



Family Futures

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Provider

A guide for children and young people who are fostered



Living with foster carers

It can be worrying, frightening and sad to leave your home, family and friends to live with foster carers. This booklet has been written for you to keep so that you can read it at any time. If you need someone to help you understand any part of it, you can ask your social worker or your foster carers for help.



Helpful to know:

There are around 40,000 children and young people living with foster carers for many different reasons.

If you are living in foster care, it is not because of things you have done.

Most young people who are looked after by foster carers stay in foster care for a short period and then go back home, others live with foster carers until they are much older.

What is a foster carer?

An adult who will take care of you while you are away from home. They will give you the guidance and assistance you need.

What will the foster carers be like?

Lots of different people become foster carers. Someone on their own might foster, sometimes it is a couple, some may be married others are not. Sometimes, foster carers have children of their own still living at home while others might have grown up children and grandchildren. They might be looking after other young people as well as you. Foster carers will sometimes have relatives and friends who will visit them.

What can you expect when living with foster carers?

All foster carers should treat you as part of the family, whether you stay with them for a short or long time.

Whilst in foster care you have certain **rights** which are listed below:

- To be kept safe and protected from harm, and to feel secure
- To be asked what you think about things and be listened to
- To be told what you can and may not do, and to have decisions explained to you
- To be helped to keep in touch with people who are important to you, and if this can't happen you have the right to know the reason why
- To be treated nicely
- To continue any customs or way of life associated with your race and culture
- To follow any religion you are used to following
- To be helped to keep healthy and well
- To have help with your school work
- To have clubs, hobbies and activities that you enjoy and to try new ones
- To be told what to do if things go wrong and be helped to make a complaint

The foster carer is there to help you develop skills needed to live independently. They will support you in continuing onto further education and looking for a job. Foster carers will be able to give you pocket money and will encourage you to save some of your pocket money for special things.

What is a placement meeting?

A placement meeting is where you, your foster carers, social worker and parents meet to decide how you will be looked after day to day. The placement meeting talks about important things for you, such as the food you like, any medicine you have to take, which members of your family you will see and when (these are your “contact arrangements”) your school, and so on. Everything is written down so your foster carers can get to know you and the best way to look after you. You can ask for a copy too. This meeting is about you and what you need; you should say what you like and what you don’t like.



What about rules?

There are rules at each foster home, which keep everyone safe and make sure everyone is treated fairly. These might be about what time is bedtime, what time you should come in, using the computer or anything else. Your social worker and the foster carers will explain to you what the 'house rules' are, during the placement meeting and it is important that you know what they

There are rules for foster carers too:

Foster carers are **ALLOWED TO:**

- Tell you off if you do something wrong
- Ground you for a while, or stop your pocket money or take away your treats if you behave in an inappropriate way
- Give you a 'time out'
- Set an earlier time for you to come in from being with your friends

When your friends break the rules in their homes, you will find these things happen to them as well.

Foster Carers are **NOT ALLOWED TO:**

- Physically hurt you, hit, kick or punch you
- Take away your food
- Lock you in your room
- Take away your clothes or shoes
- Stop you from seeing your family, when it is agreed you can (these are your agreed contact arrangements. If you are not sure what your contact arrangements are, ask your social worker)

What is a review?

Reviews are meetings which must be held for all young people who are looked after. Reviews are to agree the plan for you and to make sure everyone is keeping to the care plan.

Reviews are also to see whether everyone thinks the right things are being done for you and to change anything that needs to be changed.

You will have regular reviews while you are in foster care which will be chaired by your **Independent Reviewing Officer** (IRO). You will be told who your IRO is.

It is really important that the review hears what you think and the best way is for you to go to your reviews. If you don't feel you want to go it will be important that you let your IRO or your social worker know what you think ahead of the meeting.

What happens if you are unhappy?

As we said at the beginning, this is likely to be a difficult and upsetting time for you, because of everything that has happened and all the changes. It is not surprising if you feel scared, angry or upset. Lots of young people going through what you are going through will feel the same.

The most important thing is to find someone you trust and talk to them about how you feel. This might be your social worker, your foster carer, a teacher or school nurse. You can ask your social worker to explain what is happening and to go over things you do not understand. Your social worker must listen to what you have to say, and you can ask to make sure they are taking it into account.

If anyone has harmed or hurt you in any way tell someone straight away.



Family Futures also have a **complaints procedure**. It is okay to make a complaint and when you do we must try to sort things out quickly.

If the complaint is to do with fostering in the beginning Family Futures would try to sort things out. That may be done by the supervising social worker. If we could not sort it out we would either get a manager from Family Futures to look at it or we would get someone who does not work for Family Futures do it. They would listen to everyone and tell Family Futures what they found out and how things might be put right.

If it was still not okay we would get 3 people who do not work for Family Futures to look at everything that had happened so far and say if they think the right action had been taken or more could be done.

Finally if you are still unhappy you can contact Ofsted:

OFSTED Chief Inspector
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231
E-mail: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Commissioner for England spends lots of time listening to what children and young people have to say about how they are looked after. You can contact them at:

Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0800 528 0731

E-mail: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Child Line

This is the free 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. You can call the Helpline on 0800 1111 about any problem, at any time day or night or visit

www.childline.org.uk

If you are worried or have a problem these people can help:

Your foster carer:.....

Telephone:.....

Your foster carer's supervising social worker at Family Futures:

Telephone:.....

E-mail:.....

The bosses at Family Futures are:

Jay Vaughan: Jay@familyfutures.co.uk

Sue Hughes: Sue@familyfutures.co.uk

Your social worker.....

Telephone:.....

E-mail:.....

Your Independent Reviewing Officer is:.....

Telephone:.....

Sometimes children like to speak to somebody who does not work for social services or Family Futures. These people are called **independent advocates**. If you would like to talk to an independent advocate, you can ask your foster carer, your social worker, your Independent Reviewing Officer, or someone from Family Futures and we will arrange this for you.

Our message to children and young people in foster care



Family Futures

Family Futures will:

- Find you a foster family who can provide the kind of care you need.
- Help your foster carer to give you the best care available.
- Talk to your social worker and your foster carer to make sure you get the help you need.
- Work with any other people involved in your life, to ensure we all do what is best for you.
- Talk with you and listen to what you have to say about what you want to happen in your life.
- Deal with any complaint you have about your care quickly and thoroughly.

Family Futures would like to hear from you if you have any complaints or ideas about how we can improve what our foster carers do for children and young people like you.

You can phone us on **020 7354 4161**, or e-mail us at the addresses on the previous page, or you can fill in the form on the next page and send it to us at:

Family Futures,
440a Hornsey Rd,
London,
N19 4EB

Complaints /Ideas form

Your Name:.....

Your Foster Carers Names:.....

What you are unhappy about:

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What you think could improve what we do:

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NOTES

Please use this page to write anything else you want to remember or to tell somebody that isn't with you when you are looking through this booklet

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Family Futures



Family Futures CIC, 440a Hornsey Rd, London, N19 4EB

T: 020 7354 4161 E: contact@familyfutures.co.uk

www.familyfutures.co.uk