

# YOUNG PERSONS GUIDE



*The concept of this guide is to inform and communicate with young people using mobile phone / laptop imagery. This use of media imagery will help young people to connect and engage with this guide.*



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## **A Guide to Foster Care for Young People.**

This booklet has been created by us the Ivy House Team for you to answer some of the questions you may have about living away from home with a foster family.

### **Ivy House Team will work hard to make sure that:**

- You understand why you are living with a foster family.
- We listen to what you say and want to happen.
- You feel supported.
- You feel happy and well.
- You do things that you enjoy.
- You have all the help you need to do well at school and do the best you can.



## **WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?**

Fostering gives you a stable family life with foster carers in their homes when you cannot live with your own family or other relatives. Foster carers are ordinary people who care for you and want to share their home with you. They don't want to replace your family. Foster carers homes are safe and comfortable and you will always be made to feel welcome.

## **THERE ARE THREE MAIN TYPES OF FOSTERING.**

**Support Fostering.** Support or short break Fostering families will look after you sometimes for days or maybe weeks. They are families that care for lots of different Young People at different times.

**Short-term fostering** where you will live with a foster family until permanent decisions are made about where you will live in the future. Your fostering family will help support you to say where you would like to live.

**Long-term fostering** this is when children or young people live with a foster family for a long time usually until they have grown up and are ready to live independently. Long term foster families will help you feel good about yourself and succeed in life. They will help you make good choices for your future.



## **REASONS FOR LIVING WITH A FOSTER FAMILY**

- Sometimes a young person may ask for help because they are having a difficult time at home, they might talk to a teacher, a friend a neighbour or call someone for help.
- Sometimes a young person's family may ask for help because they are unable to care for their children, maybe because of their health or maybe they are struggling to cope or unable to keep their children safe and well.
- Sometimes a friend, neighbour, teacher, youth worker etc. might contact a social worker because they are worried that a young person, they know is not safe, not happy or not being looked after properly and are worried about you.
- If a concern has been raised by someone a social worker may visit your home and discuss this with you and your family and talk about what they can do to help. This may include your family agreeing that you live with a foster family until the problem is sorted out and decisions made about where you are going to live.
- If things at home are serious and worrying a Social Worker may discuss your safety with a judge in court and the judge will give their opinion as to what they think should happen and who you should live with.

- This might mean that you live with foster carers until your family are able to look after you again or they may decide that you stay in foster care until you are aged 18 years or older.



## **KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

You will hear us use the word “Contact or Family Time” and this means keeping in touch with your family. We know that for everyone seeing their family and friends is really important.

Your Social Worker and the Judge at court are the people who plan contact for you. It is important that you talk to your Social Worker about people you want to see and people you don't want to see.

There are different types of contact with family and friends and each is different and individual to you. These include:

- face to face visits.
- outings or trips
- telephone calls,
- emails or letters,
- text messages
- Sleepovers
- exchanging of photos.

Decisions about contact for you will be made with you and your social worker when you first come to live with your fostering family. The judge at court will then make the decision with your social worker about ongoing contact with family and friends

Sometimes other people will be there to support you when you see your family to keep you safe.

We will help you keep in touch with your family and friends and other people who are important to you.

Start to think about and write down here the people that you want to keep in touch with. You can then talk to your Social Worker about the people you want to keep in touch with.

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## **WHO IS INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING AND CARING FOR YOU?**

Your **Family and friends** are very important to you and will continue to be involved in your life. You and your family will be involved in decisions made about your future.

Your **Foster family** will look after you and provide all the things you will need on a daily basis. They will support you to keep healthy and well, go to school or college and support you in your interests and hobbies. They will guide and support you in planning for your future.

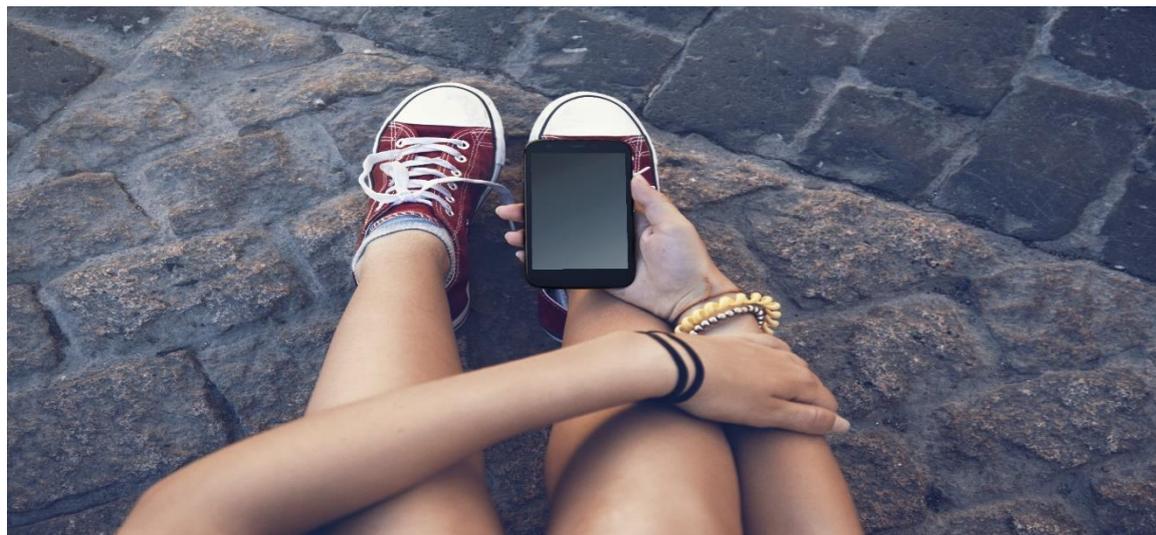
Your **Social Workers** job is to help young people and their families through difficult times. They will visit you often and talk to you alone, listen to your wishes and feelings and discuss what is happening next answering any questions that you have. They will also talk to your family and foster carers.

You and your foster family will also have your own **Supervising Fostering Social Worker** from the **Ivy House Team** who will visit regularly supporting you all.

Your **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)** will visit you with your foster carers and meet with you at your regular Reviews. Their job is to make sure that you are happy where you are living and that you are involved in the planning and decisions about your future.

Your School or College has a **Designated Teacher** who you can go to for help and advice. Their job is to support young people living with foster families and help you succeed with education and training. You will have support to meet with your designated teacher.

Your **Guardian** is a person who works with you to inform court about how you are doing and what you would like to happen with your future care.



## WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?

- **Care Plan-** When you live away from home you will have a Care Plan. The Care Plan makes it clear about what should happen and who is responsible for doing it. This may include you, your family, your social worker and your foster carer. This plan is about you and for you.
- **Reviews-** The review is a meeting to make sure that what is happening in your Care Plan is working. Review meetings are held regularly, and you will always have an opportunity to have your say in these meetings. If you don't want to attend the meetings you can have your say by email / text or by writing your views down.
- **PEP- Personal Education Plan.** – This plan is made with you, your teachers and your social worker to help you gain the support you need in school or College to succeed. This will be regularly updated with you to make sure your getting the best results you can in Education.
- **Independent Reviewing Officer-** The independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will make sure that your Care Plan is set up and that things happen when they are meant to. This person will lead Review meetings and you can speak to your IRO so that your views are heard. Your siblings will have the same IRO as you. The IRO's job is to report what is going well for you and what is not going well for you.
- **Pathway Plan-** When you reach 16 years old (and sometimes earlier) you will start thinking about plans for your future such as college / training / employment / university and your personal goals. Your thoughts wishes and how with support you are going to achieve these will be written in a Pathway Plan document and reviewed with you through your teenage years.
- **Staying Put-** If you and your foster carers decide that living with them is the best thing for you when you reach 18 years old, it can be agreed that you stay

with your foster carers on a Staying Put arrangement until you are ready to leave and move to independence.



### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR FOSTER FAMILY**

- They will welcome you and make you feel part of family life.
- They will listen to your wishes and feelings.
- They will celebrate with you on your birthday and special holidays.
- They will help you go to school or college and help with your learning.
- They will help keep you healthy and provide the food you like.
- They will support you with your hobbies and interests.
- They will help with all your health appointments.
- They will work and support you with your social worker to help you have contact with your family and friends.
- They will keep you safe.
- They will introduce new experiences for you and have fun together.

### **WHAT THEY HOPE FOR YOU**

- That you will be happy, have fun and join in with family life
- That we respect everyone and understand the house rules.
- That everyone can all work together to help each other.
- That you will keep in touch when you are not with them and let them know where you are.
- That you work hard to be the best you can in home school or college.

- That you let them know how you are feeling.



## THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

### Basic House Rules

- Try to be kind and gentle with the family pet.
- Mobile phones and electronic devices to be left downstairs at night to charge.
- No cigarettes /lighters or matches to be stored in bedrooms as a fire safety procedure.
- Make sure that you return home at the agreed time and if you're going to be late please call and let people know.

### School, College or University.

When a young person goes to live with a foster family they usually stay in the same school or College. If you are going to live with your foster family for a long time and your school is far away, you may be able to change to a school or college that is nearer and easier to get to.

If you are not in school or College, your Social Worker will get you a place as soon as possible.

Your Fostering family will support you to join in after school or College activities if you want to as it will give you the chance to learn new skills, make more friends and do the things that you enjoy.

School or College is very important for your future choices in life if you are having trouble with school / College or homework then speak to your Foster family and Social Worker as they are there to help you enjoy and achieve.

## Health

We want to make sure that you can be as healthy as you can both physically and emotionally. When you first go to live with your fostering family you will have a health assessment to discuss with your doctor or nurse any health problems including healthy eating, exercise, smoking, drug and alcohol mis use relationships and sexual health. You will have the opportunity to have a yearly health assessment.

Your fostering family will register you with their local GP, dentist and opticians when you first move in with them. You will then have the opportunity to have regular health checkups and discuss any problems you have or support you may need.

It is important that you feel good about yourself and to do this we will encourage and support you to tell us about how you are feeling (good and not so good) and what we can do to help you.

## Spending Money

Your Foster Carers will give you regular weekly spending money. It's your money to save or spend on things you want.

<b>YOUR MONEY</b>	<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>16-18 years</b>
<b>Weekly Spending money.</b>	<b>£12.00</b>	<b>£15.00</b>

## Money for Clothing

You will get monies from your carer so that you can shop for the clothes that you want to wear.

<b>CLOTHING</b>	<b>11-15 years</b>	<b>16-18 years</b>
<b>Weekly clothing money.</b>	<b>£15.00</b>	<b>£20.00</b>



## KEEPING SAFE

### Bullying

Bullying happens because people

- Do not know it is wrong.
- Copy other people.
- Find it hard to make friends
- May have friends or family who encourage them to bully.
- Are going through a difficult time and can't say how they are feeling.
- May feel envious of other people.

### Bullying is:

- Name calling
- Damaging property
- Stealing things
- Physically hurting someone
- Emotionally hurting someone.
- Lying to get others into trouble
- Threatening and intimidating behaviours.

- If someone bully's you, please tell someone you trust and who are able to help you speak out.
- There are contact numbers for people that can help you at the back of this guide.

## **Cyber bullying**

***The context to this page is screen shots of a mobile phone / text messages to inform on cyber bullying***

	Do	Don't
<b>Emails.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copy and print the information on an email or message.</li> <li>• Report abusive messaging to your social worker, foster carer and/or your service provider.</li> <li>• Only give your number to people you know and trust.</li> <li>• Get permission if you want to post a picture of someone else on the internet.</li> <li>• Only use reliable websites with a privacy policy.</li> <li>• Do share any concerns you have about information shared as soon as possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't reply to the email</li> <li>• Don't keep it to yourself</li> <li>• Don't leave your mobile phone lying about</li> <li>• Don't keep secrets for other people or about other people.</li> <li>• Don't post information or pictures about yourself and others that may make you feel uncomfortable.</li> </ul>
<b>Text messages</b>		
<b>Instant messages</b>		
<b>Blogs</b>		
<b>Websites</b>		
<b>Mobile phones</b>		



## **YOUR RIGHTS**

- You have a right to be part of a loving, safe fostering family where you will be given support to develop your own identity and interests.
- You have a right to see your family and friends.
- You have a right to see your Social Worker.
- You have a right to privacy. Your room is your space.
- You have a right to be listened to.
- You have a right to express your opinions
- You have a right to attend your Reviews. This is a good time to have your say about decisions that affect you.
- You have a right to be kept safe
- You have a right to know why you are in Foster care.
- You have a right to be involved in all decisions about your life.
- You have a right to receive pocket monies
- You have a right to receive clothing monies.
- You have a right to complain.
- You have a right to have access to your Social Care files at the age of 18 years.
- You have a right to celebrate.



## COMPLAINTS OR CONGRATULATIONS

All young people living with foster families have a right to make a complaint and should do this if they are not happy with something, equally if things are going really well for you and your foster family and you have things you want to celebrate let us know.

You can complain or congratulate by telephone, in writing, email, by text or in person. You can speak to your social worker, foster carer, IRO or anyone else you know and trust who you know can help you pass the complaint or praise on.

### CONTACT DETAILS FOR ORGANISATIONS THAT CAN HELP YOU.

Katie Duffield is the Complaints and Congratulations Manager. You can contact her on: **01909 512168** or email her [katie@ivyhousefostering.co.uk](mailto:katie@ivyhousefostering.co.uk). Or write to her at Ivy House Fostering, Coach Close, Shireoaks, Worksop, Nottinghamshire S818AP

**The Children's Commissioner for England** is called Anne Longfield you can contact her at:

The office for the Children's Commissioner

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT.

T: 0207 78 38 330

W:

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

## **Childline**

This is a free 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK, ChildLine is confidential and is staffed by counsellors.

T: 0800 1111

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

## **Ofsted**

Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England:

Piccadilly Gate

Store Road

Manchester

M1 2WD

## **NSPCC**

The NSPCC will offer help and advice, if you are worried about yourself or someone else the helpline is open 24 hours a day:

T: 0808 0800 500 0

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

## **Corum Voice**

This is advice for children and young people in care or leaving care:

Corum Voice

Gregory House

Corum Campus

49, Meckleburgh Square

London

WC1N 2QA

T: 0808 800 5792

E: [help@corumvoice.co.uk](mailto:help@corumvoice.co.uk)

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

## **Frank**

Drug and alcohol advise and support:

Text:82111

T: 0800 123 6600

W: talktofrank.com

### **National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)**

Helpline, information, advice and advocacy for children and young people to ensure their rights are upheld.

T: 0800 8081001

E: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

NYAS Head Office

Tower House

Tower Road

Birkenhead

Wirral

CH41 1FF

### **Help at Hand**

Office for the Children's Rights Director

Offer confidential help and advice about being in care, leaving care, living away from home or working with social services. They make sure that your rights are upheld.

E: [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

T: 0800 528 0731



**Use this space to note down any additional phone numbers such as:**

Your Family contact number is:

Your Friends numbers are:

Your Social Workers number is:

Your Independent reviewing officers Number is:

Your Foster families phone number is:

Your Ivy House social worker is:

Your GP'S number is:

Your Dentists Number is:

Your Opticians Number is:



## FEEDBACK FROM YOU

Your Name:

Did you find this handbook useful?

Do you understand your rights and allowances?

Do you understand how to complain if you need to?

Do you know how to tell us when things are going well?

Can you tell us what would make this guide better and more useful for you and other young people to use?

Sig:

Date:

**Please return this page to Ivy House Fostering Agency Supervising Social Worker or you could post it to Ivy House Fostering Agency, The Turbine Business Centre, 46D Coach Close, Shireoaks, Worksop S81 8A**

