



YOUNG PERSON'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 help 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 young people often ask.

Who are Young People at Heart?

We are a fostering agency, we try to find the right foster families for young people 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 young people who are living with our foster families. We also have Education Workers who can help with any difficulties at school you may have.

If you would like to know more about Young People at Heart you can ask for a copy of our '*Statement of Purpose*'.



What does it mean to be in foster care?

You will be staying with _____ who are Young People at Heart Foster Carers. They have attended lots of training sessions and are experienced in caring for young people. They will make you feel as comfortable as possible whilst recognising that you may be experiencing some difficulties.

During your placement your Social Worker will visit you, and your carer's Supervising Social Worker _____ will also visit to check you are safe and happy. They will also ensure that you are:

- Being given a healthy diet
- Being helped to stay safe
- Heard and respected
- Involved in decisions about you and your care
- Able to stay in touch with the people who are important to you
- Receiving a good standard of education
- Able to have privacy and your own personal space
- Learning new skills
- Supported in your interests in sport, playing games, music, church or temple, or going to special clubs
- In receipt of your Welcome Pack
- Having fun!

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.

You will have opportunities to see and talk to your Social Worker, who works for the Local Authority, he or she will be responsible for the planning of meetings and to ascertain your thoughts and views during your time in care.



Meetings that will be arranged are:

Placement Agreement Meeting:

This should happen within 5-7 days to discuss everything that is important for you including school or college, contact with people who you wish to remain in contact with, savings and pocket money including your clothes allowance.

There will be discussions about any health issues or medicines that you take, times you need to return by, use of mobile phones, computers, iPad etc.

There will also be a discussion on house rules to ensure everyone knows these.

Review Meeting:

This is attended by your Social Worker, Young People at Heart Social Worker, your Foster Carer and a member of your school or college staff. These meetings are chaired by an Independent Social Worker called an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). Your parents will be invited unless you or your social worker decides this will not be needed.

This meeting should happen once you are settled with the carers, so everyone can discuss the arrangements and see if any changes are needed.

These meetings are a legal requirement and will be held regularly. You may attend all or part of the meeting if you wish to do so.

Your Care Plan

This is the plan that maps out your future care, you can discuss this with your Social Worker.

We realise that these meetings are not usual for young people growing up, but the Local Authority has a responsibility to make sure that you are receiving the best possible care, and opportunities.

This is the best way of checking that you are happy and safe. You will be involved in your Care Plan.

Who can I stay in touch with?

Most young people who are fostered will still see their family and this will need to be arranged by your Social Worker.

They will let you know when and where this is going to happen, and how often. Usually, the only time this doesn't happen is if your Social Worker or the Court think it wouldn't be safe for you.

Sometimes you may not want to see your family or there may be other reasons, and your Social Worker should talk to you about these.

We know that your friends are important to you and you should also be able to keep in touch with them too.

Helping you to look after yourself



Keeping healthy is an important part of life. Your Foster Carer will support you to access dentist, optician and local health services. You will require a health medical when you come into care, to check you are up to date with immunizations and are healthy. This is a routine check and all aspects of health will be discussed with you.

School or College

It is hoped that you can still attend your previous school or college. As you have had some recent changes, it is preferred you stay in the same educational establishment.

If you have changed school or college your Foster Carer will help you all they can and ensure only the people who need to know are aware of your story.

A Personal Educational Plan (PEP) meeting will be held to ensure you are doing well in your school or college and to see if you need help in any subjects.

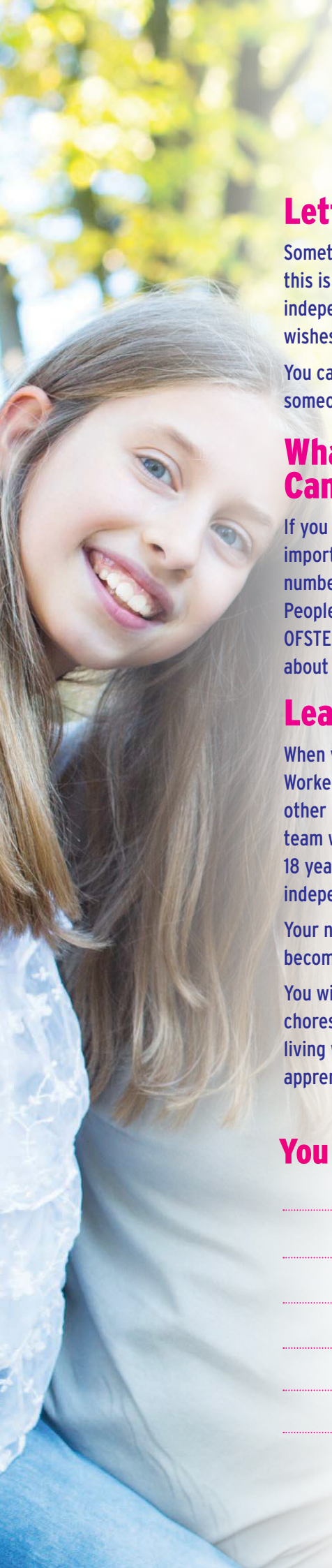
Feeling safe?

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.

Bullying

We want to make sure you are happy and safe. If you feel you are being bullied, this can be face to face, on mobile phones or on the internet at home, in school or anywhere else, you must inform an adult you feel you can trust. There are details of organisations you can contact at the back of this guide.



Letting people know how you feel

Sometimes your Social Worker may need to apply to a Court to keep you safe. If this is in progress the Court may appoint a person called a Guardian. This is an independent person who will visit you to find out how you feel and ensure your wishes and feelings are given to the Court.

You can speak to your Foster Carer, your Social Worker or an adult you trust, someone at school or college.

What if I think I am being treated badly? Can I complain?

If you feel you are being treated badly, unfairly or something is wrong, it is important that you tell someone. Young People at Heart office details and phone numbers are at the back of this guide. If you are unhappy with something Young People at Heart has done, you should tell your Social Worker or complain to OFSTED. Their details are also at the back of this guide. If you wish to complain about anyone else your Foster Carer can support you with this.

Leaving care

When you are between 16 and 17 years of age you will have a change of Social Worker from the Leaving Care Team (in some areas these teams are called other names). You will be allocated a new Social Worker or Key Worker. This team will support you with either staying with your current carer after you are 18 years of age (Staying Put Agreement) or offering support to allow you to live independently.

Your new Social Worker will develop a Pathway Plan for you, to prepare you to become more independent.

You will be taught independent living skills like cooking, laundry, household chores and budgeting money. You and your carer will discuss different areas of living within the rules of the house. Young people are encouraged to partake in apprenticeships and encouraged to get the most out of their adult life.

You may 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: 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: 0800 111111
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

CHILDREN'S

COMMISSIONER

Phone number: 0808 528 0731
Website: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.uk

NYAS

National Youth Advocacy Service
Phone number: 0808 808 1001
Website: help@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
help@coramvoice.org.uk



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