

**YOUNG
PEOPLE
AT HEART**

CHILDREN'S GUIDE



OUR NAME IS OUR ETHOS



WELCOME TO YOUNG PEOPLE AT HEART

Hi, and welcome to Young People At Heart, a fostering agency that has **YOU**, the young person at the heart of everything we do.

We've written this guide to explain what it's like being fostered with our Foster Carers. If you don't understand or have questions, you could ask someone to help you explain it. Your Foster Carer or one of the Social Workers or Family Support Worker will be happy to read it with you.

Some children and young people have helped us write this guide but if you have ideas to make it better, please let us know. We have tried to think of questions that you may have and have given some answers to questions that children often ask.

Who are Young People At Heart?

We are a fostering agency, we try to find the right foster families for children who are not able to live at home. Our job when you are with a foster family is to make sure you are well looked after, safe and happy. It's important you let us know if we could do things better. You can tell your Social Worker, Foster Carer or the Young People at Heart staff about any ideas you have or if anything is worrying you. There are Family Support Workers who may take you out and will arrange activities to let you meet other children who are living with our foster families. We also have Education Workers who can help with any difficulties at school you may have.



What does it mean to be in foster care?

Fostering is when you go to live with a foster family because you can't live at home with your family. Sometimes this is because your family can't look after you (they might be ill) or they might be having problems and need time to sort them out.

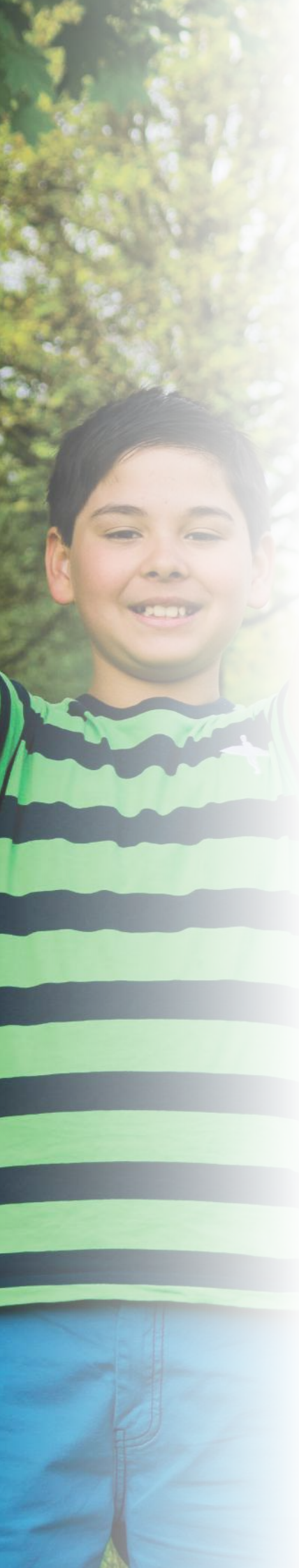
Sometimes grown-ups aren't very good at explaining the reasons why you are going to live with a foster family. You may not have had this explained to you or perhaps it was explained at a time when you were feeling too upset or muddled - but remember that it's okay to ask why, and your Foster Carers or Social Worker will try and explain it so you can understand.

What is a Foster Carer and what do they do?

Young People At Heart foster families come from various backgrounds. Your Foster Carers decided they would like to help children who need to live away from their family. They have received special training, and they have had lots of checks before becoming a foster family. They may have their own children in the foster household or other children or young people in foster care living with them.

The Young People At Heart foster family is there to help and support you in this tough time. They will be there for you to talk to and:

- Listen to you
- Help you with any problems you may have
- Keep you healthy
- Keep you safe
- Help you with your schooling
- Let you have fun, play games, sports, start or help you continue a hobby or interest
- Teach you new skills, like riding a bike, swimming
- Be part of the planning for different holidays, days out
- Help you to stay in touch with the people who are important to you



There will be rules in the foster carer's home that are there to keep you safe. All these things will be discussed with your Social Worker. At first, it may feel strange living with a different family. Your Foster Carers know this and will do everything possible to help you to settle in. You can help by letting them know of your likes and dislikes. For example, there might be certain foods that you don't like, or you might not like the bedroom light switched off.

What happens when I go to meet my Foster Family and live with them?

Your Social Worker will have worked very hard to find a foster family they think will be right for you. They may also show you a leaflet or book (we call them Family Books) that has photographs inside of your Foster Family and their home. If possible you will get the chance to meet the family before you move in with them. Your Social Worker will usually try to organise a visit to the family home, perhaps for tea. This may happen several times before you move in with your new Foster Family. This will help you get to know each other a little better and may help you to feel less worried about the move.

Your Foster Carer will show you around the house and you will meet everyone who lives there. You will have your own bedroom and a place to keep all your things safe and secure. You will be able to ask any questions you want about your foster family and their home.

Everyone will do their best to help you get settled. Young People at Heart gives all children and young people a Welcome Pack when they first move in with their Foster Family.

What about my school?

If possible, you will stay in the same school so that you don't have too many changes. Your Foster Carer and your Social Worker will check to make sure things are going well and you are happy at school, and make sure you are asked what you want and will help you if there are any changes.

It's important you let them know how you feel about school, so make sure you tell your foster carer if anything is worrying you. Only a few teachers will know about you being in foster care, it is up to you if you tell other people.



Can I still see my Family and Friends?

You will hear Social Workers, Foster Carers and other adults talking about Contact – they are talking about when you will see your family and friends.

You should let your Social Worker know who you would like to see and stay in contact with. Sometimes, it may not be possible, and your Social Worker will explain the reason why, but if you can't see the people you want to, it may be possible to write to them, e-mail, text or speak to them on the phone.

How long will I stay with my Foster Family?

This can be different for every child, as not everyone is the same. Sometimes, children only stay with Foster Carers for a short while. Other times, it may be longer, or until you are old enough to look after yourself. Your Social Worker will talk about this with you. You can also let your Foster Carer or Social Worker know how you are feeling about this.

Feeling Safe?

Foster Carers have to make sure that you feel safe so they will have some rules in their home about what you can and cannot do.

This is called a **Safer Caring Plan** which your Foster Carer will share with you. Sometimes you may forget the rules and your foster carer will talk to you about this. Your Foster Carer will never smack or hit you, call you names, or stop you from seeing your family. We expect you to be treated with respect.

What if I'm being bullied?

We want you to be healthy and happy with your foster family and in your school. If you are being bullied at home, at school or anywhere else, you must tell your Foster Carer, Social Worker or one of your teachers, or any other adult you feel you can trust.

There are also contact details at the back of this leaflet that can help if you are being bullied.



Getting your wishes and feelings heard

We want you to tell us how you are feeling and if you are worried about something. Going to live with a foster family can be a very muddling time and it can feel very upsetting if you feel you don't know what will happen to you. Talk to your Foster Carer or your Social Worker about how you are feeling and they can help make sure that your wishes are heard by the right people.

If you don't want to talk to either of these there are other people you can talk to called Advocates. Advocates are people who do not work with your Social Worker or Young People at Heart. They can help you with the problems you may have and can speak up for you. The details of the places where you can find an Advocate are in the back of this leaflet. You might want to ask an adult or friend to help you with this. You can speak to anyone that you feel you can trust.

Can I complain if I think I'm being treated badly?

If you feel you are being treated badly, unfairly or something is wrong, it is important that you tell someone, speak to your Social Worker or Foster Carer.

The Young People at Heart office details and phone numbers are at the back of this leaflet. If you are unhappy with something Young People at Heart has done, you should tell your Social Worker or complain to Ofsted.

Ofsted are the agency that check Young People at Heart are doing the right thing for children and young people, and Foster Carers. Your Social Worker, Foster Carer or Advocate will be able to help you do this. Ofsted's details are also in the back of this leaflet.

Do you want to write some questions down here?

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE AND CONTACT DETAILS YOU MAY NEED

MY FOSTER CARER

NAME:

PHONE NUMBER:

MY SOCIAL WORKER

NAME:

PHONE NUMBER:

MY FOSTER CARER'S SOCIAL WORKER

NAME:

PHONE NUMBER:

YOUNG PEOPLE AT HEART REGISTERED MANAGER

NAME:

PHONE NUMBER:

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

NAME	NUMBER

Young People at Heart Registered Office

Young People at Heart,
36 Rosslyn Park, Weybridge. KT13 9QZ

Email: hello@youngpeopleatheart.org

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,
Manchester, M1 2WD.
Phone number: 0300 123 1231
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

CHILDLINE

A free helpline for children &
young people, available 24 hours
a day.
Phone number: 0800 1111
Website: www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC

Help & advice if you are concerned
that you or another young person
that you know may be at risk.
Phone number: 0808 800 5000
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

NYAS

National Youth Advocacy Service
Phone number: 0808 808 1001
Email: help@nyas.net
Website: www.nyas.net

BECOME

(formally The Who Cares? Trust)
Phone number: 0800 023 2033

VOICE

(formally Voice for the Child in Care)
Confidential advice for children &
young people in care.
Phone number: 0808 800 5792
Email: help@coramvoice.org.uk
Website: www.coramvoice.org.uk

CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER

Phone number: 0800 528 0731
Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk



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hello@youngpeopleatheart.org

www.youngpeopleatheart.org

Young People at Heart, 36 Rosslyn Park, Weybridge. **KT13 9QZ**