

# Children's Guide

An information guide for children and young people aged between 5 - 11



## Contents

About Fostering & the NFA	P.2
Social Workers & Supervising Social Worker	P.2
Meetings	P.2
Keeping in Touch	P.3
Your Views	P.3
What Should I Expect from my Foster Carer?	P.4
Dealing with Worries	P.4
Activities & Holidays	P.5
Bedrooms & Personal Belongings	P.5
Allowances	P.5
Rules and what if I do Something Wrong?	P.6
Education & School	P.7
Health Care	P.7
Bullying & Cyber Bullying	P.8
Child Protection & Safeguarding	P.10
Making a Complaint	P.11
Useful Contacts	P.11
Have Your Say	P.12
Don't Forget!	P.15

## My Details

This guide belongs to: .....

Address: .....

.....

Phone Number: .....

My Foster Carers: .....

My Social Worker: .....

NFA Supervising Social Worker: .....

## About Fostering and the National Fostering Agency

Sometimes, your mum or dad or who normally looks after you, can be prevented from giving you the care you need. There may be many reasons why they are not able to look after you.

A foster carer is someone who is able to look after you when your mum or dad, or whoever normally looks after you, no longer can. Your foster carer will make sure you are well looked after, and will help you feel part of their family, while understanding that you may also have your own family, they will support contact with your family when this is planned.

Foster carers are all different. The National Fostering Agency understands that every child is different and will do their best to find the right family for you. This process is called 'matching'.

The National Fostering Agency has been working for over thirteen years to provide safe and caring homes for children and young people who are unable to live at home, we find, train, support and supervise foster carers.

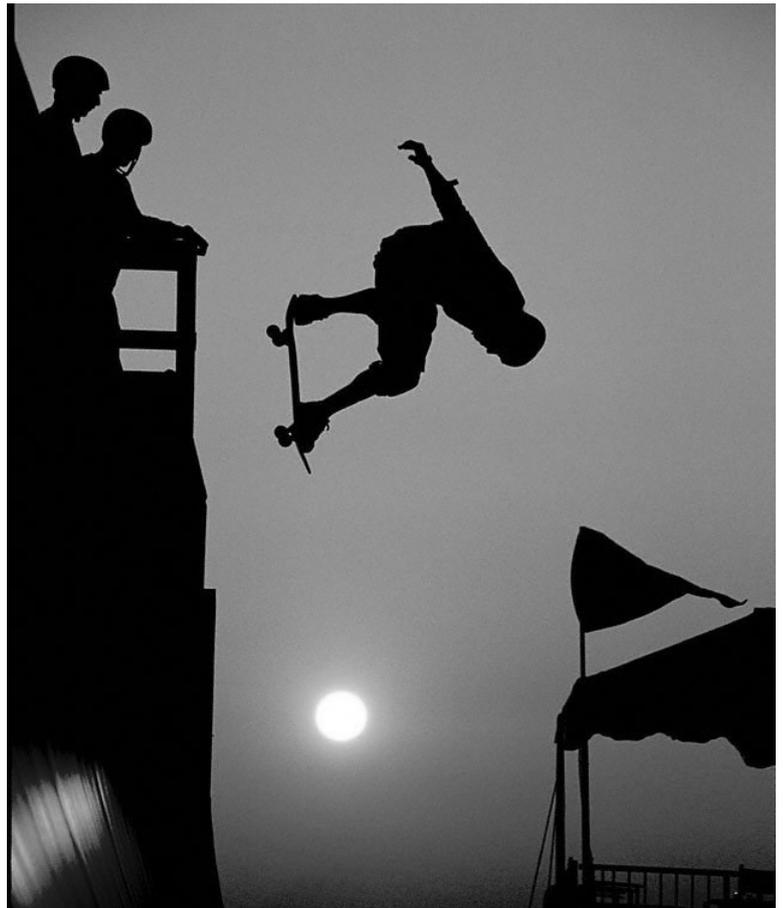
## Social Workers and Supervising Social Workers

Your social worker will support you, they will discuss any plans with you, and will want to know what you think.

Supervising social workers work with the fostering family supervising and guiding them.

## Meetings

Different types of meetings will take place whilst you are living with your foster carers, this is so that everybody can share information and work together to help you. For example, you may have to attend a placement agreement meeting and a statutory review. Your foster carers will also have an annual review and you will be asked for your views.



## Keeping in Touch

Your social worker will help you to keep in touch with your family and people who are important to you. It is important that you tell your social worker about the people you want to see. You may hear the word 'contact' and that means keeping in touch with members of your family and those people important to you, where it is safe and possible to do so. Different types of contact include:

- Face to face visits.
- Overnight stays.
- Outings or events.
- Telephone calls.
- Exchanging of photos, videos, emails or letters.

## Your Views

It is important that you tell us what you think and what you want, use the meetings to do this, also talk to your social worker, and your foster carer. Tell people what you like, and what you do not like. You can write your views in the 'have your say' at the end of this guide, or ask your carer or social worker to write them for you.

### Let's Hear It From You!

The NFA would love to hear from you about your own dreams and aspirations! You may be a very good swimmer and dream of representing your Country in national competitions. You may be a talented musician with a desire to perform. Tell us the best way for us to help you achieve your aspirations and goals.

Let us know - email (or ask your carer to email) your dreams and aspirations to [ledington@nfa.co.uk](mailto:ledington@nfa.co.uk)



## What Should I Expect from my Foster Carers?

Your foster carer will do lots of things to make you feel happy and comfortable whilst you are living with them. Wherever you live, you will be treated with respect and you should respect your carers and other young people you may live with. They will make you feel as if you are part of their family. On top of this, your foster carers will:

- Make sure that you're well looked after and listen, respect, help and support you.
- Attend meetings about you at school and with your social workers.
- Help you learn the skills you will need when you grow older and leave their care.
- Make sure you have a bedroom of your own (or shared with your siblings).
- Help you stay in touch with your friends and family and provide a space where you can meet.
- Give you pocket money according to what is agreed in your placement agreement meeting.
- Give you a chance to celebrate your birthday and religious festivals.
- Be someone who is interested and will encourage and advise you.

## What Do I Call My Foster Carers?

This is something you'll be able to talk about with your foster carers because they know that it can feel strange living with new people. They won't expect you to call them 'mum' or 'dad', you'll be able to decide together what works best.

## Dealing with Worries

*'Do they know I don't like certain foods? Can my friends come round? Will I have to move again?'*

Your foster carers will not mind you asking them about these sorts of things. They will try and help you with any worry you may have. If you would rather talk to someone else you can contact your social worker or your carers' supervising social worker.



## Activities and Holidays

National Fostering Agency foster carers will fully encourage and support you to take up general leisure activities within and outside of the home. If you have any interests or hobbies eg, football, swimming, dancing, photography, going out with friends, or going to the cinema; these will all be actively encouraged. If you want to be given the opportunity to try out new activities, make sure you tell your foster carer and they will do their best to support you.

You may go on holidays, weekends or day trips, maybe with your family, friends or carers. This will be discussed between you, your family, your carers and your social worker.

## Bedrooms and Personal Belongings

Whilst living in your foster carer's house, you will be given your own bedroom if possible. This is a place where you'll be able to spend some quiet time where you can relax or do some work. It is your own space where you can keep all of your personal belongings. If you have anything of value (eg, jewellery, savings book) you need to let your foster carer know, so it can be kept safe.

Your foster carers may need to go into your room from time to time but they will always knock first. Remember that you should never go into someone else's room without permission.

## Allowances

Whilst living in foster care you are entitled to weekly pocket money. The amount will be agreed at your placement agreement meeting between you, your foster carer and social worker. The National Fostering Agency recommend the following amounts:

Age	7 - 8	9 - 10	11
£ Per Week	£2/ £2.50	£3/ £3.50	£5.00

You are also entitled to a clothing allowance. You can discuss this with your foster carer and agree on a reasonable amount.





## Education and School

Your foster carer will help and support you in your education by making sure you have what you need, including a quiet place to study. You need to attend school regularly and if you have any difficulties, talk them through with your foster carer and your social worker.

If you don't go to school at the moment, your foster carers and your social worker will look at why, and work out how to solve any problems so you can return to school. You might be pleased about this or you might not but everyone needs a good education. If you haven't been to school for a while, you may feel nervous about returning but your foster carer will help you overcome any worries. Remember that school isn't just about the lessons, it's also about making friends and taking part in after school activities.



## Health Care

Good health is cool! Eating healthy food, taking part in physical exercise and things you enjoy. Your foster carer will make sure you're registered with a new doctor and a new dentist if you live too far away from your family home. They will also ensure that a health record is completed for you.

Our eyesight is one of the most important things to us and we need to have regular checks. Foster carers will make appointments with an optician and attend with you. If you have to wear glasses then your foster carer will help you pick out a fashionable pair.

## Bullying

Children sometimes bully others because:

- They don't know it's wrong.
- They are copying older siblings or other people in the family whom they admire.
- They haven't learnt other ways of mixing with their school friends/peers.
- Their friends encourage them to bully.
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings.
- They may be jealous.

Bullying includes:

- People calling you names.
- Making things up to get you into trouble.
- Hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving.
- Taking your things.
- Damaging your property.
- Threats and intimidation.

You should:

- Tell someone: teacher, lecturer, foster carer or social worker.
- Contact an agency for advice and information (see the 'Useful Contacts' section).

## Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is bullying and harassment through email, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, websites and mobile phones. It is also called electronic bullying, SMS bullying, mobile bullying, online bullying and internet bullying. Cyber bullying causes distress and is wrong! We have listed some ways to protect yourself.

If you receive a nasty **email** it is best not to reply. If they do not stop tell your foster carer, they may be able to contact the service provider. If a situation repeats itself or is serious and is worrying you, save and print off the emails. They will provide evidence in case your foster carer needs to take action.

Do not give out personal information in **chatrooms** or through any **instant messenger**. Do not respond to abusive messages - ignore them or log off. Always think about what you write and how you write it.

Do not reply to any **text** or **video messages** that are rude or nasty. The mobile service provider (eg, orange, O2) will have a number that you can call to report abusive messaging. Take a look on their website. Be careful who you give your number to and don't leave your mobile lying around.

Using the **internet** for chatrooms, forums and peer-to-peer networks can be great fun, a place to meet new and interesting people and share ideas and information. But you need to be very careful about who you chat to and what information you give out.

Remember, if you've never met the person, he or she is still a stranger, regardless of how often you've 'chatted'. If a stranger walked up to you on the street and asked you for personal details such as your address and telephone number you wouldn't give it to them. The same rules apply on the internet.

Sending text messages, emails and pictures either by mobile phone or on your computer can be a great way to keep in touch with friends. But remember, once that message, picture or email has been sent, you no longer have control over where it goes or who sees it. Images can be copied and manipulated or even posted on the internet without your permission and that confidential text message you sent could easily be forwarded to the wrong person.

Only give your mobile number to people you know and trust. Never respond to a text message from someone you don't know. Remember to always ask permission if you want to post a picture of someone else on the internet.

When registering for things on websites you may be asked to give personal information. Always check that the site is reliable and reputable before giving out any information and make sure they will not pass on or sell your information (well known sites such as the BBC are reliable). Reliable sites will always have a privacy policy which will tell you how your information will be used. This should help you decide if you want to give out your information. Most sites also have a check box at the bottom of the page asking for permission to pass on or use your personal information.

If you have any doubts at all speak to your carer who will be able to help you decide whether the site is reputable.



## Child Protection and Safeguarding

Sometimes adults or other young people hurt children harm them in a physical/emotional way and this is not right. Child abuse is wrong and child protection is about preventing and stopping child abuse.

### What is Child Abuse?

**Physical Injury.** This is where a child is beaten/punched/kicked hurt in a physical way.

**Emotional Abuse.** This is when a parent or carer behaves in a way that is likely to seriously affect their child's emotional development. It can range from constant rejection and denial of affection, through to continual severe criticism. Witnessing domestic violence can be considered a form of emotional abuse.

**Neglect.** This the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education and medical attention.

**Sexual Abuse.** This is when a child or young person is pressurised, forced or tricked into taking part in any kind of sexual activity with an adult or young person. This can include kissing, touching the young person's genitals or breasts, intercourse or oral sex. Encouraging a child to look at pornographic magazines, videos or sexual acts is also sexual abuse.

### What is a Child Protection Enquiry?

Someone may tell someone at school, or a health visitor or the Social Services that they are worried about a child. A child may then become the subject of a child protection enquiry this may lead to an investigation. The Social Services have a duty to investigate.

### Child Protection Conference

It is a social workers job to protect children from harm and if they feel there is concern a meeting called a child protection conference will be held to help decide what can be done to help a child this will become known as a child protection plan. Parents, teacher, social worker and all those who play a part in a child's care may contribute to the plan. You may be able to go to the meeting and should discuss this with your Social Worker.

A key aim of children's services, including local authorities and foster providers is to keep children and young people safe from harm. The law states that abusing children is wrong.



## Making a Complaint

All looked after children have a right to make a complaint, if are not happy with something you can make a complaint to NFA by telephone, in writing or in person. Speak to your foster carer's supervising social worker for further details. Councils have a complaints service, ask your social worker about this service and contact details. Also remember to speak openly to the Independent Reviewing Officer.

## Useful Contacts

### Commissioner for England

There is a commissioner for children in England and her name is Anne Longfield, and she works to 'promote awareness of the views and interests of children'. The office of the children's commissioner.

20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

**Tel: 0207 783 8330**

Website: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

### Child Line

This is the free 24 hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. Child Line's counselors are there to help and find ways to sort things out. Child Line is confidential - which means they won't tell anyone about your call unless you want them to talk to somebody for you, or you are in danger.

**Tel: 0800 1111**

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### Ofsted

An organisation called Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England and Wales.

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street  
Manchester, M1 2WD

**Tel: 0300 123 1231**

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

### CoramVoice

Confidential advice and advocacy for children and young people in care of leaving care.

49 Mecklenburgh Square, WC1N 2QA

**Tel: 0808 800 5792**

Website: [www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org)

Email: [info@voiceyp.org](mailto:info@voiceyp.org)

### NSPCC

If you need help or advice, or are concerned that you or another child may be at risk. The helpline is open 24 hours a day.

**Tel: 0808 800 5000**

Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

### National Fostering Agency

If you need to contact us then our details are:

Ground Floor, 920 Birchwood Boulevard  
Birchwood, Warrington, WA3 7QS

**Tel: 01925 286850**

**Independent Review Officer** write the name and contact number of your IRO below

# Have Your Say



Children and young people in foster care have regular reviews. Every year your foster carers also have a review called an annual review or AFCR for short.

The supervising social worker, your social worker and your foster carers all contribute to this review. Your views are also very important to us. Listening to your views and opinions will help us ensure that your foster carers give you the best possible care. We want to hear from you, so please take some time to fill out this form.

## Your Details

Name: ..... Date: .....

Foster Carer's Name: .....

Supervising Social Worker's Name: .....

## Enjoying Life & Achieving

What activities do you like to do?

.....  
.....

How often do you get to do these activities? .....

Do you like school? .....

What's your favourite subject? .....

Does your foster carer encourage you to do your best?

.....

## Health

Are you aware of the benefits of regular exercise and eating well? .....

Do you understand what is meant by a balanced diet? .....

Do you have any specific needs or worries in respect to your health?

.....

.....

## Staying Safe

Do you feel safe in your foster placement? .....

Do you feel safe at school? .....

Is there anything we can do to make you feel safer?

.....

.....



## Making a Positive Contribution

Are you given the opportunity to make your own choices? For example, clothes to buy and wear?

.....

.....

Do your foster carers help you develop practical skills for every day life?

.....

.....

# Economic Wellbeing

Do you receive pocket money? .....

Do you have a bank account? .....

Are you receiving the advice you need to manage your money? .....

# Summary

What are your foster carers like?

.....  
.....

If you could change three things, what would they be?

1, .....

2, .....

3, .....



Thank you for taking your time to fill out this form. You are the most important person to us and we want to know that we are providing the best possible service for you. To help us do this we need to hear from you. Please write your thoughts and suggestions here:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



