



# It's all about you

## Your guide to Fostering People



**fosteringpeople**  
let's change lives together

Consistently  
Outstanding  
since 2013



## Hi there, we're Fostering People

So...you might be feeling nervous, and not know much right now but that's okay, we've got you covered. Have a read of this guide, we know it's a bit long, but it'll make things so much easier to understand and you'll know all about us and what we do by the end of it. If there is anything you don't understand, do ask either your foster parent or us and we'll do all we can to help.

In your guide, you'll read about these:

- Who we are and how we support children and young people
- Who your team at Fostering People are and how they'll support you
- What to expect in your foster placement
- What you say matters
- Important phone numbers and addresses

At Fostering People, we are a friendly team and we just want what is best for you. Everyone is different and all of the young people we place are different and all of the young people we place in foster care come from different backgrounds, and all have a different story, just like you.

Our goal is for you to be happy and enjoy your time with the foster parents you stay with, but it's normal to miss home or to be feeling upset at the start, or even if you've been there a while. If you ever need someone to talk to you can speak to one of us whenever you need.

We are separate to Children's Services and will never judge you or make your life harder, we want to make it better, so here's a little bit about us:

- We find our own foster parent
- We have our own social workers who will support you and your foster parents
- We have our own groups, get togethers and meetings so you can have your say



**You**  
Page 3

**Kidszone**  
Page 4

**All about us**  
Page 5

**Social Workers**  
Page 6

**Your life**  
Page 8

**Be healthy**  
Page 8

**Be safe**  
Page 13

**Your placement**  
Page 20

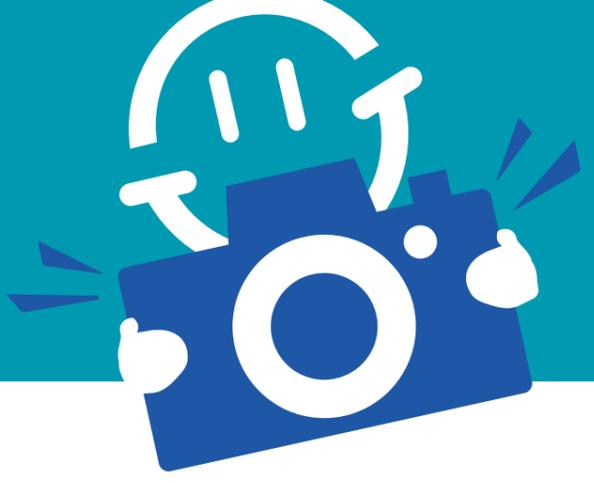
**Be prepared for your future**  
Page 30

**Your voice**  
Page 34

**Address telephone numbers**  
Page 34

**Complaints procedure**  
Page 38

# You



**My name**

**My foster parents**

**My address**

**Telephone number**

**My mobile number**

**My e-mail address**

**My local authority social worker**

**Their phone number is**

**Name of Independent reviewing officer**

**Their contact details are**





# Kidzone

**Kidzone is a website just for young people in Fostering People. You can access it at any time at:**  
[www.fosteringpeople.co.uk/kidzone](http://www.fosteringpeople.co.uk/kidzone)

This site has lots of information to make sure that your stay with Fostering People and your foster parents be as good as it can be. There is lots of information to help you find activities that interest you. There is also information about activities being held by Fostering People just for you.

The site also has lots of ways in which you can become involved in what we do, so you can help us to make any changes possible to make life better for young people in foster care within Fostering People.

Via this website, you can get in contact with us at any time, if you have any worries, or just want to let us know something great has happened, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

Your safety, health and happiness is extremely important to us and you'll find information available on the website to help you stay safe, especially online, including some really useful films, so it's not all reading!



# all about us

## Statement of Purpose

The Statement of Purpose is a booklet we have put together that tells the world everything about us. It will help you, your foster parents and children's services to understand what we do.

The Statement of Purpose tells you:

- Who we are and where we came from
- What we do for you
- Who our staff are
- How we find the right foster parents for you
- How we train and support our foster parents
- How we make sure our foster parents are doing a good job
- Different types of fostering placements we have
- The numbers of foster children and foster parents we have
- How you can complain if you need to

We have included a lot of the information from the Statement of Purpose in this guide. We did you a favour and took most of the boring bits out, but if you want your own copy, just ask us and we'll give you one or you can download a copy from our website:

[www.fosteringpeople.co.uk](http://www.fosteringpeople.co.uk)

## Your Team

Your team are the people who make sure you enjoy your stay with us. Your team are:

- You
- Your Foster Parent(s)
- Local Authority Social Worker
- Fostering People Supervising Social Worker (for you and your foster family)
- Respite Foster Parents (somewhere you can stay for a break)



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Statement of Purpose





# Social workers

## Local authority social workers

Local authority social workers are the people that support you.

Every child or young person who goes into foster care has a social worker (this is the law).

Imagine your social worker as your friend, you can talk to them about anything. They'll answer any of your questions and they'll keep you up to date on everything that is happening.

It's the law that your social worker visits you within 1 week after you go to live with your foster parent.

Then they should visit you again at least every 6 weeks for the first year. It could be less often after that; they will talk to you about that at the time.

You can ring or email your social worker whenever you need to.

Your social worker will make sure you're ok and well looked after.

They'll speak for you at meetings.

Some other jobs they have are:

- Find the right home for you and talk to you about it.
- Take you to visit your foster home before you move in
- Take you to your new foster home when you move in
- Make a formal agreement on your behalf, which is called the 'Foster Placement Agreement'
- Make a plan for you while you live with your foster parents
- Tell you how to complain if you need to.
- Visit you regularly and give you their number and email address.
- Have meetings to talk about how you're getting on in your placement.

If you aren't happy, your Social Worker will talk to us for you and we'll help you.

Your social worker will make plans with you for leaving your foster home, whether you're going back home, moving somewhere else or leaving care when you're old enough.

## Supervising social worker (SSW)

At Fostering People, we'll try to find the right match for you, but your foster parents won't be like Supernanny and they won't have all of the answers, so they need support too. A Supervising social worker is the person who supports them, and makes sure they are doing a good job in caring for you.

The Fostering People SSW will:

- Speak with our foster parents about children and young people who may need to live with them
- Be there if needed, when you first meet your foster parents
- Help you move into your foster home
- Meet your foster parents regularly to make sure they are doing ok. They'll help your foster parents if they need help.
- Attend meetings set by your local authority social worker

Our supervising social workers will talk to you on your own sometimes, but this is nothing to be wary of, they want to know if you're happy. If you aren't happy or have any questions, please be honest and say something, they'll help sort it out for you.



# Be healthy



It's really important to stay healthy and we want you to protect your health. You can talk to a doctor, dentist or optician whenever you need to.

Every year we'll make sure you have a medical test, this will make sure that you're fit and well.

If you're younger than 16, your parents or the local authority will need to give us permission for this to happen.

When you're 16 or older, you can choose whether you want any medical treatment or not. If you have any problems about this, just talk to your foster parent or social worker, they'll help you.

We don't want anything bad to happen to you, which is why we want you to make positive choices for yourself.

So:

- We'll encourage you to be responsible in your sexual life and make suitable choices
- We'll encourage you to protect yourself and others, emotionally and physically
- We'll provide you with the chance to seek information and advice on drugs, alcohol and solvent abuse if you need it. Just let us know, we're always here to help.

## Hygiene and Personal Care

Personal cleanliness is an important part of life and your foster parents will want you to look after your personal hygiene. They'll make sure you have everything you need (toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant).

They might let you pick these, just let them know when you need more.

You might not like certain foods, or have a special diet. If you go shopping with your foster parents, they'll know what to get you.

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## Drugs

You might know already that drugs are very powerful. There are many different kinds, some are illegal and some are not. Legal drugs or prescriptions are there to help you; just be careful that you follow medical advice and ensure your foster parent keeps these for you. Illegal drugs change the way you think, feel and act and there's no guarantee how it'll affect your body, it can all depend how you're feeling when you take them.

People talk about being 'high' on drugs, but this doesn't mean it's fun. Being 'high' and experiencing 'lows' can be scary, and they can affect you afterwards, damaging your brain and damaging your organs.

If you want to know more about the effects of drugs, we totally get that you might not want to talk to us or your foster parents about this so here is a website you can look at:

### FRANK

FRANK is the government's national drug agency for young people. It has a 24 hour advice line for young people and the website is filled with lots of facts on all sorts of drugs. You can live chat with them online, give them a call or email them and they'll be there to help you.

**Website:** <http://www.talktofrank.com/>

**Email:** <http://www.talktofrank.com/contact>

**Phone number:** 0300 123 6600



## Safe Sex and HIV/AIDS

**Sex is a healthy and normal part of life. People often use sex as a way to share their feelings and show warmth and tenderness for each other.**

Sex also can create powerful emotional and physical feelings. You might have heard a lot of stories but in this country, most people wait until they feel comfortable and mature enough to handle these feelings before starting sexual relationships.

There are many different ways that people choose to have sex in their lives:

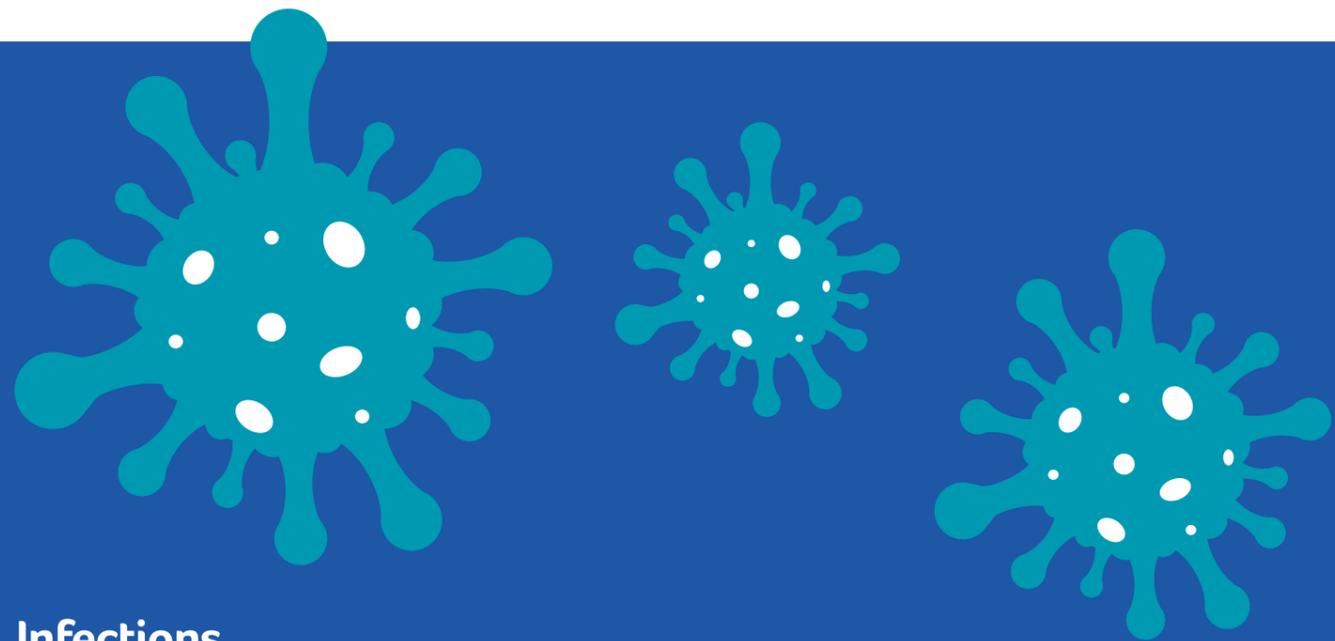
- Some people choose to have sex without being in a steady relationship
- Some choose to make sex part of a long term relationship
- Some people are attracted to members of the same sex and have sexual relationships with them
- Some people choose not to have sexual relationships at all
- Some people find their first experiences are not as they thought they would be

Whatever your personal situation is, make sure you make the right and positive choices that are best for you.



### The law specifies age limits to having sex:

- The age of consent to sex is 16 for both men and women. This is regardless of whether this is with a man or woman. So we would advise you to wait until you are at least 16.
- If you are 16 years or older you should not have sex with someone younger than 16 because this is against the law.
- Anyone who is in a 'position of trust' who is over 18, is committing an offence if they have sexual intercourse or engage in sexual activity with a young person aged 16 or 17 in their care.



### Infections

There are lots of different infections you can get or pass on through sex. There are some pretty simple ways to stop it happening. There are so many places you can get advice on how to protect yourself, try your local chemist, doctor's surgery, school or college, and of course, you can always ask your Fostering People team.

### Do you know of any sexual transmitted infections?

You might have heard of HIV. Once it's in your body, the infection can develop over time and damage your immune system, which leads to AIDS.

HIV can be passed from one person to another through sex if you don't use condoms.

HIV can also be passed through other people's blood by sharing needles, syringes or other injecting equipment.

HIV is not passed through everyday contact, like shaking hands or hugging.

There are ways you can protect yourself. If you ever want to speak to somebody about any sexually transmitted infections, or diseases or want information on contraception and safe sex, you can speak to your family, foster parents, social workers, your school/college nurse, teacher or family planning service.

# Staying safe

## Bullying

So you're probably thinking, why should I tell someone if I'm being bullied, because it can just make things worse, it'll make me look weak and even more of a target, then they'll bully me more.

Bullying happens everywhere, not just in school, so there are so many people in the world that understand what it feels like to be bullied, and at Fostering People we'll help you if you're ever bullied.

If you're being bullied by your foster parent or anyone looking after you it is important that you tell your own social worker or your Fostering People supervising social worker to get help and make sure the bullying stops.



If you are being bullied, we understand how you're feeling. You wake up in the morning and don't want to go to school or college, you might feel like there's nobody to talk to and that nobody understands.

Bullying can be anything from someone in the classroom saying horrible things, calling you names or making you feel isolated. It can even be your friends turning against you, and violence.

Foster parents can get to know you well, and will know there's something up, even if they don't know what it is exactly.

People who bully others are suffering in their own way, and they deal with it by making others feel bad, so they don't know have to think about what's upsetting them.

Social media plays a huge role in society today, and bullying happens on WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and many others. You can tell your teacher, foster parent, social worker or friend if you're being bullied.

If you want any information on bullying, Childline is a great website for young people to look at, you can call and message them at anytime, anywhere.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/searchpage/?query=bullying>



# Internet & Mobile Phone Safety

**Everything is available online and most of the population use their mobile phones or the internet to keep in touch with their friends, family and people around the world.**

You can go on YouTube and watch a video, or go to Instagram to see what celebrities are saying on the other side of the world.

They are great for those things, but some people use their phones and the internet to commit offences. You must be careful of these people.

Strangers can use the internet and phones to get your personal information. If the wrong people find out this information, they can do all sorts with it.

The internet is great for sharing photos and stories with your friends, but make sure you know who sees them.

Sharing intimate photos or texts with strangers can lead to things like harassment.

The internet is a great tool, but use it for the right reasons.



Visit the Kidszone website to watch videos to help you stay safe when using the internet.  
[www.fosteringpeople.co.uk/kidszone](http://www.fosteringpeople.co.uk/kidszone)



## Safeguarding/ child Protection

We have to know that you're safe, it's really important to us that we do everything we can to give you a safe life at home.

Everyone at Fostering People has a responsibility to make sure you're safe and not suffering any type of abuse. If any abuse allegations are made, then children's services have to take it seriously and investigate, sometimes with the police.

If you're being abused by anybody, in any way, you must speak to an adult that you trust (your foster parents, social worker or your teacher).

They'll always take you seriously and listen to you. Take a deep breath and take your time to talk about what you're going through.

The adult you trust that you told will then be able to do something about it. You'll both have to agree on what you'll do next, but you have to know that for the abuse to stop, they'll probably have to tell somebody else about the abuse, to make sure you're safe and protected.

## Young people and the Law

Don't keep quiet or hide away if you're a victim of crime.

- You can speak to your foster parents, sometimes it helps when you're not related to somebody when you talk about your problems.
- Tell the police
- If you need more support, there are support groups you can look into.

Here's a website you can use to call somebody and get advice.

<https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>

If you've been hurt or injured (in anyway - physically, emotionally, sexually) as a result of a crime you could be entitled to compensation from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

You can find more info on this from the police and children's services. You might need legal support and advice if you decide to apply.



# Education

### All children between 4 and 18 must have education .

This is the same for foster children. It's important that you go to a school that is right for you, and that you're treated fairly.

We'll try to keep you at the school you're already at when you move in with your foster family. However, sometimes this doesn't happen, because you might have moved too far away. We all understand how hard it is to start a new school and make new friends, so we'll try to find a school that's right for you. We want to know how you're feeling about your school,

and if you have any worries, talk to us, there's always somebody that will listen.

Most young people go to school full time, this means Monday - Friday.

Sometimes though, foster children might not go to school for certain reasons.

If you've been excluded, your foster parents can try to get you back into school or move you to another school that you choose. We don't make this choice for you, you and your team will talk about it and choose what's best for you.



# Disabled children & young people

**Being disabled shouldn't stop you from enjoying life. You should be given the same opportunities, like taking part in sports, travelling to different places and get into buildings with no problems.**

If you're being bullied, don't keep quiet, you must tell your foster parents or social worker to get

help. There are plenty of support groups you can talk to.

Always remember, it's your choice how you want to deal with things, so always tell people what you want to do.

If you aren't disabled yourself, always remember that people with a disability can be hurt by being treated unfairly. Make sure you treat people with a disability with respect and kindness, just like everyone else.



# Religion, race & culture

**Your foster parents will respect your religious or spiritual beliefs. They'll make sure you have the chance to continue any religious or cultural things you do while they are looking after you.**

Whatever your race, religion or culture, your foster parents will make sure your needs are met. It's important that you're able to keep any traditions or rituals. All of our foster parents are given training on religions and cultures so you can feel comfortable speaking to them about your needs and what you have to do.

We teach foster parents about the racism and prejudice children and young people can face in their lives, and they can help you deal with any problems that happen. If you foster parents don't have the same beliefs as you, they won't make you take part in anything if you don't want to.

They'll never discriminate against you.



# Your placement



## When you move in

Feeling nervous, worried or even scared is very normal if it's time to move into your foster home. It takes time to get to know people, so we know you are moving in with strangers. We understand if you're feeling sad about moving away from your own family, or previous foster family.

Your new foster parents know this, and they're going to help you settle in.

Your foster parents won't expect you to be settled in straight away, that's not fair on anybody. If you think of a way that would help you to feel better about moving in, you can tell your social worker or your foster family, and they'll help if they can.

Your foster parents will tell you about themselves, and you might even have things in common with them. If you want to, you can tell them things about you too.

## What you'll be given:

- Information about why you're being looked after by foster parents
- The name of your social worker
- Your foster placement agreement (foster home rules, how much money you'll get, clothes etc.)
- A date for your first foster placement review (this will happen within 28 days from when you first move in)

## What your local authority social worker will give you:

- Their name, address and phone number. They'll tell you who their manager is as well so you can contact them.
- Time to talk. If you need a breather and someone to talk to who isn't a part of your foster family, just for a chat or to talk about something personal, you can talk to your local authority social worker.
- Loads of advice

**So, you might have been in care before, or this might be your first time but we want you to be clued up on everything.**

## What's fostering?

Fostering is when a family look after a child or young person when they can't live with their own birth family.

You will live in your foster parent's home and they'll give you everything you need. It's a pretty worrying experience because you don't know them yet, but we know you will be safe in their care. (We've done a lot of checks)

There are foster parents all over the world.

They all have different homes and lifestyles. Sometimes they already have children or young people who live with them, sometimes it's their own children, sometimes it's other foster children.



**Your social worker should be doing all of these things. If they aren't, tell them or talk to your foster parents about it.**



### When you move in

Because you are experiencing care, there will be meetings that happen so we can make decisions about your care, how you are and your birth family. There's lots of meetings which include:

- **Arranging all the details**
- **Making plans**
- **Checking how things are going**

We'd love for you to take part in our meetings that are about you, so you can tell us how you feel, what you need and what you wish. It depends what type of meeting it is, on how much you will be involved, but we'll always tell you before you come along. Even if you don't come into the meeting, you can always write down or tell someone what you want the people in the meeting to know.

### We will work with the local authority and any other agencies involved in your care to make sure you don't feel left out, or that we're making decisions without you.

You have the right to see most of the information we have about you and the local authority has to make sure they give you information about your situation which is easy for you to understand.

When you are placed with a foster family, you'll have regular meetings with your foster parents and children's services to make sure everything is going ok, and to see if there's anything that needs changing to make it better.

Your first review is held within 20 days of you moving in with your foster parents. The next 3 months later.

The third review will be held after 6 months and any subsequent reviews will be held every 6 months.

It's really important that you have the opportunity to participate in these review meetings.

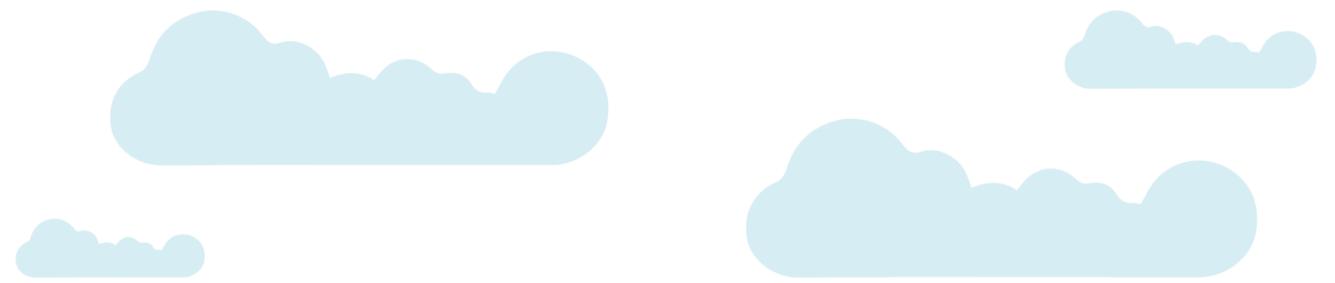
If you wish to attend the meeting your social worker and the supervising social worker from Fostering People will support you during the meeting.

If you're nervous about speaking in front of people then you can bring someone with you for support. If you do not wish to attend your social worker and the SSE will talk about how you can make sure that your views are made known at the meeting.

You may want to write it down or video it for us.

We want you to be a part of these meetings, so we know how you're feeling.





Once an agreement on who you can be in touch with is made, it will be possible for you to contact your family and friends in lots of different ways.

This could be visiting them, texting, calling or e-mailing.

Your social worker will talk to about who you can contact while you're in foster care. You don't have to contact anyone if you don't want to. If you are in contact with someone, and want to stop, tell your social worker and they'll help.

There could be times when your social worker or foster parents decide that there's somebody in your life who you shouldn't be speaking to, because they could cause you harm. Your social worker will explain the reasons for this and talk with you and your foster parents about how to stay safe.

Sometimes a good option for your safety is if you have rules about contact, like having someone there with you while you visit somebody, or having your phone calls and activity on social media monitored. This isn't because they don't trust you, they just have a responsibility to make sure you're ok and safe.

Your social workers and foster parents should treat your family and your friends kindly and with respect at all times. If your family or friends are visiting you then there will be rules for them to follow, because they are in your foster parent's home.

Your foster parents will treat them fairly, but they want to be treated fairly too.

Seeing your family and friends can bring up memories and old feelings, making you feel sad or maybe even angry. If you need support, time to yourself or even somebody to talk to, let someone know, we understand.

You might want to stay at a friend's house, but you need to let your social worker or your foster parents know and they can agree how this can happen.

They'll probably want to give your friend's family a quick call to make sure its fine with them, and that you're safe. This agreement will happen as soon as you start your foster placement, and you can find it written in your 'foster placement agreement'.

# Contact with family and friends

The children's services department or trust must encourage you to have contact with your family and friends unless there are really good reasons not to do so, so please don't think that as soon as you go into foster care, you can't contact anybody, because you can. There is a law in place in place that explains all of this called the Children Act 1989 and either your own social worker or our Fostering People social worker can explain it to you.





# Starfish Promise

All of our foster parents make a starfish promise for each child they care for. They make a promise to make a difference to you and make your experience of being in foster care as positive as it can be.

## Your foster parents promise to:

- Listen to you
- Commit to care, protect, nurture and empower you
- Act to improve your experience of and outcomes from being in our care
- Promote your involvement with Fostering People by nominating you for award schemes and competitions as well as attending agency events
- Do all they can to encourage, support and enable you to:
  - Complete your 'Have your say' and 'Be heard' forms and show you all the resources available on Kidszone.
  - Take part and contribute to your own care plans and care reviews
  - Take part in participation activities and events within Fostering People.

# Your privacy

You're still allowed your privacy when you go into foster care and allowed to have private things.

## When you move in, you'll have:

- A safe place for you to save your personal things
- Talk with your social worker and foster parents. They'll tell you that your safe place won't be searched unless there is a very serious reason. You'll be told why if this needs to happen.
- The right for your personal information to be kept private
- The ability to make personal phone calls in private (these might cost money, so you might have to limit it to a certain amount of time).



# Rules & Expectations

**Rules are different in everybody's house. Your foster family might have rules that they'll tell you when you move in with them.**

If there's other children or young people living there, they'll follow the similar rules. If you feel that the rules aren't fair, you should be able to talk about this and challenge your foster parents, but in a reasonable way. If you feel that the rules are wrong and you're very unhappy, you can speak to your social worker, or make a complaint.

**Discipline in foster homes is controlled. Your foster parents aren't allowed to punish you in these ways:**

- Smack or hit you
- They can't stop you from visiting your family because of something you've done
- They can't stop your family from visiting you, unless there is a good reason for it
- They can't stop or give you less pocket money.
- They can only keep you away from other children for a short time, to allow you to calm down, but they can't stop you from seeing them completely
- They can't control you by giving you drugs, unless you need them for medical reasons
- They are not to be disrespectful of your religion, race, culture, sexuality, disability or gender

You don't have to put up with any of these punishments from your foster family. If you're unhappy about how you are being treated, you **MUST** tell your social worker.

It's important to know that everyone has to follow rules to make living with each other fair and comfortable. If you break rules that you agreed with, then you must expect a consequence for what you have done. An example is, being grounded for coming in late.

Keep talking about the rules with your foster parents while you live with them.



## Independent Visitors

If you don't get to see much of your family when you're living in foster care, it's important that you have access to a person outside of the foster family and children's services. This is where your Independent Visitor comes in, who has no connection with the people who are looking after you. You can talk to them about anything you need to, and they can help you if you need any help. If you'd like an independent visitor, just ask your social worker.

## Pocket Money and Clothing Allowances

You will get pocket money and your foster parents will be paid to help take care of you. You can use your money to buy clothes and shoes. Your foster parents must make sure you have enough shoes and clothes (your school uniform too).

Your foster parents must make sure that they replace anything you've grown out of, or anything that is damaged. They'll buy this with the money that we pay them.

When you talk to your foster parents and children's services about your pocket money, they have to tell you clearly what you are expected to buy with your pocket money. Making this clear will make it so much easier for you to understand later in your stay.

When you move in with your family parents, you might not have suitable clothes and shoes. Children's services might be able to get some money to buy the clothes that you need, instead of your foster parents spending their money on it. You might be able to get this money if you have to change school or get a whole new uniform too.



# Preparing for your future



So, when it's time to leave care, you might be jumping for joy to have your own independence and freedom, or you might be upset about leaving your foster parents, or even worried about what comes next.

## Staying Put

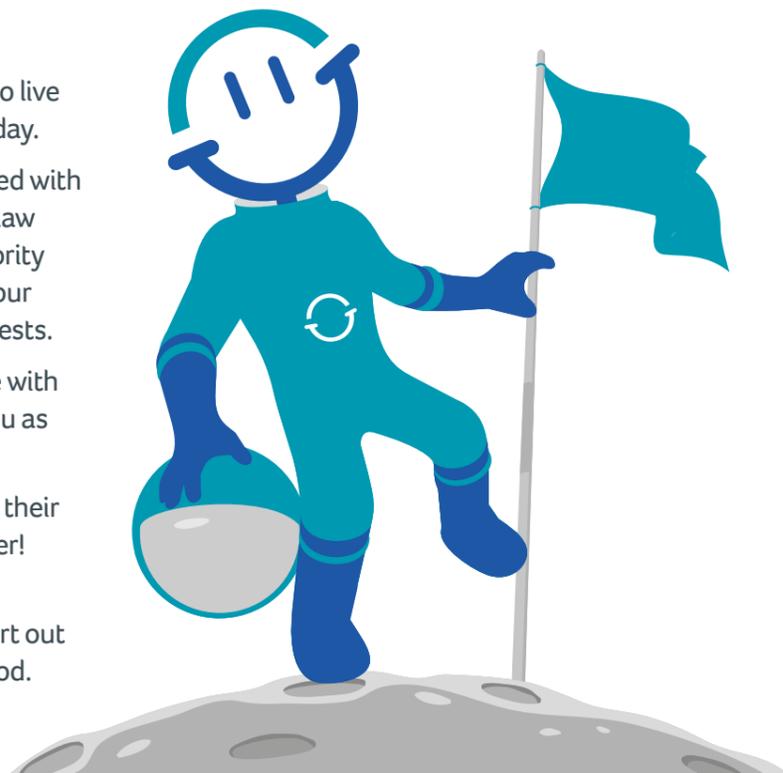
Staying Put is where a care leaver continues to live with their foster parent after their 18th birthday.

Over the years young people have often stayed with their foster parents once they are 18 but the law changed in May 2014 so that your local authority has to support this arrangement if you and your parent want it to happen and it's in your interests.

This is great news, as you can continue to live with people you know and who have supported you as you have grown up.

It means that many young people don't leave their foster home until they are 21 years old or older!

It can help you to get into or continue with education and training or give you time to sort out the issues you face as you move into adulthood.



## Legal definition of Staying Put:

Staying Put is available to a young person who is 'eligible' - that is someone who has spent 13 weeks or more in care since the age of 14 and is still looked after (in care) when they turn 18. They must be living with a foster parent who has been approved by either the local authority or a fostering agency.

## Is Staying Put right for you and your foster parent?

Staying Put arrangements need the agreement of the foster parent and the young person if they are going to work.

When you reach 16 your social worker will do a needs assessment.

This will consider all your needs as you start to plan to leave care. The needs assessment will help your worker and you understand what needs to be included in your pathway plan.

As part of their assessment they must consider whether Staying Put is a possibility and must discuss it with you and your foster parent.

Staying Put must be discussed at the first review after your 16th birthday and what is decided should be recorded in your pathway plan.

It should also be considered at all other reviews before you turn 18, in case your situation changes.

You, your foster parent and worker will need to agree to Staying Put and work out the details of how it will work.

Sometimes Staying Put may not be possible; it depends on the circumstances of your foster parents as well.

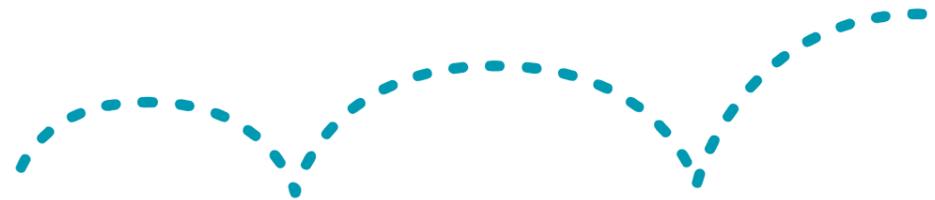
You may not wish to remain with your foster parents after 18; you may wish to live with your birth family, in supported housing or in your own accommodation.

It is very important that your worker discusses the benefits of Staying Put as well as the changes it will bring between you and your foster parent.

Your worker must also discuss what the alternatives are, including the practical support and financial arrangement in such situations.



# Moving on



The local authority has a duty to support your Staying Put arrangement until your 21st birthday.

It may be that you feel that you are ready to move on before this and moving on should be discussed at each pathway plan review.

However, just because it is discussed does not mean you have to move on, but there should be a back-up plan in case the arrangement ends suddenly.

There may be some circumstances where it is in your best interest to remain with your former foster parent after your 21st birthday, because you are doing an education course which has not ended, or you are struggling with some specific problems or issues.

In these situations you can ask if you can remain with your former foster parents, but there is no requirement on the local authority to agree to it.

## What to do if you are not happy with the plan for you.

All young people who are looked after should have an independent reviewing officer(CIRO).

If you are unhappy with your pathway plan or the decision that has been made about Staying Put then you should speak to your CIRO.

You could also ask for an advocate to be appointed to help explain your views to your personal adviser or social worker and to represent your pathway plan review meeting.

You can request an urgent review of your pathway plan, so your concerns can be considered.

If you feel you are not able to put your views forward you can ask for an advocate or bring a friend or family member to support you.

If it is not possible to resolve your concerns you should ask for details of how to make a complaint. There will also be details on your local authority's website.

## Where to go for more advice?

### Coram Voice

Provide free legal advice and help (called advocacy) to young people who are living in care or have recently left care.

T: 0808 800 5792

[www.coramvoice.org.uk](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk)

### National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Offer information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children and young people.

T: 0808 808 1001

[www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)



# Your Voice

Everyone is different and we all like different things and it's not always easy to get on with other people.

When you're living with other people, you have to accept that not everything will go how you want it to go, and sometimes you have to fit in with others. There will be times where they have to fit in with you too.

It might be difficult sometimes, you might have disagreements and misunderstandings but whatever happens it's important to always have respect for the people you live with, and know that some behaviours might not be acceptable.

Your voice is what matters to us, the only way we know we are doing a good job is if you are happy, so we

always want to hear how you are feeling and what can be done differently.

We look over foster parents' work every year and we ask children and young people who have stayed with them how they found their stay, what was good, what was bad, what could have been better or different.

If you ever have to complain about anything in your foster placement, send a letter directly to Fostering People's quality assurance team. (The complaints procedure is at the back of this guide).

Your Fostering People supervising social worker is always there to listen to you and talk to you about how you are finding living your foster home.

## Right to information

The Data Protection Act (1989) states that everyone is entitled to see certain information that is held about them.

This act will be replaced by the General Data Protection Regulations in May 2018.

Fostering People holds information about you which we build up during your stay with us, to help us manage your placement and provide the right support. You have a right to be able to see this information, just ask your foster parent or your supervising social worker.

The only information you aren't allowed to see may be confidential information about someone else or sometimes information given by someone else like the police or doctors. If you are ever told that you can't access your file and information you should complain.



## Children Act 1989/2004

**“Young people should be brought up in their own family, whenever possible. A court must put the interests of a young person first when making decisions about them and children's services must work together children/young people and their families”.**

The Children Act is important because:

- It protects you
- It makes sure you know your rights
- It says your views are important
- It gives you the right to know what's happening and why
- It allows you to make a complaint if you need to



# Addresses and phone numbers

All numbers were correct at the time of print but may have altered since.

## Fostering People Quality Assurance

Tel: 0115 945 5445  
Monday- Friday 9.00am- 5.00pm

## Childline:

FREE CALL: 0800 1111

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

Childline is the free help line for children and young people in the UK. You can call on the free number to talk about absolutely anything, nothing is too big or too small.

Counsellors are always there help sort it out.

## Become Care Advice Line

Tel: 0800 023 2033  
Monday- Friday 10.30 am - 3pm

## NSPCC Child Protection Line FREE

CALL for 18 and under: 0800 1111  
FREE CALL FOR ADULTS: 0808 800 5000  
Website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

You can tell them about worries you have in your life that are making you feel frightened and at risk.

## OFSTED

Tel: 0300 123 1231  
Children's Commissioner for England  
Tel: 020 7783 8330

## Fostering People Limited

Suite D  
The Point  
Welbeck Road  
West Bridgford  
Nottingham  
NG2 7QW  
0800 077 8159  
or visit our website [www.fosteringpeople.co.uk/kidszone](http://www.fosteringpeople.co.uk/kidszone)

## FRANK - National Drug Helpline

FREE CALL: 0300 123 6600

W: <http://www.talktofrank.com/>

If you have any questions or need advice on anything to do with drugs, they'll tell you. They can also give you advice on where to go for help in your local area for any problems with drugs.



## Samaritans

FREE CALL: 116 123

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

Samaritans are there to help people who are feeling suicidal, distressed or experiencing feelings of distress. They are open 24 hours a day.

## Youth Access

Tel: 020 8772 9900

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

Youth Access is the national organisation for young people's information, counselling and support services.

## Runaway helpline

FREE Helpline: 116 000 (call or text)

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

Runaway helpline is a free phone help line for young people who have run away or been forced to leave home or care.



# Complaints procedure

FOSTERING PEOPLE QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAM 0115 9455 445

## Need to make a complaint?

- We want to know
- We'll listen to you
- We'll do our best to make things better

## Fostering People Complaints Procedure for children and young people

When you are living with a foster family, there might be some problems that happen. When this happens the best thing is for everyone to talk about what has gone wrong, what people are upset about and then decide what the best way to fix it is. Most problems can be fixed this way.

## Are there things you are worried or concerned about?

You might feel unhappy about the way you are being treated, especially if it feels like the way you are being treated is unfair.

You might feel unhappy about where you're living

- Not being listened to
- Not being included in decisions
- Not having contact or enough contact with your family or friends
- Being bullied
- Being hurt or being treated badly
- Things that are happening to you or someone else that you feel are wrong



## What should you do? Speak up!

The most important thing is that you talk to somebody, or write it down so that it doesn't keep happening.

We know we keep saying this throughout your guide, but you MUST speak up if you aren't happy, we'll do our best to help fix the situation, we won't make it worse.

### Who should I tell?

- Family
- Foster parents
- Your local authority social worker, or their boss

### Who should I tell?

- A Fostering People staff member including the registered manager
- A teacher
- A friend
- Somebody you trust
- Somebody from the Fostering People Quality Assurance Team: 0115 9455 445
- An advocate - this is somebody who will speak up for you if you need help. They'll make sure your views and wishes are listened to and acted upon.

### How do you find an advocate?

Your children's services complaints officer or children's rights officer must help you find advocacy services which you feel will be best for you. They'll help you get in touch with an advocate and you'll be able to meet them and see how you get on with them.

Even if you're living far away from where you lived with your family, your children's services must still help you to find an advocate where you are currently living. Your social worker will give you these details when you come to stay with us.

**National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)**  
 Offer information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children and young people.  
 T: 0808 808 1001  
[www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)

**Coram Voice**  
 Provide free legal advice and help (called advocacy) to young people who are living in care or have recently left care.  
 T: 0808 800 5792  
[www.coramvoice.org.uk](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk)

There are more telephone numbers in the address/ telephone section of this guide.

You can choose your own advocate if you know someone you trust who is willing to help such as a relative, teacher, carer, friend or family member.

An inspector from the government department OFSTED which inspects and registers fostering agencies such as Fostering People, their telephone number is at the end of this guide.

If you contact a member of Fostering People quality assurance team then they'll not pass on or act on any information you give them without knowledge.

Other organisations will probably do the same thing, but if it seems that you or another child or young person have been or is being hurt or that there is some danger, then Fostering People and other organisations have to do something to make sure that it stops.

**I've told somebody about what's making me unhappy, and the problem hasn't been solved!**

If Fostering People is directly responsible for what is making you unhappy (like your foster home, a member of staff or a service we provide) then please follow the procedure which is on the next page.

The children's services department that is responsible for you has its own complaints procedure for children and young people.

They'll have a complaints officer or children's rights officer who will tell you about advocates who can help you sort complaints or problems.

A complaints officer will give you names and numbers of people who are advocates then you can call them or they'll call you.

If you're unsure about which route to go down, talk with an adult who you trust and feel comfortable with and ask them for advice.

The Fostering People quality assurance team (0115 9455 445) will be happy to give you advice.

Don't feel worried about making a complaint to Fostering People, it will never get you in trouble. You are allowed to do it, it's your right!



**Here is some more information about the Fostering People complaints process:**

**STAGE 1:**

Stage 1 is where we try to sort out your complaint by talking with you, your social worker and foster parents about it to sort it out. We will let you know who will be responsible for trying to sort this out for you and how long it will take to do. You will always be told of the outcome.

If you want to talk with someone else ring our Quality Assurance Team (0115 9455 445). If no one picks up, leave a message (make sure you leave your name) and we'll contact you ASAP.

**Can someone help me with my complaint? Can someone do it for me?**

Yes, you can have help from someone you choose who is willing to help, like a family member, social worker, foster parent or teacher.

Fostering People quality assurance team can help find someone to help you make your complaint. The person they find will keep in touch with you while your complaint is being dealt with.



### STAGE 2:

#### What if I'm still not happy?

Contact the quality assurance team and they'll plan for someone called an independent investigator to meet with you to find out why you are still not happy.

They'll investigate your complaint fully. They'll probably want to read file records and interview people who are connected to your complaint. They'll be asked to complete the investigation within 4 weeks, but sometimes it might take slightly longer.

When the investigation is finished, the head of quality assurance or another senior manager will write to tell you what's been decided and what will happen to make things right. We might have to explain why something happened, apologise if we made a mistake or did something wrong. We might tell you how we have learnt from any mistake and how we won't make the same mistake in the future.



### STAGE 3 (FINAL STAGE):

#### What if the problem hasn't really been sorted, or what if I'm not happy about the independent investigation?

You should tell the quality assurance team, and they'll arrange for your complaint to be heard by a panel of 3 people.

This will be the Fostering People registered manager and 2 others.

You'll be invited to come to the meeting to tell us how you are feeling.

You can bring someone with you along to help (a family member, foster parent, a friend, someone from an organisation that give advice and support to children and young people).

As this is the final stage, you'll be told the outcome within a few days.

#### What if I'm still not happy?

You should contact OFSTED (for England). They are responsible for inspecting and registering fostering agencies.

Ofsted have their own complaints procedure which you will be told about when you contact their office. You can contact them at any time while Fostering People is dealing with your complaint.



#### To contact OFSTED (England)

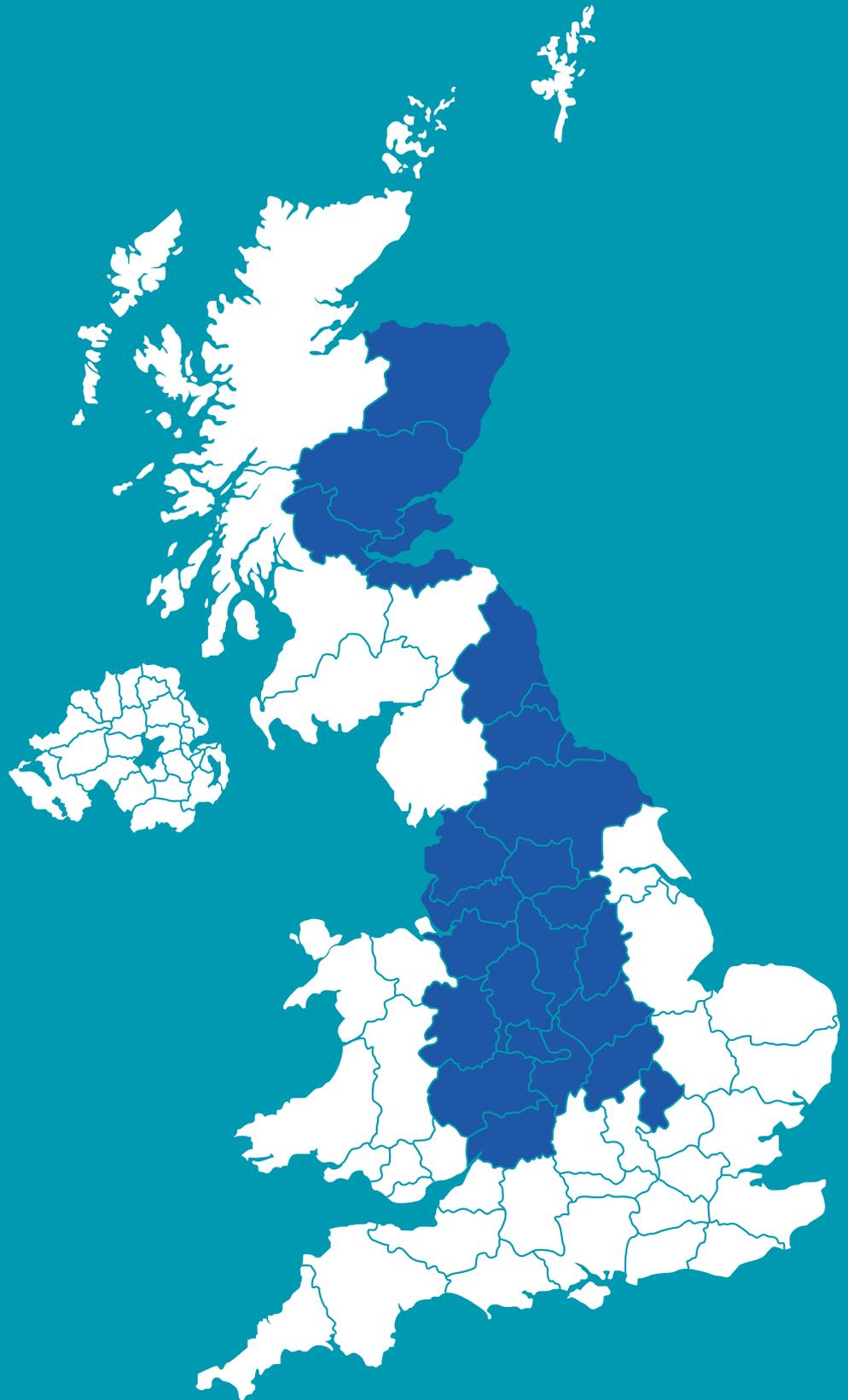
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231 (general enquiries)  
Tel: 0300 123 4666 (concerns number)

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide. I hope you found it useful. If you have any comments or thoughts about it, just contact me, Oliver Kirkland, Registered Manager - I'd really welcome your feedback. You can reach me on 0800 077 8159.

# fosteringpeople

let's change lives together



Give us a call on  
0800 077 8159

**Contact us:**  
Suite D, The Point  
Welbeck Road  
West Bridgeford  
Nottingham  
NG2 7QW

[www.fosteringpeople.co.uk](http://www.fosteringpeople.co.uk)