important job. They will visit you in your foster home and sometimes see you in your own home. They will make sure you are ok and have everything you need. They will talk to you about plans for your future so it is important that you tell them how you feel and what you want.

**Alpha Plus Social Worker:** The Alpha Plus social worker visits the foster carers. They give them support and advice about looking after children well.

**Support Worker:** Some children and young people need extra help to explore their emotions and feelings in relation to their past, in order to prepare for the future. The support worker can help you with this.

**There may be other professionals involved with you, your foster carer or social worker will make sure you know who they are before you meet them.**

# Your Space

At Alpha, we don't expect you to share a bedroom with anyone who isn't your brother or your sister. If you need help to arrange your belongings, your foster carer will help you. You can also ask your foster carer how you can personalise your room. If there are belongings you have left behind at home or at another foster home, let us or your social worker know so we can try to get them to you.

To keep everyone safe and to respect each other's space and privacy, we should knock before entering each other's bedrooms. We should always ask for permission before touching or borrowing each other's possessions. Your foster carer will help you to keep your belongings safe.

Your foster carer will always knock before he or she enters your bedroom unless he or she thinks you are hurt or in danger.

You will also have privacy when you are using the bathroom and toilet. We also knock before entering the bathroom to make sure it is free.

In the foster home, you will get space to do your homework or to have some quiet time if you need it.

Any information we have about you is treated as confidential. That means that only people involved have information about you, and that is on a "need to know" basis.

# Keeping Healthy

When you come to live with your foster carer, one of their jobs is to make sure that you are registered at a dentist, doctors and opticians. Your foster carer will also help to arrange regular check-ups to make sure you stay in good health. Your foster carer will support you when you need to go to medicals but as you get older they will also respect your privacy.

Keeping healthy isn't just about going to the doctors. Eating healthy food such as fruit and vegetables is important too. Your foster carer will ask you what food you like but will also help you to make sensible food choices. If you need to eat certain foods because of health, religious or cultural reasons, then your foster carer will help you to do this. Exercising regularly can also help to keep you healthy and it can be fun!

**Make a note of the foods you enjoy and to share with your carer**

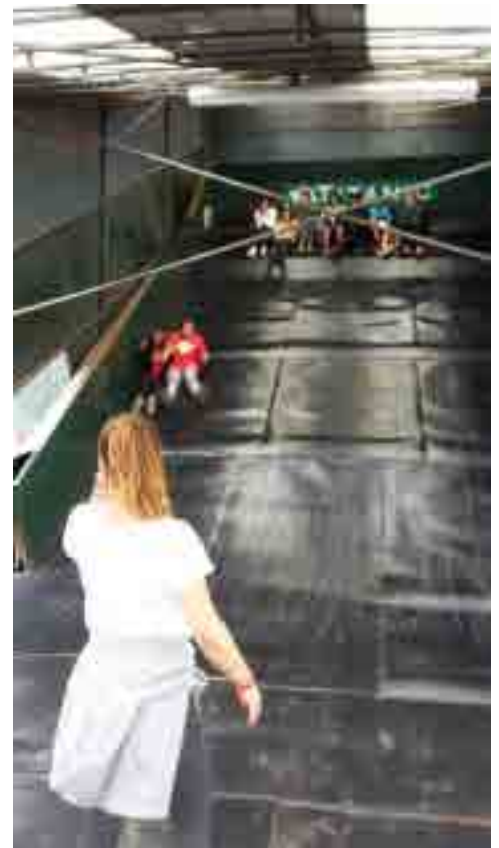
# Getting Active

Taking part in activities such as team sports, swimming, drama clubs, horse riding, joining a choir or dance group can be excellent ways to stay fit and feel physically healthy, and boost your self-esteem and confidence.

This can help in all areas of your life, including getting on with other young people. After School Clubs are always a good place to start and your foster carer will help you to find the kind of activities available in your area.



**JOIN IN AND HAVE SOME FUN !**





# Fun with Alpha

You will have the opportunity to take part in lots of fun activities with other young people and with your foster family. For example, we hold an awards evening every year, to celebrate all your achievements. We also go out in the Summer for fun days on the Beach and places like Crocky Trail and Manley Mere Aqua Park. And you will also be invited to join the Participation Group at Outdoor Elements and try your hand at archery, bush craft skills, tree climbing and crate stacking. There's too many events to mention here and we are always open to suggestions, we look forward to meeting you soon...





# Pocket Money & Savings



Whilst you are living with your foster family, you may be given pocket money.

Your foster carer will tell you how much money you will get.

Alpha Plus will put money aside for you each week. This is different to your pocket money and will be saved in a bank until you leave Alpha Plus Fostering.

# Sleep Overs

Making and keeping friends is enjoyable and important. You can ask your foster carer if it's okay for your friends to come for tea or to spend time with you or stay over.

Your foster carer will want to know a bit more about your friends and their families, so they feel you will be safe whilst you are with them.

If you want to stay over at a friend's house, your foster carer will need to talk to your friend's parents or foster carers. Alpha Plus knows that sleeping over at friend's houses is an important part of building friendships. When you are living with a foster family it is their responsibility to make sure you are safe.



# Culture and Religion

You may follow a different religion from your foster carer.

You may want to go to a mosque, church, synagogue, temple or any other place of worship. You can talk about this with your foster carers.

There may also be special rituals for you to follow and religious festivals that you want to celebrate, your foster carer and Alpha Plus will help you celebrate important events in your religion.



# Safer Caring

All foster carers have a 'Family Safer Caring Policy'. This policy is different for everyone. Your foster carer may ask you to help write it. It will include things like privacy, coming-in times, bed times and how to sort out differences.

Things don't always go well and we know that children and young people can sometimes get into trouble. This is part of life and it helps us to learn right from wrong. Sometimes your foster carer may be angry with something you have done but remember foster carers are not allowed to smack or hurt you, even if you have done something wrong.

Your foster carer will **never** do any of the following;

- \* Lock you in your room
- \* Stop you from seeing your family
- \* Stop you from having food
- \* Stop all your pocket money
- \* Ridicule you

# Bullying

## **What is bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It can include name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, or threatening to hurt someone.

It can happen anywhere, at school, at home, or online. Bullying can be a one off or happen over a long period of time and can happen to anyone.

## **What is cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow you wherever you go, via social networks, gaming and your mobile phone.

## **How can bullying affect you?**

Bullying can make you feel lonely, angry, frightened, and confused. You might experience some or all of these feelings.

# Bullying

## Where can you get help?

Ignoring bullying won't make it go away. You need to tell someone what is happening.

If the bullying is happening at school, your teachers may not be aware, talk to your carers and your teachers. If you feel you can't speak to a teacher, maybe a friend could do it for you.

If the bullying is happening online, your carers or teacher can help you.

You can also get help and advice from: -

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

And you could call or chat online with childline at: -

<http://www.childline.org.uk/> or Freephone 0800 1111

# Internet Safety



Don't Share personal information like your phone number or email address online.

Only talk to real life friends or family if they are on sites with a social media element.

Beware people you meet online might not be who they say they are.

Be a good online friend and not say nasty things even if its just a joke.

Use secure and legal sites to download music and games.

Make sure you check with your carer before downloading any programs to avoid viruses.

Talk to your carer or trusted adult if you are upset by something you have seen online.



# Moving On & Leaving Care

Leaving care can be really scary. Don't worry because there is a lot of support to help you become independent. As it is a big step, it's important to plan ahead. Your social worker will help you to do this by making a plan called a 'Pathway Plan'. You might also have an after care worker to help you get the skills you need to live on your own and also get advice on housing and benefits.

Your foster carer will also help you by making sure you have the skills to look after yourself e.g. cooking, paying your bills, shopping and using household appliances.

Just because you have left foster care doesn't mean that you need to lose touch with your foster carer. You will always be welcome to visit your foster carers and most young people like to stay in touch for many years.

It is also the law (Leaving Care, Act 2000), that young people can still get support from social services up to the age of 21. Ask your social worker or after care worker about what's available in your area.



# Who are Ofsted



The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (known as Ofsted) are the people who make sure that Alpha Plus are doing their job properly. Ofsted visit Alpha Plus regularly to make sure that children in foster care are being well looked after. To do this, an Ofsted Inspector may want to come and talk to you about what it's like living in your foster home. If you have any concerns or complaints and would like to talk to someone at Ofsted, their address and phone number is:

OFSTED  
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
Telephone: 0300 123 1231

# Complaints, Compliments & Comments

We want you to be happy while you are living with Alpha Plus foster carers and we hope that you and your foster carers can sort out any problems you might have. However sometimes this isn't possible and you may wish to make a complaint. If you do, you can talk to any of these people:

- Your Social Worker
- Alpha Plus Social Worker
- Support Worker
- A Teacher
- OFSTED
- Reviewing Officer— Your Social Worker will give you details
- Gill Gilgun, Registered Manager, Alpha Plus, Tel: 0161 633 2240
- Helen Farrington, Team Manager, Alpha Plus, Tel: 0161 633 2240

# Help Line Telephonenumber Numbers & Websites

**ChildLine**—Tel: 0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**NSPCC Child Protection Line**  
Tel: 0808 800 5000  
[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Kidscape**—Tel: 020 7730 3300  
[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)



**Childrens Commissioner**  
Tel: 0800 528 0731  
[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/our-work/children-in-care/](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/our-work/children-in-care/)

Including the creation of a digital hub 'IMO' linking children in care councils across the country  
<https://imohub.org.uk/>

**A National Voice**—Tel: 0161 237 5577  
[www.anationalvoice.org](http://www.anationalvoice.org)

**Children's Rights**—0808 8005792  
<https://coramvoice.org.uk/>

Coram Voice, getting young voices heard. From making a complaint to online safety tips and knowing your rights.

# Help Line Telephone Numbers & WebSites

## **Thinkuknow**

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/)

Use the Thinkuknow website to report abuse and explore advice about staying safe when you're on a phone, tablet or computer

## **BECOME**

The Charity for Children in Care and Young Care Leavers (formally The Who Cares Trust)

Care advice line: 0800 023 2033

[www.becomecharity.org.uk](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk)

**YoungMinds Crisis Messenger** Provides free, 24/7 crisis



support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis

- If you need urgent help text YM to 85258
- All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors

Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

# Help Line Telephone Numbers & Websites



<https://www.kooth.com/> Free safe and anonymous online support for young people. At Kooth you can chat with friendly counsellors, read articles written by young people, get support from the Kooth community, and even write in a daily journal.



<https://www.theproudtrust.org> There are groups all across the UK for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) young people, or those questioning their gender or sexuality. There are also some trans-only youth groups too.



<https://www.talktofrank.com/> Honest information about drugs and alcohol.