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PARENT&CHILD

YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE 12 – 18 YEARS



HELLO AND WELCOME TO PARENT AND CHILD FOSTERING SERVICE

We hope this booklet will help you find out about us and the people who want to help you while you are here. It tells you about who you can talk to whilst you are placed with our foster carer/s and when you might be feeling unhappy or have any questions.

If you want to know about anything else which is not covered within this booklet, you can ask your foster carers, your social worker, your foster carer's supervising social worker or anyone from Parent and Child Fostering Service.

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WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Foster carers look after children who need somewhere to live for a period of time whilst they are unable, for whatever reason to be cared for by their parents or within their own family. Sometimes children stay for a few days and at times longer.

Why am I here?

You are probably in foster care because you cannot live with your birth family at the moment. There are many reasons why children and young people need to come into foster care and your social worker and foster carer are there to help you understand the reasons why. Although you might be feeling worried or scared it is important to remember there are lots of people who will help you understand your feelings and hopefully make you feel better. This guide is here to help you understand what it means to be in foster care and what might happen next.

Who will look after me?

It might feel a bit strange to be looked after by adults who are not in your birth family, but this is what happens when you are in foster care. Foster carers are adults who want to look after children and young people who need a place to stay. They have their own social worker - just like you – they are called supervising social worker. Foster carers can look after children and young people safely.

Do you know how long you are going to stay with your foster carers? The Placement Planning Meeting is held within 7 days after you arrive with your foster carers and should indicate how long you may have to stay. We will make sure that we tell you as much as we are able to about your foster placement through your own social worker as well as during the placement planning meeting. You should be advised about what the longer-term plans are for you by the review meeting which should take place on you at 4 months into the placement. By this time, you should also have a Permanence Plan in place if you unable to return home just yet.

There are additional responsibilities in terms of preparing young people for the Transition to Adulthood, Leaving Care, when they are 16 years of age. This involves a Pathway Plan that incorporates the Care Plan which sets out all of the arrangements to ensure that they make a successful transition from care to independent living or to an Adult Service when you turn 18.

Staying put

There is also the 'Staying put' option and if all parties agree, young people should be able to remain with their former foster carer beyond the age of 18. Across UK, Local Authorities have various arrangements/duties to support young people who wish to remain with their former carer up to age 21 under the stay put arrangement if they are not ready to move.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Our aim is to ensure you are well cared for and that the best opportunities are open to you. By this we mean that:

Your wishes and feelings are listened to and acted on unless this is against your interests and could affect you negatively.

Your safety and welfare are maintained as our highest priority.

Your educational achievement is encouraged and promoted.

We encourage you to have a healthy positive view of yourself and your identity.

Your physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing is promoted.

You have access to a range of leisure activities for example, links with a local sports or leisure centre, dance, drama or other expressed interests.

You are supported in developing the skills you will need to become and eventually live independently for example, help with budgeting and managing money, preparing meals and making responsible decisions.

Perhaps you can think of additional areas to add to the above which you would like your foster carer to support you with. You can add these below:

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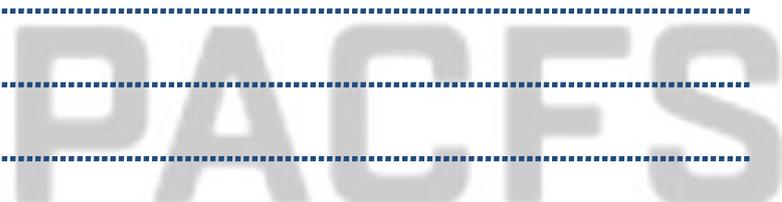
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YOUR FOSTER CARERS

Your foster carers want you to feel welcome and will make sure you have the things you need as they want you feel settled and at home with them.

Your foster carers are:

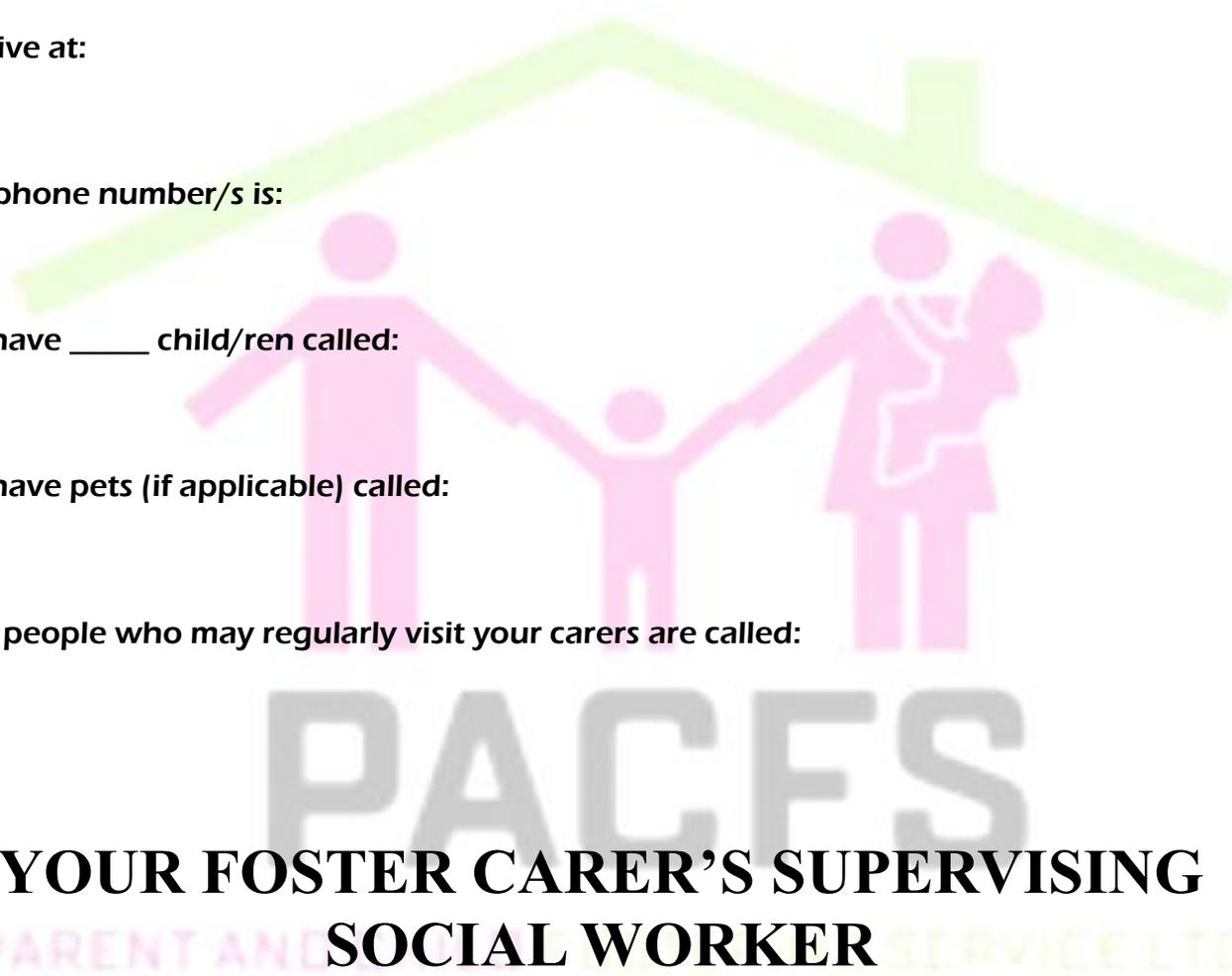
They live at:

Their phone number/s is:

They have _____ child/ren called:

They have pets (if applicable) called:

Other people who may regularly visit your carers are called:



YOUR FOSTER CARER'S SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER

Your foster carers have their own social worker to help them in their fostering role, this person is called a *supervising social worker (SSW)*. It is likely that you will see the SSW quite often because they will visit your foster carer regularly to discuss how looking after you is going. The SSW may briefly talk to you to ask how you are and how you feel the placement is going.

The SSW will be talking with your own social worker to provide updates on the progress of your placement with the foster carers. The SSW is also normally invited to attend the Looked After Child Review meeting alongside and may be involved in other 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 or just want to talk, the SSW can be approached during their visit to the foster placement - or you can call them if you like. The SSW does not however take the place of your own social worker who you are encouraged to speak to as your primary contact. However, at the same time, the SSW is available and will pass on any information you discuss to your social worker.

Your foster carer's supervising social worker is currently:

Their contact details are: 07495 981127.

WHEN CAN I SEE MY FAMILY AGAIN?

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 the arrangements for you to see them. The arrangements will usually be referred to as 'contact'.

Your foster carers will support you around contact with your family in cooperation with what your social worker and his/her department has arranged as this is expected of the carer. Prior to the start of the foster placement, if it is possible, we will arrange for you and your parent/s to visit the foster carers so that you know where you will be living for the period of time necessary.

We understand that you may want to keep in touch with your family and friends and unless there are exceptional circumstances, you have the right to see them and/or speak to them.

Your foster carers will allow you to telephone your family and see them whenever your social worker and your family say this is ok.

Your social worker and his/her manager understand that you need to know what plans are being made regarding yourself and your situation and will speak with you in relation to this. Our role will be to work closely with your social worker in ensuring the plan is followed as expected whilst you are placed with our foster carers.

EDUCATION

Who will I know at school?

You might not want people to know you are in foster care, but some teachers will need to know. One thing that will change at school is that you will have a meeting called a P.E.P. (Personal Education Plan). This is when you, your carer, social worker and teacher come together to talk about your education and make sure you are getting the right support. It is a bit like a CIC Review Meeting, but just about your education.

Will I change school?

Hopefully you will not have to change school. But if your new home is far away from your old school you might have to. This might feel hard at first, changing both school and home at the same time, but there will be people to support and help you.

Foster carers value education very highly. As a result, your foster carers will encourage you to attend school and to do your very best. We want you to achieve the best you can and will support you towards this. Foster carers will attend your personal education plan (PEP) meeting at the school, open evenings and any school social events with you.

To help your foster carer to help you, please complete the following:

My favourite subjects at school are:

.....

.....

School subjects I struggle with are:

.....

.....

School friends: names and numbers

.....

.....

.....

.....

FOOD SHOPPING

You can ask for your favourite food and also help with the shopping if you so wish.

You can also help yourself to something to eat anytime you choose - but remember not to eat or drink all of your favourite things in one go and to eat healthily for your own benefit!

My favourite meals and drinks

.....

.....

.....

I don't like-

.....

.....

Please make a list here of food and drinks you cannot have because of your religion, culture or dietary needs.

.....

.....

ACTIVITIES AND HOLIDAYS

General leisure activities within and outside the home will be encouraged, arranged and supported by foster carers.

If you have any interests, sports or hobbies for example Parkour (free running), BMX, skateboarding or long boarding, roller skating, ice skating, biking, scootering, kick boxing, tag rugby, football, street dancing, theatre groups, collecting models, magazines, horse riding, judo, or any others, these will be actively encouraged and supported.

If you are a member of a youth club or any regular club, for example swimming, football, dance, team or out of school club, this too will be encouraged.

You will not be able to take time off school for holidays however we will encourage you to go on organised school trips and it may be possible for you to join your foster carers and their family if they are planning a holiday to take place during the summer or any of the half terms.

WILL I BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING I WANT?

Probably not! When you arrive at your foster carers you will be able to view a copy of the carer's Safer Caring Policy for the household. This will be adapted early in the placement to include points which will be relevant to your own safety and protection whilst you are in the foster placement.

Your foster carers have a responsibility to keep you safe. This means they may not always be able to agree to you doing what you want to especially if there is a risk of any danger or harm to yourself.

Everywhere has rules and expectations around an individual's behaviour. There are rules about how we treat each other; rules about listening to each other, rules about keeping safe and taking good care of ourselves. Sometimes there are rules about not going into another person's bedroom or about looking after the home. There could be rules like no shoes in the lounge or no running around at teatime. Rules are put in place as they make things better for everyone. Older children will have different rules to younger children especially rules about going out and what time you come in.

Having rules doesn't mean your foster carers don't want you to have fun because they do! They just want to keep you safe as well.

Older children and teenagers may want to stay overnight with friends. It is important however for your safety that your carer knows details of who you would be staying overnight with and where. Providing this is confirmed by the carer as a safe arrangement, you will be allowed to do this. This is sensible, isn't it? We do not encourage you to stay away overnight without permission as this will cause everyone a lot of worry and you will have to be reported to the police as a missing person.

You will be able to bring friends home just as other children do and you may be able to have a friend to stay overnight. This will have to be discussed beforehand with your foster carer and agreed with the parents of your friend.

You will be able to choose your own clothes and hair style. But you cannot have body piercing or tattoos without the approval of your parent/s or social worker.

GOING OUT

Depending on your age, you may not always need to be supervised when going out on an activity or visit. However, foster carers would like to know where you are going and what time you intend to return.

COMING IN TIMES

These should be arranged with your foster carers. Later times can be arranged for particular activities.

What rules do your carers have? You could write them down here:

.....

.....

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GOING MISSING

You may sometimes leave home or return late without informing your foster carer. If this happens and they are unable to reach you, you will be reported as missing to the Police, the Local Authority Social Work Team and your foster care agency. The Police will be on the lookout for you. They will visit you at the placement once you return to talk to you about going missing. Your foster carer would also talk to you, as well as your own Social Worker. We would want you to know you also has access to an independent person carrying out a return to placement interview with you. However, It is hoped you will be able to talk to your foster carers and plan your outings properly, without the need to go missing from placement.

BULLYING

Bullying includes such things as threats, name calling, pinching, hitting, hair pulling or other types of physical intimidation or actions which deliberately upsets you.

There are many types of bullying behaviours. At the end of this booklet there are some contact details in case you are being bullied, or you know someone who is being bullied. Young people have stated that cyber bullying scares them the most - we have contact details for cyber bullying too.

If you feel that you are being bullied at school, please talk to a teacher you feel able to talk to and don't keep this to yourself. You can also tell your foster carer, your own social worker or the supervising social worker. They can really help you.

There are also other agencies which can help such as Child-Line. You can call Child-Line on 0800 1111.

There are additional names and contact numbers of people and organisations that can help you with any problem or worries you may have at the end of this booklet.

SMOKING

Smoking is known to be bad for your health and can present a potential fire risk. We would like to encourage you not to smoke and will do all in our power to support you to give it up.

If you are a habitual smoker, this will be discussed at the Placement Planning Meeting, so that you understand what rules will apply to your smoking whilst you are in the foster placement. However, you will be offered information on giving up smoking and we will try to support you with this.

DRUGS

If you have experimented in taking drugs or are being put under pressure to try drugs then we encourage you to talk to your foster carer, social worker, supervising social worker or teacher.

You can also Google: www.talktofrank.com

This website provides an A-to-Z list of substances which explains appearance and use, effects, chances of getting hooked, health risks and UK law. It also includes helpful information about peer pressure.

COUNTY LINES

County Lines is where criminal gangs or individuals groom children to transport drugs outside of the city and across the country on their behalf. Children as young as 11 are being targeted, with criminals taking advantage of vulnerabilities, such as family breakdown, poverty or learning difficulties. They offer youngsters money and promises of a better lifestyle. Once involved, experience shows it takes time to engage with victims suffering this kind of exploitation, due to the pressures they face and fear of reprisal. You may at times be approached to traffic drugs using dedicated mobile phones or 'lines'. We encourage you to talk to your foster carer or Social Worker who will be able to follow PACFS' Safeguarding Policy in this situation. You can also report anonymously to Crimestoppers.

Telephone: 0800555111

Website: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/#>

ONLINE SAFETY

We understand that a number of children and young people enjoy spending time on social media on their phones and other devices. Your Foster Carers may need to monitor and supervise your use of the Internet. Your carer will insert appropriate parental control software in ensuring you are kept safe. When on the internet, never give your details / pictures to, or open emails from those you don't know or arrange to get together with those you meet online. Your Foster Carer and social worker will need to discuss what sites you are visiting, what's ok to post and what behaviour is acceptable.

You can also access advice and guidance on: <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

SEXUALITY AND SEXUAL HEALTH

If you want to know more about how your body might be changing during puberty and adolescence and/or sexuality matters, it is always best to talk to a responsible person - you can either talk to your foster carer, social worker, the supervising social worker or your teacher about this or if you prefer to, you can Google the following websites:

kidshealth.org

www.plannedparenthood.org/info-for-teens

Live Well - NHS Choices

LGBT Youth in Care

They promote an ethos of acceptance nationwide of young people and their identity and help ensure that all young people in care are in an environment where they are safe to come out and are supported to do so.

Website: <https://www.lgbtyouthincare.com>

SEXTING

According to the NSPPC, the law says that sexting can be seen as harmless but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend.
- share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age.
- possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

However, as of January 2016 in England and Wales, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the Police can choose to record that a crime has been committed, but that

taking formal action is not in the public interest. These crime records may appear on future checks, particularly if the young person has been involved in other similar activities which could indicate they are at risk.

You could find out more about the legislation on child abuse images on <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse/>

And more on sexting on

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting>

ALLOWANCES

You are entitled to pocket money - the amount you will receive will be agreed between you, your foster carer, supervising social worker and your social worker.

You are also entitled to a clothing allowance - this amount is set according to how old you are. Your foster carer and social worker will discuss these allowances with you.

You can write down your allowances here.

My clothing allowance is:

£.....

My Religious Festivals and Birthday allowance is:

£.....

My pocket money allowance is:

£.....

You will have a bank account opened for you by your foster carers. **If you are allowed access to your bank account details, please keep these safe.**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Here are some of the questions children ask about foster care. If you have other questions, please ask us and we will provide you with an answer even if this means exploring the answer to your question first and later letting you know. Don't forget that your social worker will be telephoning and visiting you on a regular basis and so you can ask them questions too.

What about School?

If you are already in school and settled there, every effort will be made for you to remain there however if there are problems regarding school, your social worker with their manager and with your input may discuss whether it is better for you to stay or change school.

If you are not in school at the moment, the reasons will be looked at and how any problems can be resolved so that you can return to school. You might feel pleased about this, or you may not – however everyone of school age will need to be in education.

If you haven't been to school for a while and you are feeling a little nervous about this, your school, foster carer and social worker will help you with this.

Remember, school isn't just about lessons – school can help you to make new friends and provide the opportunity for you to take part in worthwhile activities including after school ones.

Will I Have My Own Room?

Whilst living in your foster carer's house, you will have your own bedroom. If you have brothers and sisters, you may share a bedroom if it is felt this is appropriate. You will be responsible for helping to keep your own room tidy.

You can use your bedroom to be on your own if you need your own space for a short time and of course you can keep your personal possessions there. Do remember however, that there will be times when your foster carer will need to enter your room to check that everything is okay, and the general tidiness is being maintained. Before entering, foster carers will knock your door. You should not go into the bedrooms of other members of the household.

Music and television in bedrooms need to be kept at a noise level which does not disturb the others.

What Do I Call My Foster Carers?

The carers will introduce themselves to you and let you know what to call them. They certainly won't expect you to call them mum and dad, but you can decide with them what is most acceptable.

How Do I Stay Healthy?

Whilst living at your foster carer's house, we encourage good personal hygiene. This will range from having regular baths/showers to brushing your teeth. Where possible, we will try to continue with your own family doctor so that if you are unwell, you can be seen by a doctor who knows you. However, if you are living a long way from your family home, we may need to change your GP, dentist or other services you attend. If this is the case, the foster carer will arrange registering you with another doctor or service. All your notes will be forwarded from your old health professionals to your new ones.

As our eyesight is very important, we need make sure we have regular checks. Your foster carers will make eye appointments and attend with you. If you have to wear glasses, foster carers will help you with choosing these.

Whilst we are growing up, we need to have certain immunisations and visits to the dentist to help maintain good health – Your foster carer will arrange these appointments for you. Your foster carers will also encourage you to eat healthily so that you are helping yourself towards remaining fit and well and do not become overweight.

What Happens If I Do Something Wrong?

During your stay with your foster carer, we will always seek to encourage and promote good behaviour with praise and rewards given. It may however be felt necessary to use certain sanctions as a consequence for behaviour considered unacceptable. The carer will always speak with you about the behaviour and depending on the behaviour itself, a reprimand may be the only response needed or the sanction may take the form of grounding, withdrawing a leisure activity, doing an additional household chore for a period. Sanctions will be given for any deliberate damage.

More information about this will be shared with you at your Placement Planning Meeting

What About My Worries?

Will I have to move again?

Can my friends come to see me?

They know I don't like beans, right?

What if I don't like the rules?

How much pocket money will I get?

What if I don't like my social worker?

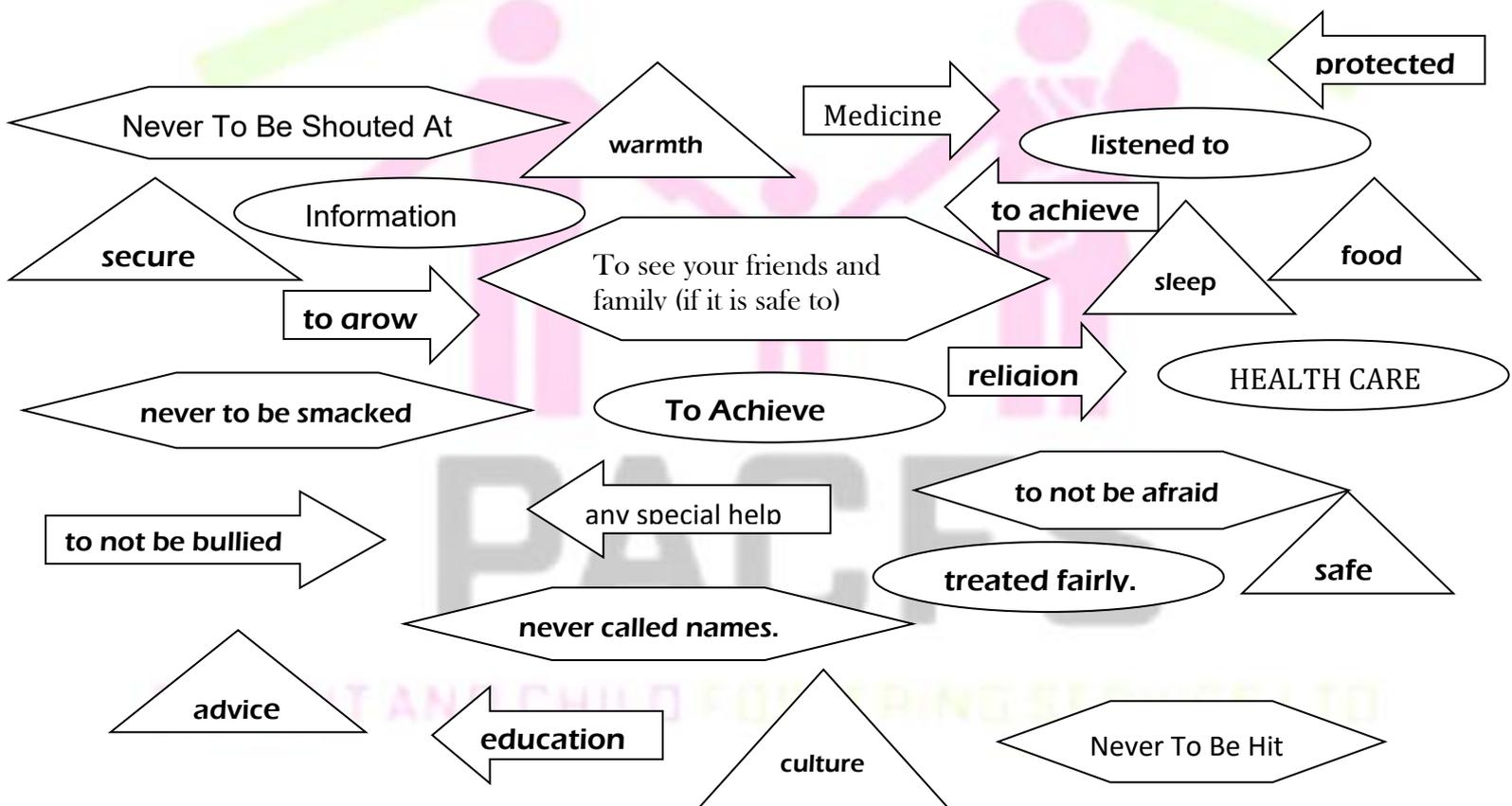
What if I don't like their children?

Your foster carers will not mind if you ask them about these sorts of things. If you would rather ask someone else, you can contact your social worker, the supervising social worker or any of the staff at Parent and Child Fostering Service.

YOUR RIGHTS

You are very special and as a looked after child or young person you can find below what your rights are.

You have the right to /be/given:



YOU MUST LET YOUR SOCIAL WORKER KNOW IF SOMEONE IS TAKING AWAY ANY OF YOUR RIGHTS. AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS GUIDE IS ALSO A LIST OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS YOU CAN CONTACT FOR HELP.

COMPLAINTS

All investigations into allegations are carried out in line with Brent Local Authority Safeguarding Children Board Policies.

Children's Social Care

Brent Civic Centre

Engineers Way

Wembley

HA9 0FD

Tel: 0208 937 1200 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

020 8863 5250. EDT out of hours

Contact details for other Local Authorities are available on request.

You are able to make a complaint at any time you want to can be about your foster carers, their children, the care you are receiving, your social worker or the foster carer's supervising social worker.

Your social worker should have given you a document telling you how to make a complaint, normally this is called 'Children's Representations and Complaints.'

You can make a complaint by

- telling the supervising social worker or your social worker
- ringing our office on 0208 733 8213 during working hours
- ringing our office out of duty hours on 07956924625
- going onto our website: www.parentandchildfostering.com
- calling up one of the senior management staff

Jesse James Harmon Fostering Manager: 07572 378258

Abimbola Ladipo-Ardegebe, Responsible Individual: 07956 904261

We will try and sort out your complaint as quickly as possible and put things right for you. This is Stage 1 of the complaints process.

If you are not happy with what we tell you at this stage, you can ask for another person such as a senior manager to look at your complaint. This is stage 2. If your complaint is really serious or you are still unhappy with what we tell you at stage 2 you can go to stage 3. Here we ask someone who is not a fostering social worker to investigate your complaint.

You can call OFSTED or the Children's Commissioner if you have a complaint, and their contact details are at the back of this booklet.

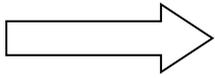
CONTACT NUMBERS

If you want to talk to somebody who is completely separate from fostering or your own social worker, there are lots of other people who may be able to help. Call one of these numbers below or alternatively email or visit the website.

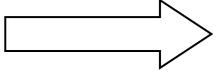
- Childline 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
- National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) 0808 808 1001 help@nyas.net
- NSPCC 0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk
- Bullying UK www.bullying.co.uk
- Kidscape 020 7730 3300 www.kidscape.org.uk/childrenteens
- National Aids Helpline – 0800 567 123
- Drinkline – 0800 9178 282
- Brook Advisory Centre – 0808 802 1234
- SupportLine – 01708 765 200
- Samaritans – 0845 7909 090
- Sexwise – 0800 282 930
- Sexting – <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting>
- Youth Access - 020 8772 9900
- Frank – 0300 123 6600 (Text 82111) www.talktofrank.com
- Think U Know – E safety <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) are the people who inspect all fostering services to make sure that we are looking after children properly. If you think we are not doing our best for you, they will listen to you and try to help.

- OFSTED National Business Unit
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester M1 2WD
Tel: 0300 123 1231



Local Government Ombudsman Tel: 0300 790 0203



The Children's Commissioner for England

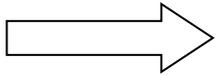
Their role is to protect the rights of children and young people, especially the most vulnerable, and stands up for their views and interests.

Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0207 783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

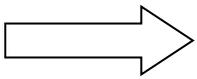


Refugee Legal Centre

The Panel of Advisors for Unaccompanied Refugee Children give advice on asylum issues and can provide help for unaccompanied refugee children. The centre can provide a free representative for appeals. Their advice line is open from 9.30am to 1pm.

Phone: 020 7780 3220

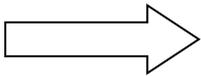
Website: <https://www.refugee-legal-centre.org.uk>



LGBTQ

They promote an ethos of acceptance nationwide of young people and their identity and help ensure that all young people in care are in an environment where they are safe to come out and are supported to do so.

Website: <https://www.lgbtyouthincare.com>



Refugee Council

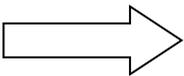
The council provides advice, advocacy and support for young asylum seekers who do not have a parent or adult to support them.

Address: 240-250 Ferndale Road

Brixton, London, SW9 8BB

Phone: 020 7346 6700

Website: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>



County Lines

You can contact Crimestoppers anonymously.

Website: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org>



Help At Hand

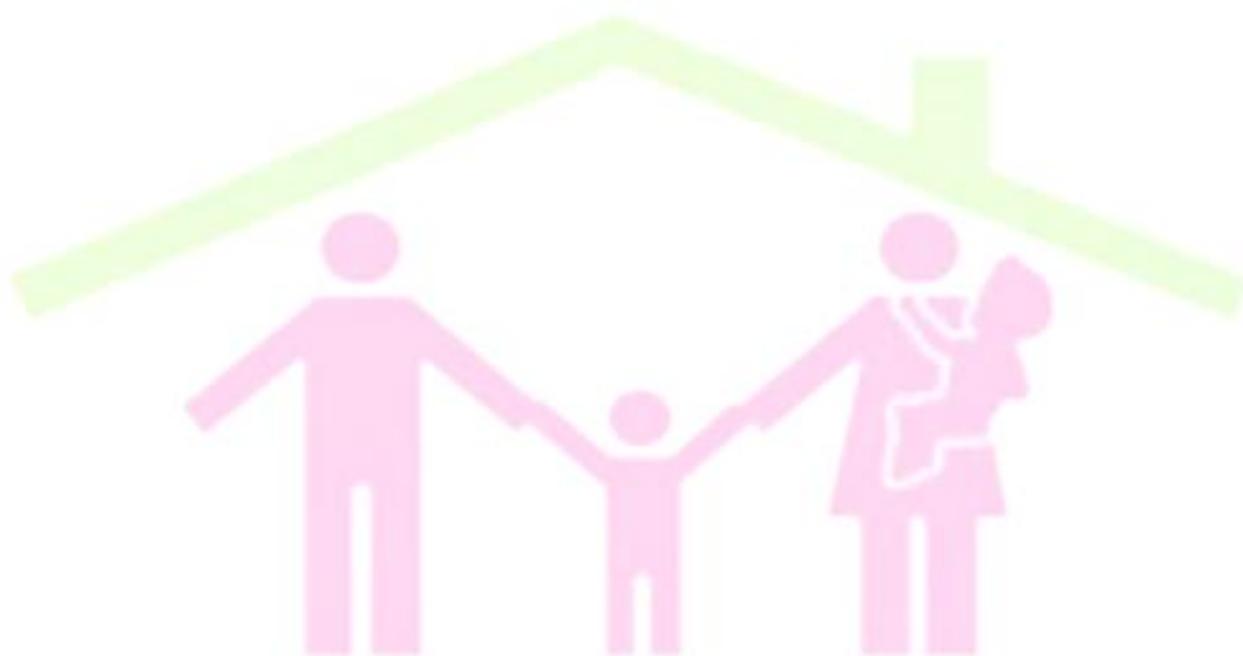
Advice service for children in care, living away from home or receiving social care services.

Freephone 0800 5380731

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand>

MY NOTES

You can use this page to write your own notes... or you can just 'doodle' on it if you prefer!

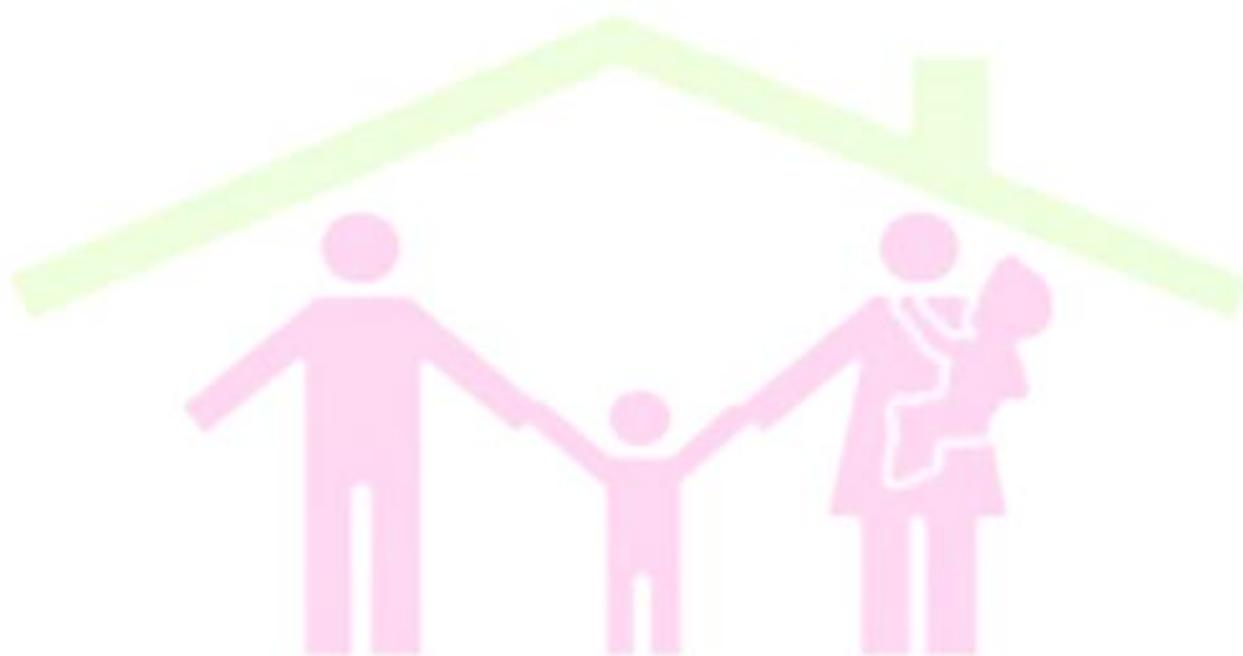


PACFS

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MORE NOTES

More notes... or doodles!



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