



# Parent And Child Fostering Service Ltd

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**PARENT&CHILD**  
Fostering Service

**CHILDREN'S GUIDE**



## The PACFS Children's Guide



## What can fostering offer me?

**We want you to be happy and feel safe whilst you are in foster care** – and we **do** understand that if you could choose, you would probably prefer to be at home. While you are living with foster carers however, we will do everything we can to...

- Help you to keep in touch with your family and friends
- Make sure you stay safe and healthy
- Help you sort out any problems you may have for example at school or if you are in trouble with the police
- Make sure you have a good time and feel happy!

It makes no difference to us whether you are a boy or a girl, have a disability or not, or what your background is, everyone is treated the same because we believe in **equal opportunities**.

We want to provide the very best foster placements for all children and young people who are placed with our carers!



## Your 'Care Plan' and 'Placement Plan'

Every child or young person 'in care' has a **Care Plan**. This sets out basic information about who you are and what the arrangements will be to look after you properly. Another plan - called a **Placement Plan** will be made with you when you are placed with foster carers. This will set out



how things will be organised for you in the foster home and includes what the arrangements are for you to visit your family and friends while you are there.

The **Placement Plan** will be made at a **Placement Agreement Meeting**. You will be invited to this meeting and asked how you feel about what goes into the plan.

## Planning Meetings and Review Meetings

One month after you move in with foster carers, a **Child in Care (CIC) Review Meeting** will be held to see how things are going and decide if any changes need to be made to your **Placement Plan**. There will be a further **CIC Review Meeting** three months after the first one and every six months after that.

Other meetings – called **Planning Meetings** - may be held from time to time if there are specific areas which need sorting out for you in between **Review Meetings**.

You will normally be invited to **Planning Meetings** and **CIC Review Meetings** which are about you. If for any reason you cannot take part, you will always be asked for your views and either your social worker or your foster carer will make sure these are passed on to the meeting.

## Moving into your placement

You will be told about your foster carers before you meet them. Whenever possible, you will be given the chance to meet them before you actually move in. The only exception to this is if you have to move somewhere quickly - for example, in an emergency. You will be asked how you feel about going ahead with the placement and when you think it should begin.



## Staying safe

Your foster carers are expected to do everything they can to keep you safe and help you to stay safe from **any** kind of harm while you are living with them.

If at any time you do not feel safe in your foster home, please **tell somebody** straight away such as your parent, your social worker, a teacher at your school.

## Social Workers

You will keep your own social worker when you move in with foster carers. Your carer will also have a social worker too – called a Supervising Social Worker from the Parent and Child Fostering Service.

Your social worker should keep in touch with you and visit you in your foster home to find out how you are doing. How often they come and see you will depend on how long you've been there and how happy and settled you are. It is stated within child care law that your social worker needs to visit and see you on a regular basis.

You **always** have the right to speak to your social worker in between visits and your foster carers are expected to help you to contact them if you want to. For example, you can telephone your social worker at their office – or your foster carers can also telephone them for you.



## Contact with family and friends

We know how important this is. Arrangements for you to keep in touch with your family and friends should be discussed and agreed with you at your **Placement Agreement Meeting** and written into your **Placement Plan**.

You will be helped with your bus/Metro fares if you go to visit and will also be allowed to use the foster carers' telephone to keep in touch with your family and friends.

## Staying over (with friends)



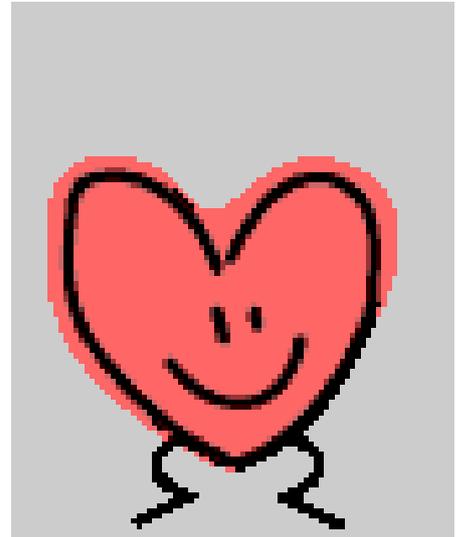
Overnight stays with your family will usually be agreed in advance and written into your **Placement Plan**.

If you are invited to stay overnight at a friend's house, you will also need permission - so tell your foster carers as soon as you can. If they are happy with the arrangements for this and **believe you will be safe**, they can give you permission. If they are not sure, however, they **have** to ask your Social Worker to decide.

## Relationships

We hope you will both keep in touch with your friends and make new ones while you are in foster care. We know how much having relationships with people we like, helps us to feel happy and this includes those with boyfriends or girlfriends when the relationship is going well!

Your foster carers are expected to 'be there' for you as someone to talk to if you are having problems with **any** relationship. They can also help with advice around sexual health and contraception - don't be embarrassed or afraid to ask.



## Pocket money and clothing allowance



You will be given pocket money every week while you are in foster care – unless you are working and have an income of your own. How much you actually receive depends on your age – Ask your Social Worker to find out for you.

The foster carer gives you money to buy clothes depending on your age. As you get older, you should also be given the chance to choose and buy your own clothes (when this will actually begin will normally be agreed with you at a **Planning Meeting** or **CIC Review Meeting**)

## Respect and privacy...

While you are living with foster carers, you can expect to be treated with respect - this also applies to your possessions. You can also expect some privacy, for example, regarding your bedroom.

In the same way, you will be expected to treat your foster carers and their home, with respect – and allow them some privacy too.

We all have 'off' days, but if everyone thinks about how they behave (and how what they do could affect other people around them) they usually get on OK – most of the time anyway!



## Boundaries

Obviously there have to be some rules – for example: coming in times, bedtimes, how loud you can play your music, etc. These should be discussed and agreed with you before you move in or as soon as possible after you move to your foster carer's home.



If you deliberately break these rules, or get into trouble outside of the foster home, foster carer will want to speak with you about this and there may be a reasonable 'sanction', for example you may be 'grounded' for a short time or not allowed to watch TV for a couple of hours or so.

You will **never** be physically hit by the carer and **never** stopped from making an arranged visit to see your family. Your foster carer will always try to discuss things with you depending on your age and level of understanding.

## Running away...

There are at times occasions when a person may feel like running away but this doesn't help to sort things out! Because we want to keep you safe, if you ever do run away, your foster carers **have to** inform the Police (as well as tell Social Services, of course)

If you are likely to be late getting back to the foster home at anytime, it is a good idea to telephone and let your carers know – in case they become worried and report you 'missing'!

## Bullying

No one has the right to bully you – whether you are in foster care, or not! We know however that it can happen, perhaps at school or when you are out with your friends.

Bullying includes things like:

- people making up things to get you in trouble,
- hitting, pinching, biting, pushing and shoving you
- taking things away from you,
- stealing your money or food, calling you names,
- spreading rumours about you,
- threatening and intimidating you



If you are **ever** bullied, please **tell somebody** at school and/or at home – then your social worker and/or foster carer can help you work out what to

do to make sure the bullying stops. You can also visit [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk) or contact Child Line on 0800 1111

More contact details are on Page 9.

## Smoking, alcohol and drugs

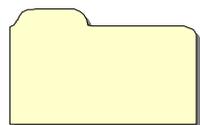
Foster carers cannot give you permission (if you are under 16) to smoke, drink, or take drugs while you are living with them - they have to abide by the law too! They are also expected to help you to stay healthy.

If you are over 16 and do smoke, you will be expected to agree where this is OK whilst you are in the foster placement.



This will not be your bedroom, as it could be a fire risk and is likely to be outside in the garden.

## Seeing your file



You can ask to see what is written about you on your file – usually the comments which have been made by your Social Worker and your foster carers. In many cases, what is written down will come as no surprise as it would have been shared with you anyway.

If you want to see your file, you will need to ask your Social Worker to arrange this for you. You also have a right to add your own views about what is written.

## Health and medical

We want you to enjoy good physical and mental health while you are in foster care. You will be provided with any medical/dental treatment you need and will be given the chance to have a medical check up (with your own doctor) each year, to make sure you stay fit and well.



## School and college



Your foster carers will help you attend either school or college, provide you with either dinner money or a 'packed lunch'... and even support you with your homework!

We want you to do as well as you can at school and/or college, as this should help you to get a good job eventually. If you have problems at school or college, your foster carer and your Social Worker are expected to help you try and sort them out.

## Respite Care

Everyone needs a break now and again! Your foster carers are no different and have the right to some time on their own. It may be suggested that you stay with someone else (maybe other foster carers) for a short while. You will **always** be told about this in advance and should be given a say as to what happens, who you stay with and so on while your carers have their break.

## Online Safety

We understand that a number of children and young people enjoy spending time on social media on their phones and other mobile devices. Your Foster Carers may need to monitor and supervise your use of the Internet. Your carer will install appropriate parental control software. 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.

## Leaving Care/Placement and 'Pathway Plans'

Before you are due to transfer to the Leaving Care Team, there will be changes in social workers. You will be allocated a new Social Worker or Personal Advisor from the Leaving Care Service who will make a plan with you called a **Pathway Plan**. This plan focuses on what should happen as you move towards independence. You will be given advice and help with accommodation when the time comes and any financial help you are entitled to.

If you are in full term education, you will be supported until you are 21 years old, or 25 if you are attending university or college. If you have a disability, you will be supported until you are 24 years old.

Social Services will continue to offer you some support when you start living independently or move into supported lodging and this support should remain in place until you feel fine about being on your own.

## Complaints...

It's always best to try and sort things out by talking to your foster carers or your Social Worker. If this doesn't work, and you feel strongly about the way you are being looked after, you have the right to make a formal complaint. You will receive details of how you can make a complaint when your placement commences.

## Contacts



For your information, we are suggesting the following people / organisations that may be able to help you.

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

**Your foster Carer.**

**Your teacher.**

**Your Social Worker.**

### **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

### **The National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)**

You can obtain help to complain from NYAS, who will assign to you an advocate. An advocate is someone who speaks up on behalf of someone else and helps them to get the things that they are entitled to. They can attend meetings with you and support you to get your message across.

E-mail: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net): Free phone- 0800616101

### **Voice of the Child in Care (VCC)**

If you are unhappy with decisions that have been made about your care you can call VCC to speak to an advocate.

Freephone: 0808 800 5792 Website: [www.vcc-uk.org](http://www.vcc-uk.org)

### **CHILDLINE.**

This is a 24 hour helpline for children who are at risk of being hurt or abused.

Free Phone: 0800 1111 Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### **Who Cares? Linkline**

If you are a child or young person who is being looked after, then this special service is for you. Who Cares? is a voice for children living in care and acts as their champion. They believe every child in care should receive the support, encouragement and opportunities they need to enjoy their life and to achieve.

Helpline: 0207 251 3117

Website: [www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk)

## **Think U Know – Home**

Guide to internet safety and safe surfing for young people from age 5. Learn about online safety when chatting, using blogs, online gaming, etc.

Website: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk>

## **OFSTED**

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's services and skills is the government appointed body which inspects organisations which provides services for all children and young people. Parent and Child Fostering Service and your school are regularly inspected by OFSTED. OFSTED will listen to your complaint and views and you are able to make a complaint directly to them using the contact details below.

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street,

Manchester

M1 2WD

E-mail: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) Help line – 0300123 1231

## **The Children's Commissioner for England**

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

Tel: 0207 783 8330

Email: [info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Website: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

