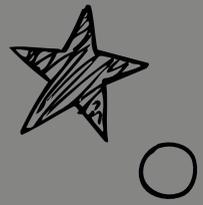




Young Person's Welcome Guide

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Hello and welcome to Children First Fostering Agency. We were set up to find, check train and support foster families to look after children and young people. We work with foster families and supervise them to make sure that the young people they look after are protected and well cared for.

We work closely with social workers in local authorities so that children and young people have the best possible foster family to help and keep them safe and happy.

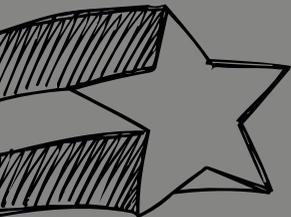
We are called Children First because we always put the interests of children first. We are on your side and you can trust us to look after you.

Look at our website www.cffa.co.uk and read our Statement of Purpose which will tell you more.

Young people don't always know who to contact or speak to so the aim of this guide is to make sure you know who to contact when you need to.

We hope this guide will answer your questions but if you are unsure of anything please ask your social worker or your foster carer or phone Children First.

We will always be there for you.





Information About Me

You can use this page to write down all of your important information.

My Name, Address and Phone Number	
My Foster Carer's Name	
My Family's Address and Phone Number	
My Social Worker's Name and Phone Number	
Manager of Social Worker Name and Phone Number	
My Independent Reviewing Officer's Name and Phone Number	
My Children First Social Worker's Name and Phone Number	
Name and Phone Number of Children First Agency Manager:	
Name of my School and Teacher:	
Name, Address and Phone Number of my Best Friend	



How do people become foster carers?

We screen people who come to us to be carers then once selected they are assessed and specially prepared, checked and trained to make sure they are suitable. After approval the foster carers are reviewed every year to ensure they are doing the right thing by their looked after children and young people. You will be asked your views at this time.

What you can expect from your foster family:

- Your own bed in your own bedroom, unless you want share a room with your brother or sister.
- Space to put your things.
- Pocket money.
- Toiletries.
- Clothes.
- Someone to listen and support you.
- The chance to celebrate your birthday and festivals important to you.
- Private space to meet with your social worker, IRO etc.
- Help to stay in touch with your family and friends.

What other things would you like from your foster carers? (Write them down).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Moving into a foster home for the first time

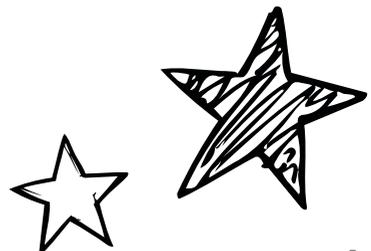
When you move into a foster home for the first time it can be scary because you are starting to live with people that you don't know.

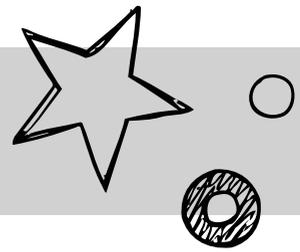
You might feel worried. You might want to be quiet or you may want to talk about how it's going.

It is important that your foster carers know something about you and your family so they can help you. Your social worker will tell them some things and it will be good if you tell them more as you get to know them.

It is also important that you and your own family know something about the foster family too – and your social worker and your foster carers will tell you and answer your questions.

Your foster family want to do their best for you and hope that you will enjoy living with them – they can be good people to talk to.





Your Social Worker

Your social worker is someone who will be there for you, someone who will visit you regularly and who you can talk to. Your social worker will listen to you and work to make your views heard and acted on. Your social worker will arrange for you to keep in contact with your family and friend and will attend meetings with you to talk about your needs.

The Supervising Social Worker

This person is your foster carer's social worker and also someone you can talk to. The SSW will check that your foster carer is looking after you well and that their house remains safe and comfortable. If you are having any difficulties being heard the SSW can help.

Meetings

Your local authority and your social worker have to write down what they will do to help you. How they will support your health, education, hobbies and they will help you maintain contact with family and friends. This is called a care plan.

At regular intervals your care plan will be reviewed –this may be referred to as a LAC or statutory review. The care plan and the review are about you and it is important that you put your point across and ask whatever questions you may have.

Keeping in Touch

When you see your family and friends this may be called contact by your social worker and foster carer. It is important that you are able to maintain these relationships so your social worker will make plans with you to see these people. These plans are called contact plans. If you have any worries about seeing someone or if there is someone you would like to see please talk to your social worker or foster carer. They are there to help you



Education

You may have different feelings about school or college; you can always talk to your foster carer, social worker or someone you trust at college or school.

Your education is very important as it will help you in the future to follow the career path you are interested in. We want you to succeed and will help you to build on your achievements.

Your foster carer will provide a space for you to do your homework and will attend any meetings at your college or school like parents evening and options meetings.

Personal Education Plans

These plans record your educational targets, what you enjoy, what you are good at and areas that you would like to improve. If you have special needs you will have a statement which also makes plans for your educational future.

What help do you want with your education/homework?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Health

Your health is very important. You need to eat well and do some exercise. Your foster carer will provide lovely nutritious meals for you and will encourage you to learn to cook and play a sport you are interested in. By eating well, exercising and having leisure activities you will maintain good health which will make you feel good.

Your foster carer will keep a 'health record' for you that records all your health appointments with the GP, Dentist, Optician and any other health professionals involved in your care.

Being healthy also means looking after your emotional and sexual health. Your foster carer will help you to seek advice if you have any concerns about these areas. It helps to get advice about drugs, alcohol and sexuality which can all affect your overall health.

Holidays & Activities

Your foster family will take you on holiday with them wherever possible and will encourage you to participate in an activity like football, dancing, swimming or scouts / guides. Remember to tell your foster carer about the hobbies and sports you enjoy so you can still do these things while in care. Perhaps you are part of sporting team or belong to an activity club what ever it is we want you keep enjoying these things.



Bullying

Bullying can happen to anyone at any age. You might be bullied at school, home or online and it can be really bad.

You could be bullied by, an adult, a carer, a teacher, a child or young person, or someone younger than you. Bullying can mean different things and include these:

- People calling you names.
- Being teased.
- People taking your things or damaging them.
- People taking your money.
- People spreading rumours about you.
- Being ignored and left out.
- People hitting, kicking, pushing or pulling you or physically hurting you in any way.
- Being threatened or intimidated.
- People taking your friends away.
- People making things up to get you into trouble.

Bullying can also be part of other forms of abuse, including neglect, emotional, physical and sexual abuse.

No one has the right to hurt you or make you feel horrible or stop you from joining in. If you are being bullied you don't have to put up with it. You must talk to someone you can trust about it.

Cyberbullying

The Internet can be great but there can be dangers – read this and keep safe! Cyberbullying is a problem that causes unhappiness and can put people at risk.

The first tip is to Stop, Block and Tell. This means that if someone has sent you a message that you don't like you should stop what you are doing, block that person and tell a trusted adult.

Another way to stop cyber bullying is to ThinkB4uClick! It's important not to send anything that will upset or hurt someone. Don't pick on someone else.

Taking 5! When you walk away from the computer or mobile for 5 minutes it allows you to cool off without overreacting or reacting too quickly.

By practicing any of these things you can avoid becoming a cyberbully or prevent yourself from becoming a victim of cyberbullying.

If you are being bullied it isn't your fault and it can be stopped – but you must tell someone.

Who can I tell?

- Talk to your foster carer.
- Talk to your teacher.
- Talk to your social worker.

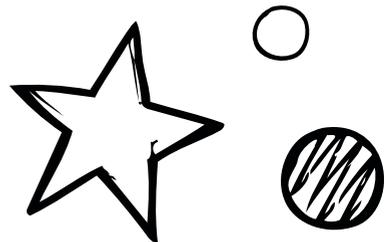
Or, take a look at our Useful Contacts page for a list of organisations which will offer your support and guidance.



Independent Reviewing Officers

You will have your own Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who is an independent person from your local authority. It is their job to make sure you are asked about important decisions that affect you and that your wishes and feelings are recorded. This person will also always explain to you why some things can't happen even when you really want them to. You will see your IRO at your review meeting but you can contact him/her at other times as well.

Your local authority may have people who act as independent visitors. These are people that visit children and young people in care so they have someone independent to talk to. If you would like an independent visitor, talk to your social worker and your IRO.



We know that moving in with a new family can be scary and worrying at times – especially if you are worried about your family at home. At times you may also feel sad or angry about having to live with foster carers. It is difficult to manage these feelings and sometimes these thoughts can lead you to do things that are harmful to you or that may get you into trouble. At these times it is important to talk to someone about your feelings before you get yourself into a troubling situation. There are people who will always listen to you like your foster carer, social worker and IRO. Perhaps there is a teacher that you trust where you are studying who you can talk to? Below are some other useful organisations that you can use to contact if you are not happy about something.

Remember

However small or big your worry is there are people who can help.

Making a Complaint

At Children First we will always try to do our best for you – but we know that sometimes things can go wrong.

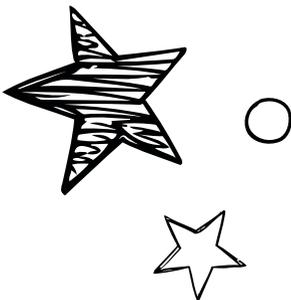
We have told you about some of the things we promise to do but if Children First workers or foster carers do not keep these promises – we want you to complain so that we can put things right.

There might be other things that you are worried about or that you would like to change, these might be quite small things or big things, we want to hear about them all so we can put things right.

If you think it will help - you can start by talking to your foster carer or your social worker.

If this does not help or if you prefer, you can use our complaints procedure start by phoning Children First: 01268 567 330 (9.00am to 5.30pm) or 07880 556 617 (all other times).

Ask to speak to the person in charge: we will find out from you what the problem is and explain how we are going to start to deal with it.



The Children's Commissioner for England – Anne Longfield

The Children's Commissioner, Anne Longfield, stands up for all children and young people and is on your side.

- Telephone: 0800 582 0731
- www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Child Line

This is the free 24 hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. Child Line's counsellors are there to help and find ways to sort things out. Child Line is confidential - which means they won't tell anyone about your call unless you want them to talk to somebody for you, or you are in danger.

- Telephone: 0800 1111
- www.childline.org.uk

Ofsted

An organisation called Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England and Wales.

- Ofsted, Picadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD
- General Enquiries: 0300 123 1231
- About Concerns: 0300 123 4666
- Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Voice for the Child in Care

Confidential advice and help for children and young people in care of leaving care.

- 320 City Road, London EC1V 2N2
- Telephone: 0808 8005792
- Email: info@voiceyp.org
- www.voiceyp.org

NSPCC

If you need help or advice, or are concerned that you or another child may be at risk. The helpline is open 24 hours a day.

- Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Children First

Responsible for your foster carers and we will help with your complaints anytime.

- Tel: 01268 567 330 (9.00am to 5.30pm)
- Mobile: 07880 556 617 (all other times)

National Bullying Helpline

- 0845 225 5787 (Mon to Fri, 10 to 4pm, Sat, 10 to 2pm).

The Who Cares Trust

- www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk

Kidscape

- www.kidscape.org.uk



Children First Fostering Agency | 3 Lords Court | Cricketers Way | Basildon | Essex | SS13 1SS

T 01268 567 330 | F 01268 289 716 | www.cffa.co.uk | children-first@cffa.co.uk