

The Right Side of Care

In Care Fostering for you

The leaflets in this pack have been developed with children and young people from Wirral to give you some information when you first become looked after. You can also visit our website for children looked after, young people and care leavers: www.therightsideofcare.com

Hello and welcome to fostering

This booklet will help you find out about us and the people you can talk to for help, complaints and questions while you are here.

If you want to know about anything that is not in this leaflet you can ask:

- Your foster carers
- Your social worker
- Anyone from Children's Services

What is fostering?

Foster carers look after children and young people who need somewhere to live for a while that is not with their own family.

Even if you are in foster care for a short time, it can be difficult but do not worry; your foster family will make you feel welcome and safe and treat you as if you are part of their family.

The fostering service tries to find foster carers who are the best people to look after you.

The service checks all foster carers to make sure they are suitable before deciding that they can look after children and young people. Some foster carers have only just started to foster and others have fostered children for many years.

Your foster carers get support and training from the fostering service. They have their own supervising social worker who visits them regularly to make sure they are OK. They have a review every year to make sure they can carry on fostering.

Your foster carers have a handbook given to them by the Fostering Service that helps them to know what they should do to be good carers.

When the fostering service was looking for a foster family for you, they thought about what you need such as:

- being able to stay at the same school
- being near to your family and friends

They try and find foster carers that will help you carry on doing things that are important to you such as:

- clubs
- groups you are a member of
- religious activities that you take part in

Wirral fostering aim

Our aim is to make sure you are well looked after.

We think this means:

- Keeping you healthy
- Keeping you safe
- Helping you with school
- Letting you have fun and enjoy being you
- Making new friends
- Staying in touch with people you care about
- Asking what you think - and listening to you
- Helping you stay out of trouble

We do this by:

- Finding the best foster carers for you
- Checking foster carers are suitable to look after children
- Supervising your foster carer and giving them advice and training.
- Work with you, your foster carer and your family to make decisions about your future.

We want you to tell us how we can do this better.

We hope you will contact us if there is anything that you would like to share with us.

Our phone number is **0151 666 4616**.

Different kinds of fostering

Short term

Some foster families care for children for a few weeks or a few months. This is called short term fostering and is normally used to give the child's family a chance to sort themselves out.

Long term

Some children and young people may live in foster care for longer. This means that they will stay with the chosen foster family for a long time because they can't go home for different reasons and living in a foster family is best for them.

Respite Care / Short Breaks

Sometimes children and young people, especially disabled children who need a lot of special care, have short breaks away from their home. These children and young people stay with a foster family for a few hours or a few days every so often and then go back home.

Who decides what happens to me?

You, your parents, your foster carer and your social worker will have review meetings to decide what is best for you but everyone has to listen to how you are feeling and what you want as well.

Sometimes it might feel like other people are deciding what will happen to you but they are there to try and help you. You will be asked to come to these meetings and tell everyone how you feel but if you don't feel comfortable doing this, talk to your social worker and they will do this for you. An advocate could also help you. They work for you and only you and will speak on your behalf if you need them to.

Your foster carer's supervising social worker

Your foster carer will have a supervising social worker who helps them to help you. They will sometimes look at your bedroom, your clothes and look round the house to make sure it is safe for you to live in.

Your carer's supervising social worker will keep talking to your social worker and to people concerned with your health and your education.

This is so that everyone knows what is happening and what you need.

If you have any questions you can ask the supervising social worker when you see them - or you can call them if you like. They will definitely want to know what you think of your foster family, and what you like doing, what you like to eat, and anything else you want to tell us about. They will ask you while you live with your foster carers and when you leave.

**If you want to contact your foster carers supervising social worker or one of the team managers in the fostering service telephone:
0151 666 4616**

Education

Foster carers will help you do your best in school, and will help you with your homework. They will help you if you have any worries about something in school and they will also go to your school open evenings, plays and sports days.

There will also be a teacher at your school called a '**designated teacher**'. This is someone who wants to listen to you, knows you, helps to get the best for you and is **ALWAYS** on your side, no matter what.

Make sure you know who they are and speak to them about any problems or worries - **it's their job to help you.**

What will it be like living with my foster carer?

It is a foster carer's job to look after you and keep you in a safe, warm house.

They will make you feel like part of their family as long as you live with them. Your foster carer will make sure that you:

- Have your own bed to sleep in
- Have somewhere to keep your belongings safe
- Have enough food to eat, which is appropriate for your culture or religion
- Have clean clothes to wear
- Can go to see a doctor if you are poorly
- Can go to church or other place of worship if you want to
- Receive pocket money
- Are supported to do things you enjoy and are important to you

Activities and holidays

Fun activities in and outside the home will be encouraged, arranged and supported by foster carers.

You can tell your carers what you like doing and what you would like to do. Your foster carer will help you carry on doing things you like and support you to try new things. If you are a member of a club, such as Judo, swimming, football team, dance group or another out of school club, we will ask your carers to take you and pick you up.

Bullying

Bullying is being threatened, name calling, pinching, hitting, pulling hair or something done to you which is meant to upset you, or if you mean to upset someone else.

- If you feel that you are being bullied at school please talk to a teacher you like.
- You can always phone or talk to your social worker about school or life in your foster home.
- If you are still not happy ask your foster carer, or social worker how you can complain.
- If you feel that you are being bullied, please tell your foster Carer, teacher, social worker or someone that you trust.

There is a complaints leaflet that also provides you with some advice and guidance.

Will I be able to do anything I want?

Probably not. Your foster carers have to promise to keep you safe. That means they might not always let you do what you want to.

Everywhere has rules. There are rules about how we treat each other, rules about listening to each other, rules about keeping safe and taking care.

Rules

What rules do your carers have? You could write them down here to help you remember:



Questions

Here are some of the questions children ask about being in foster care. If you have other questions please ask us and we will tell you as much as we can.

You can write the questions and answers in the spaces on the next page. Don't forget that your social worker will be visiting you and you can ask them things too.

 **Question:**

What do I call my foster carers?

 **Answer:**

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

 **Question:**

When can I see my family again?

 **Answer:**

This is a very important question but the answer is not the same for everyone. Your social worker will talk to you and your family about arrangements for you to see them. Your foster carers will help with this as much as they can.

My Questions



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Information I need to keep

My name:

My foster carer's name:

Address:

My phone number:

Social worker's name:

Social worker's phone number:

My important phone numbers:

My advocate:

The person I would speak to in school:

Things that are important to me:

There are lots of people who want to help you, so make sure you talk to them! Ask your social worker or foster carer to help you with this.

By talking things through with your foster carer, your social worker, and your family, you'll not only feel better but you'll also help them understand you better. And by listening to their point of view as well, you can all work together to find ways to make life easier.

What if I feel sad or lonely?

Expressing your emotions is very important but there are good ways to express yourself: talking to a friend, listening to or making music or writing a journal.

There are some not so good ways too, like: yelling at someone, smashing things or running away.

Talking to someone about how you feel won't make the feelings go away but it will make you feel a lot better, and it will help other people understand how you feel as well.

Who can I talk to about this?

There are lots of people you can talk to about how you're feeling you could talk to: your foster carer, your social worker, your friends, your family or to a teacher / tutor.

There are also phone lines you can call to talk to someone about how you're feeling. They can give advice about all kinds of things and you say is confidential. Have a look on the back of this leaflet for some of the numbers.

Some useful contact numbers

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Childrens Commissioner for England

Tel: 020 7783 8330
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Childrens and Young People's Participation and Engagement Team

Tel: 0151 678 1936
Mobile: 07799 861 764

Childrens Complaints Officer

Tel: 0151 666 5677

Bullybusters

Tel: 0800 169 6928
www.bullybusters.org.uk

Ofsted

Tel: 0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Wirral Council Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT)

Tel: 0151 606 1008

Wirral Council Emergency Duty Team:

Tel: 0151 677 6557