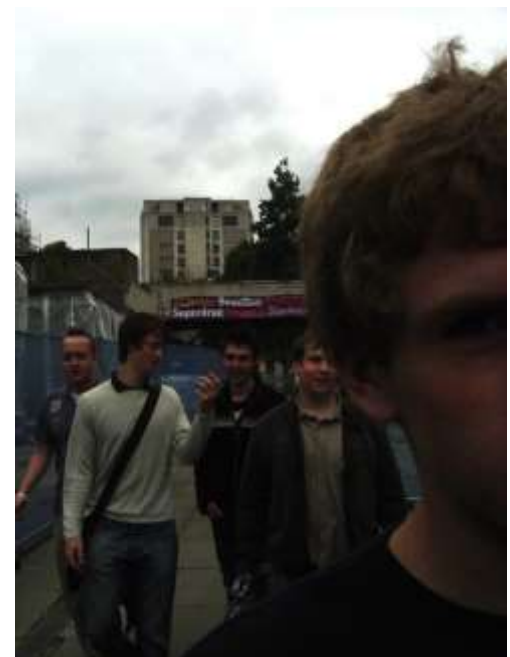


# YOUNG PERSONS GUIDE TO THE FOSTERING SERVICE age 12 and over



Things you need to know  
about being fostered



There will be over 60,000 children and young people in foster care today in England!

## Why?

Every child and young person is different,  
**And** has a different story...

- A court is deciding what should happen and/or has asked the local authority to care for you
- Or there is not an adult to look after you
- Or you may have asked to help
- Sometimes young people live with foster families while social workers are finding out if there is anyone else in your family, or someone who knows you well, who could help



Or they could be trying to find out when things will be all right for you to go back home

## Every foster family is different too!

- There may be other young people or children being fostered with the family you are living with.
- Or they may have children who have grown up, or of different ages still living at home.
- We try to make sure your foster family has a similar background to you. If this isn't possible then they get help in understanding things about your background.
- That may be - your religion, ethnic origin, language, culture (for example, things about your diet and family traditions). And they will always try to understand your health needs.
- We will help you to keep in touch with people who are important to you. We will try to keep you going to the same school/college. But if it's too far you will be helped to choose a new one.
- There will be regular visits from your social worker to discuss any problems, needs or wishes with you.



## Your foster care is individual to you and you should always feel safe and well cared for while you are with your foster family

To make sure this happens the government uses “The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (OfSTED)”. People who work for OfSTED know a lot about how children and young people should be cared for.

At regular intervals they come and inspect Be My Family Fostering Agency to make sure that all the foster carers and staff who work for us understand children’s and young people’s needs. They make sure that the standards of care are high, and that Be My Family Fostering Agency has the right people working for it.

To contact OfSTED see the back cover

To see that everyone understands what they are trying to do, Be My Family Fostering Agency has the “Statement of Purpose” which is where all the things we are trying to achieve are written down.

Here is a summary of the “Statement of Purpose” for the Fostering Service. If you want to see the full statement ask your foster carers or telephone on 02085 810352 or email: [mail@bemyfamilyfostering.co.uk](mailto:mail@bemyfamilyfostering.co.uk)



“The main aim of **Be My Family Fostering Agency** is to provide stable and first-rate foster care for children and young people of all ages. We aim to provide a fostering service where children are valued, supported and encouraged to grow and develop as individuals.”

## My rights -



- To be protected from harm
- To be able to express my wishes and feelings in the knowledge that my concerns will be taken into account
- Information about my family and other important people in my life and contact with them or a clear explanation of why it is not possible
- To be told clearly what I can do and what I am not allowed to do
- Not to be discriminated against for any reason
- To have stable and nurturing care
- To live with foster carers who have a similar background to me
- For any needs arising from a disability, or my racial, religious, sexuality and cultural needs, to be accepted and supported
- Health care that meets my needs, including emotional and mental health needs
- Support for my education
- Opportunities to develop my skills and interests
- Encouragement to participate in making decisions and plans for my future
- To be prepared for my life as an adult with the necessary help available to me while I do this
- To know how to make a complaint, and if things go wrong who can help me
- To be provided with access to a solicitor if I want legal advice about my care order, or any other legal order affecting me - such as contact with certain people in my life

Your social worker will help your foster carers check these things happen for you by making sure that everything important is written down on a special form. You should be given copies of these and you can discuss them with the social worker.

**And you should always be able to take part in decisions about your care and your future.**

## Care Plans and Reviews

A Care Plan is about decisions for your future.

A Care Plan is about setting out what is to be done for you. It is also about what you want from the plan and what you need to do to make the plan work.



Reviews are meetings which Social Services must hold for all young people who are looked after. Reviews are to agree your plan and make sure everyone is keeping to the Care Plan. Reviews are also to see whether everyone is satisfied with what is being done and to make plans for the future

You will have regular reviews while you are in foster care which will be chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). You will be told who your IRO is and how to contact them. So that your feelings can be considered carefully at the Review it is important that you attend. If you don't feel ready to attend you can let us know what you feel by filling in a Consultation Form beforehand.

Or you can do both!

You can get support and advice on completing the Form and attending the Review from your foster carers, social worker or from Be My Family Fostering Agency.

If you are not happy with the way things are being handled while you are in foster care then you have the right to complain to -

Your social worker or their boss. If you are still not happy you can speak to their boss! If you have a complaint you can get a leaflet from your social worker that is acting as your advocate.

You will be entitled to have an independent person involved in looking at your complaint. Please ask your social worker to provide you with their contact details or contact them on your behalf.

There are other people who can help and advise you. Young people who are not having regular contact with their families can have an Independent Visitor who is someone from outside Social Services and your family who can come and see you.

For more information ask your social worker.



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## Useful contact numbers:

Your social worker

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telephone

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email

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Ofsted  
Clive House, 70 Petty France, London SW1H 9EX

0300 123 4666  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

NSPCC  
(helping those children who are in greatest danger and  
distress)

0808 800 5000  
0800 1111

The Who Cares? Trust  
(a voice for children and young people in care)

020 7017 8901

Coram Voice (charity advocating for children and  
young people in care)

0808 800 5792

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