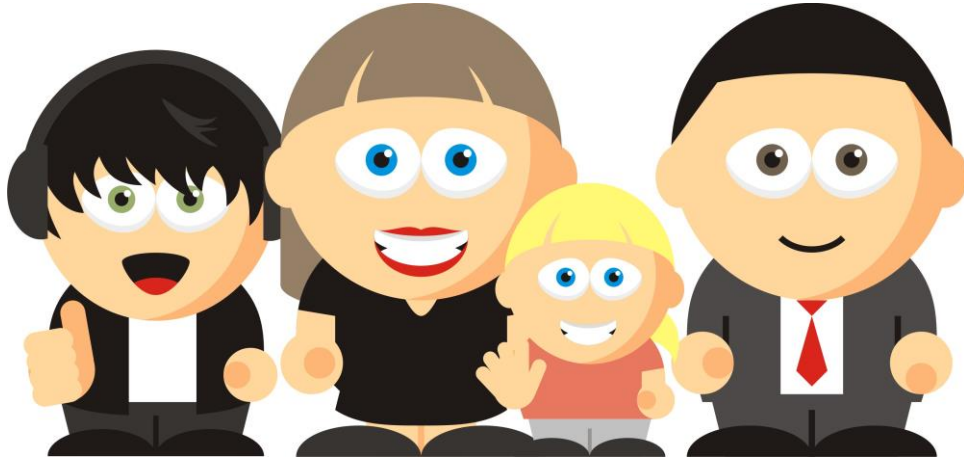


What is Foster Care?



A Guide for Younger Children



Hello!

This booklet tells you about foster care, what to expect and what help you can get.

Foster carers will do all they can to help you feel safe and cared for while you are away from your family. They will listen to what you want and help you stay in touch with your family and friends.

Moving to your Foster Carers



You may have lots of different feelings when you move to your foster carer's home and this is normal.

Tell your foster carer how you feel. They want to help you feel safe, secure and comfortable.

What to expect when you are in foster care

You have the right...

- Not to be spoken to in a nasty or hurtful way, or be hurt in any way
- Not to be made to feel bad about yourself



- To feel safe and comfortable.
- To be helped to keep in touch with all important people in your life unless we think that contact may be unsafe for you. Sometimes someone has to be with you when you meet with family (called supervised contact).

- To be offered the right sort of play activities



- To be talked to and listened to about plans or decisions made about you and be helped with talking about your wishes and feelings



- To make a complaint. You can do this yourself or get someone to do this for you. This will be sorted out quickly.
- To ask for, or contact an Advocate for advice and support. There is more information about them later in the booklet.

What about School?

Going to school is very important. We want you to stay at the same school, and a taxi may be needed to get you there. If you cannot stay at the same school, we will help you settle into a new one. Your foster carers will go with you to meet the teachers and help you with any problems.



We have a special team of people to help you and your carers with school work, they are called Education Support for Looked After Children (ESLAC). You will meet the person from the team who supports you at your Personal Education Planning meeting in school.

You or your carers can contact ESLAC at any time, just telephone **01670 810433**

Please ask your foster carers, social worker , teacher or ESLAC support worker if you are not sure of anything.

What about my Family and Friends?

The social worker and foster carers will make a plan with you and your family about when and how you see each other. You may also be able to phone.



You may want to be in touch with other people e.g. a friend or neighbour.

Tell your foster carer what you want - it is important to make the right sort of plan.

What about my Health?



In foster care, you will be able to get all the care and treatment that you need. Your foster carer will go with you to visit the doctor, the dentist and the optician to make sure you are healthy and developing properly. They will look after you when you are ill, and listen to you when you are upset or unhappy.

Who makes sure people are looking after me properly and are planning for my future?

You will have an Independent Reviewing Officer who will make sure that there are proper plans for your future and that meetings are held to talk about this. They will want to get to know you and listen to your views.

You can phone them on: 01670 624888

Not Happy with your Foster Carers or Social Worker?

If you are worried about something and don't want to speak to your foster carer or social worker, there are other people such as teachers who can help. Or you can ring Client Relations or the Advocacy Service.



Let us know how you feel!
Client Relations

If you feel you are not being treated fairly by someone you should tell your foster carer, social worker, or get in touch with the Client Relations Team who will do their best to sort things out

quickly or help with any complaints you have. You can contact them by calling:

0800 373615 or email
client.relations@northumberland.gov.uk

Advocacy

Advocates are there to help if you feel like you are not being listened to or need help to get your views across. You can contact them on

01670 629297 or email
voicesmakingchoices@northumberland.gov.uk

Family Support & Placement Service - What is it?

Each foster carer has been checked to make sure they are safe to look after children and they have a Supervising Fostering Social Worker who is in touch with them to make sure



everything is ok. OFSTED checks that the Fostering Service is doing this job properly.

There are all sorts of foster carers - some look after children in an emergency, some keep them for a very long time, others have children for a short period of time e.g. at weekends.

All children have their own plan for their stay in foster care. If you don't know about your placement plan and what is in it, ask your social worker or foster carer.



Useful Contacts:

Your foster carer can help you with contacting these people:

Fostering Manager

Family Placement Service

3 Esther Court, Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington, NE63 8AP

Tel: 01670 62 62 62

Director of Children's Services

County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF

Tel: 0845 600 6400

Client Relations

County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF

Tel: 01670 623978



Advocacy Service

Tel: **01670 629297** or Email:
voicesmakingchoices@northumberland.gov.uk

OFSTED

If you want to make a complaint or have a concern about the Fostering Service

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Tel: **0300 1231231** (08.00 am to 6.00 pm)

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street

Manchester, M1 2WD

Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street

London, SW1P 3BT

Tel: **0800 528 0731**

Web: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk