

Welcome

Your Guide to Foster Care



Children's Guide

This guide is available on C.D and in Makaton

Welcome



We hope you are going to like living here and don't feel too scared or upset.

Your social worker will talk to you about why you are living here and help make plans for your future.

While you are living at your foster carers, it is your home. We want you to be safe, happy and be able to try new things. Maybe there is something you have always wanted to do or have enjoyed before. Let your foster carer know.

This little book has lots of useful things about living in foster care. It has been made especially for you!

This book had been made with the help of children who live in foster care in Blackpool

What's in this book?



My Foster Home

Using the telephone

Pocket money

Food

Bedrooms and Bedtime

About Me

My Family

Meetings

My Feelings

Talking to me

How to complain

My School and my Friends

School

Religion and Culture

Friends

Keeping Safe

Bullying

Useful Contacts

Who else can help

All about me

My name is:

My foster carers are called

Where I live

My phone number is

My social worker's name is

My social worker's telephone no is

My birthday is



Using the telephone

Can I use the telephone?

YES. You can use the telephone to call your family and friends so long as your social worker says it is okay. Just ask your foster carer if you can use the house phone

The telephone number at my foster carers is:



Pocket Money



You will get pocket money every week. Ask your foster carer how much you will get and when.

How much pocket money will I get?

£ _____

Which day will I get my pocket money?

You may choose to save some of your money each week for special occasions such as holidays.

You could save it in a money box or the bank. If you would like to open a bank account, you can talk to your foster carer or your Social Worker about this.





Food



You can tell your foster carer what you would like to eat and your foster carer will talk to you about what foods are good for us to eat. You will be able to go with your foster carer to do the shopping so that you can choose some of your favourite foods.

My favourite foods are:

My bedroom

You will be able to have all your toys and belongings in your room and arrange them how you would like.

Your foster carer will knock on your door before they come into your bedroom, unless they are worried that you may be doing something dangerous that might hurt you. If so they may come into your room to make sure that you are safe.



What is my bedtime on a school night?

What is my bedtime on a weekend or holiday ?



Some children like to have a light on whilst they go to sleep, **let your foster carer know if you do.**



My Family

About Me

There may be lots of different reasons why you are not living with your family at this time but we know that they are still very important to you.

Your social worker and foster carer will help you to understand why decisions are made and what happens now.

You may be missing your family and wonder when you will be able to see them again. Its your social workers job to arrange for you to see your family. They will let you and your foster carer know where and how often you will see them. There are sometimes reasons why you are unable to see your family, if its not possible your social worker will explain the reasons why.

Meetings

There will be meetings with your social worker and members of your family. But most importantly, with **YOU**. The meeting will be chaired by an Independent reviewing officer (IRO) their job is to make sure you are being looked after properly and listen to your wishes and feelings when making decisions and plans for your future. If you would like to speak them please call **01253 477544**

You may choose to go to these meetings, but if you don't want to go, you may wish to tell your foster carer what you want or what you are feeling and they can tell the meeting. Just talk to your social worker or your foster carer about this.

These meetings are to check that things are going OK and that you are happy living with your new foster family. They will also talk about other things like your school, if you see your family enough, your health and what fun things you get to do.

Your Social Worker

Your social worker is someone that has been specially trained to work with children and their families. They will visit you regularly and keep in touch with your family and your foster carer. **YOUR** social worker is there to help **YOU** and **YOUR** family.

Fostering Support

A fostering support worker is someone that looks after your foster carers. They will visit your foster carer every month and would be happy to talk too you to if you have any worries.

Information about me - my file

The Fostering Service have to keep information about all the children who live with their foster carers to make sure you are looked after properly. Your social worker will also have information about you and you can ask them to see this.

My Feelings

We want you to be happy living with your foster carer and to tell them about your worries, especially if you are unhappy. They are there for you to talk to.

Whilst you are living with a foster carer you will have a care plan which says what is going to happen and how you will be looked after. Its your social workers job to write this, they will give you your own copy to read and explain it to you.

If you don't think you can tell your foster carer how you feel, talk to your social worker or you can call one of the numbers at the back of this book.

Remember your feelings are very important to us !

Talking to me

You have the right to be 'consulted' about decisions that are made about you. This means people will ask you for your views and listen to what you say. It doesn't mean you will always get what you want, but you will be told the reasons why.

Complaints

If you are not happy with the way you are being looked after you must tell someone. If you can't tell your foster carer or social worker, you should tell us how you feel so we can try and sort it out. If you cannot tell anyone it may be easier to fill in a complaints form at the back of this guide and post it in the envelope provided. (no stamp needed)

If you do have a complaint, it will be dealt with quickly and in confidence and everything you have to say will be taken seriously. The complaints system does work and we have changed the way we do things by listening to children and young people and taking on board suggestions for improvement.

Blackpool Children's Rights Service

They can help with your problems, sort out any complaints and explain your rights. They could provide you with an Advocate. This is someone who will help you get your views across to people, they can attend meetings with you and speak to your social worker, foster carer, teacher if you feel unable to do so. If you want to make a complaint, an Advocate can help you to do this. They won't talk to anyone else about the things you tell them (unless you ask them to, or unless you or someone else would be in danger if they said nothing).

Contact them on free phone [08000856234](tel:08000856234)

School & Friends



My School

You will still be able to attend your own school and see your friends. If you are worried about going into school let your foster carer or social worker know and they will speak to your teacher and help support you.

My school is called:

My school teacher's name is:

My Friends



While you are at your foster carers we know how important it is for you to still see your friends. You may want to invite them to play or tea. Talk to your foster carers about your friends coming to visit.

Remember

If you are going to play with a friend it is important that an adult knows where you are at all times or else we will all be worried about you.

If your foster carers do not know where you are they may have to tell the police, your social worker and your family.

Religion and Culture

If you would like to go to your place of worship just talk to your foster carer or social worker and they will arrange this for you. You will be able to choose clothing, hairstyles and diet to maintain your cultural identity.



Keeping Safe



When you are playing outside

When you are outdoors playing with friends or with an adult you must **NOT** talk to strangers.

When you are near animals

Also, you must not approach or stroke an animal that you do not know.

When you are on the computer

If you are on the computer, make sure you do not give anyone your address or phone number. **ALWAYS** let your foster carer know if anyone has asked you for your address or phone number. **NEVER** arrange to meet anyone you contact through the internet.



Bullying

We want you to live together happily and safely at your foster carers. We know that sometimes bullying can happen and so that we can learn friendlier ways to behave we will try to understand the feelings of all children involved.

If someone is making you feel sad or unhappy, we want you to tell someone. You can tell your social worker, a teacher, your foster carer or the fostering support worker. They will talk to you about this and try and sort the problem out.

It is important that you are able to share if someone is making you sad. You may choose to tell someone by drawing a picture, writing it down or talking to them.

If you feel that you are still unhappy and not being listened to, you could ring:

CHILDLINE on 0800 1111

Or one of the numbers at the back of this book!

Useful Contacts

This section of the book has lots of telephone numbers, addresses and websites of people who will be able to help you.

You can always call the Fostering Team if you would like :-

Contact Kirsty Fisher on [477028](tel:477028) or [477649](tel:477649)

Our Address is: Fostering Team
Progress House
Clifton Road
Blackpool
FY4 4US

Who else can help?

The inspectors who check you are looked after properly work for Ofsted.

If you are not happy living with your foster carers or if you have a complaint, you can contact anyone of the people below and they will help you.

Customer Care Team

Contact them on

Tel 01253 477700

Or e-mail them at

Social.Services@Blackpool.gov.uk

Blackpool Children's Rights Service

Free phone on

08000856324

Or e-mail them at

Childrenssociety.org.uk

Right's 4 Me (Ofsted)

Free phone **08005280731**

www.rights4me.org

Childline

Tel: **0800 11 11**

Or write to:

The Office of the Children's Rights Director

Ofsted

Aviation House

125 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

Kidscope (if you are being bullied)

Tel: **08451 205204**

or

Cybermentors.org.uk

Independent Reviewing Officer

Contact them on

01253 477544

Tell us what you think!



My Name is _____

And I think this guide is: (circle your answer)



Good



OK



Rubbish

Is there anything else you want to know?

No

Yes, I want to know

Write what you would like to know in this box:

What do I do now? Take this page out of the guide and ask your foster carer to give it to your Fostering Support Worker



Blackpool Council

BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY FOR ALL

CHILDREN'S COMPLAINT FORM

My Name is.....

I Live At.....

.....

My Telephone Number is.....

Write your complaint here:

If you need more space to write please use the back of this form.

Please send this form **(no stamp needed)** in the envelope provided to

FREEPOST NWW 6785

Customer Care Team

Blackpool Council

Children, Adult & Family Services

Progress House

Clifton Road

Blackpool

FY4 4US

Or ring us on: **01253 477700**

Or you can email us at: Social.Services@Blackpool.gov.uk