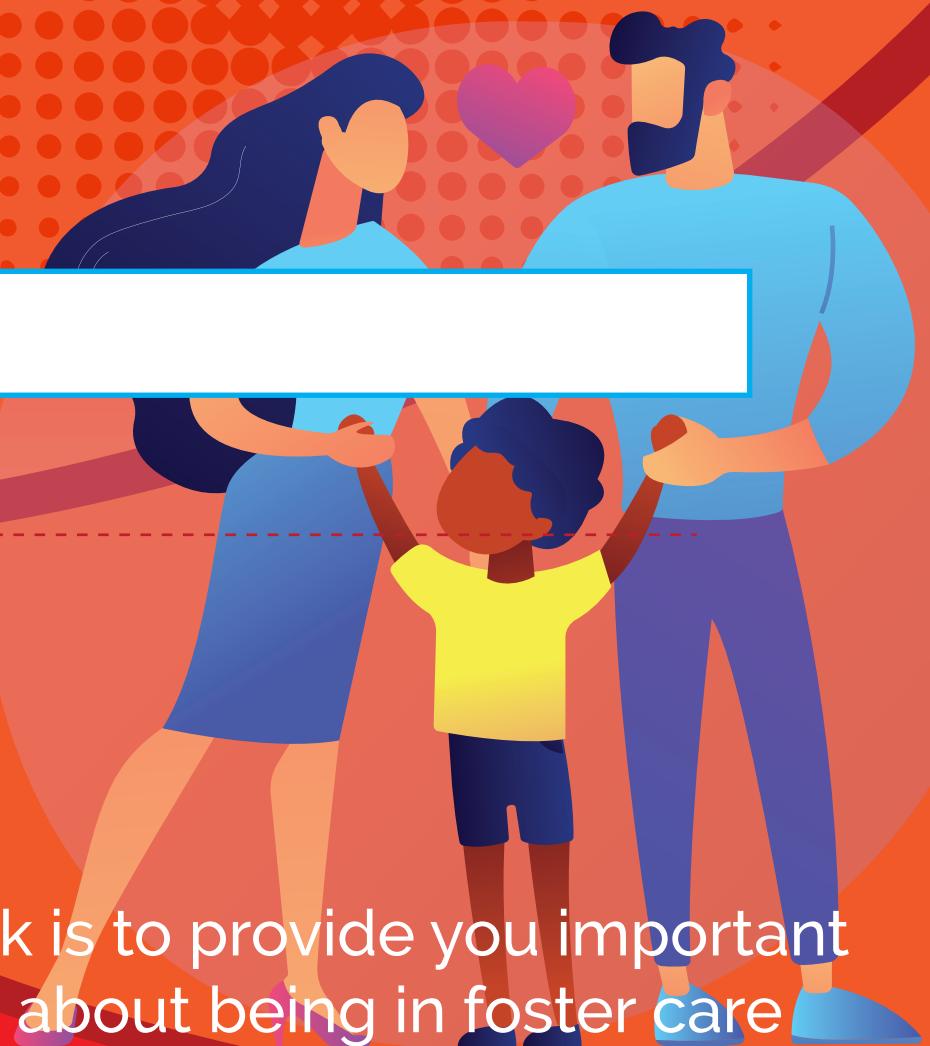




A GUIDE TO **FOSTER CARE** FOR CHILDREN **Age 12-18 yrs.**

Dear [redacted]



This handbook is to provide you important information about being in foster care with Britannia



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WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Fostering is a special service set up for looking after children and young people who are unable to live with their parents.

THERE ARE 3 MAIN TYPES OF FOSTERING

EMERGENCY/RESPITE FOSTERING

This is for a very short time maybe a few days or weeks, this is usually for children who need to take some time out from their home. Social services will find them a family who they can stay with for a short time.

LONG – TERM OR PERMANENCY

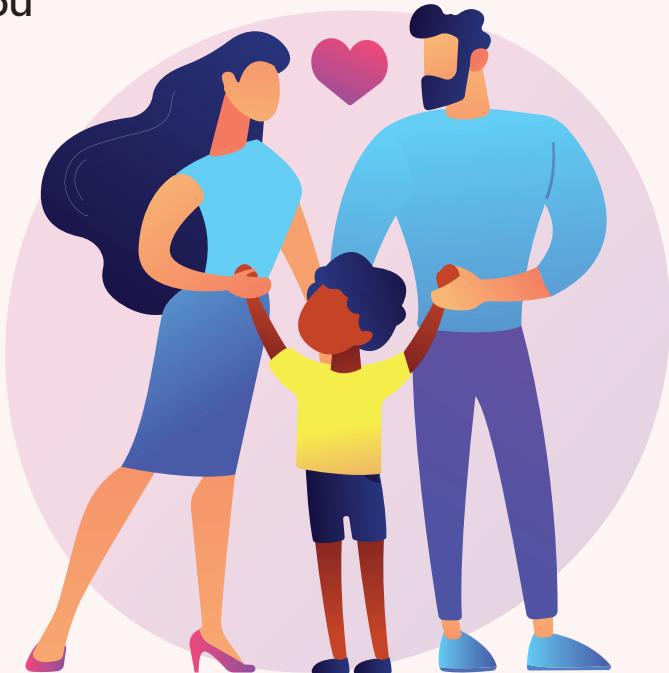
This is when a child or young person is placed with a foster family for a long time, usually for a number of years or until they have grown up.

SHORT – TERM FOSTERING

This is when a child or young person is placed into care, short-term can be for a few weeks or sometimes longer.

YOUR SOCIAL WORKER

Your own social worker works for the Local Authority – that's the area you live in. They are in charge of making sure you are looked after very well. Your social worker will visit you at your foster home to make sure that you are happy. Your social worker can help and you should feel happy talking to them about things that are worrying you



YOUR CARE PLAN

When you go and live with foster carers your social worker will talk to you about why you are living there and how long you will be staying. This will be written in more detail in your Care Plan. Your Care Plan will be looked at in a meeting which is called a Looked After Review by someone called an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). Your IRO will make sure you have your say about what you want to happen and will talk to you about how you can give your views.

The care plan is the plan for your future and covers all the important things like:

- ✓ How long you are going to be in foster care
- ✓ Contact with your family and friends
- ✓ Your education
- ✓ Your health
- ✓ Leisure activities
- ✓ Leisure activities



To start with the care plan is written by the social worker and their manager. After this, it is reviewed and changed whenever necessary at a review meeting

WHY DO I HAVE TO LIVE WITH A FOSTER CARER?

Children live with foster carers for all sorts of reasons, but it's not because of anything you have done wrong. When a child cannot live with their own family, they can live in a foster home for a while. Moving into a new and different family is not easy, but your Social Worker and your foster carers want to make sure you are in a safe, caring and happy home.



YOUR INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER

An Independent Reviewing Officer's (also known as IRO) main job is to make sure that your care plans which is all about you and where you will be living meets your needs.

- ✓ They will chair your looked after care review
- ✓ By letting you have your say in your review
- ✓ By following up to make sure that people actually do what they agreed to do.

At your Review, it is very important that you make sure that your IRO knows how you feel and what you would want to happen.

Your IRO's job is also to make sure that the Local Authority (For whom your social worker works for) knows when everything is going well but also to find out if there are anything they can help you with.



TEN important things to know about your IRO

1. If you are in care (or “looked after”) the local authority must appoint an IRO for you
2. Your IRO chairs your case reviews.
3. If you have brothers and/or sisters in care they too will have the same IRO as you do.
4. You should know who your IRO is and how to make contact with him/her.
5. You should keep the same IRO for the whole time that you are in care.
6. If you are a parent yourself of a child who is also in care, you both will have the same IRO but in some situations will have a different IRO.



7. You should be given written information explaining the role of the IRO, and telling you what you can do if things decided at your review are not carried out.
8. If your IRO leaves (perhaps to go to another job or retire) they must introduce you to your new IRO.
9. Apart from your first week in care, you should never be without an IRO.
10. Your IRO should meet with you in person before your first review.

HOW TO CONTACT AN IRO?

Your social worker or the Agency's supervising social worker can provide this information for you. You can also take your IRO's contact details when you meet him/her at your first review.

Do you know who is your IRO? Write his/her name here:

WHO'S WHO?

There are lots of workers who are responsible to make sure that you are okay and they are part of something called a care team. This means they will work together and listen to your views about how you are cared for and any worries that you may have.

Your social worker

Every child who is fostered has their own social worker.

Your social worker is:



Your social worker's telephone number is:

Your fostering social worker

Every foster carer has their own social worker.

Your fostering social worker's name is:

Your fostering social worker's telephone number is:

If there is anyone else you can keep their details below:

Name: _____

Telephone number: _____

BRITANNIA FOSTERING AGENCY

Going to live with Foster Carers can be a really difficult and emotional time. Every young person's circumstances are different. Some young people may be pleased to be fostered. Others may be scared and angry. It's natural to have all sorts of different feelings. This Guide is to help you understand fostering and how your foster parent(s) will look after you. It tells you about Britannia Fostering Agency and other adults you can talk to about anything you want, even when things make you unhappy. If you need help to read or understand anything in the Guide, your foster carer will help you.

Your foster carers have their own fostering Supervising Social Worker. These people work for a company called Britannia Fostering Agency. Their job is to make sure your foster carers are looking after you properly and have all the help they need. These people will also talk to you to make sure you're happy and well cared for.



Your Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker is: _____

Their contact number is: _____

Their email is: _____

Our Address is: _____



YOUR FOSTER CARER'S

Foster carers are people who have been approved especially to care for children and keep them safe.

We understand that it can be very difficult moving into a new home and meeting your foster carers for the first time. Your foster carers will make you feel welcome and safe in your new home.

You will have lots of questions like:

WHAT DO I CALL MY FOSTER CARERS?

You should ask them; they won't expect you to call them 'Mum' or 'Dad'. If you talk about it then you can find out what everyone is happy with.

MY BEDROOM?

You will have your own bedroom or you may share with your brother or sister. Your bedroom is your own space. You should try to keep it tidy. Your bedroom is your place to keep your personal belongings and anything that is important to you

YOUR RIGHTS

All adults should listen to you and treat you fairly all the time, even when you have done something they are not happy with.

When you want to find out about something or want some advice then your foster carers will help you. You can also speak to your social worker or the Britannia social worker. You should tell your foster carer about yourself, what your favourite foods are and what you like doing.

You have the right to be kept safe at all times.

You should receive a healthy and balanced diet and plenty of exercise.

When you are 18 you will have the right to read your file.

Every child has the right to an education.

You will receive pocket money, and your carers will save money for you in your bank account.

You have the right to know why you are in care.



WHO WILL SUPPORT ME AS I GET OLDER AND NEED TO MOVE ON?

As you start to think about leaving school and getting ready for adult life your foster carers will do their best to make sure you have all the skills you need to move on. They will help you with cooking, washing, managing money as well as lots of other things depending on your needs. We will work with you, your social worker and everyone else involved to agree and follow your “Pathway Plan” to independence Expect to be treated with respect!

Your Pathway Plan talks about your future plans and aspirations.

We all need to make sure we do this when the time is right for you and you feel ready. If and when you move on, we hope that you will keep in touch with your foster carers and they will be pleased to keep in touch with you.

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 Safe Care Policy 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. Expect to be treated with respect!



POCKET MONEY

When you are living with your foster carers you will get pocket money every week. The amount you get will depend on how old you are.

USING THE PHONE

We want you to be able to keep in touch with your family and friends, but it's important that this is done in a safe way. Your foster carer and social worker will talk to you about this. Remember we always want you to feel safe and not frightened in your foster home, if you don't feel safe you should talk to someone about this to help you sort it out

MAKING A COMPLAINT

What to do if you need to complain. If you are not happy about the way you are being looked after, or feel you are not getting the help you need, you have the right to complain. You can ask your foster carers or social worker to sort things out, or you can ask the fostering social worker who visits your foster carer to help you.

YOU ALSO HAVE THE RIGHT TO TALK DIRECTLY TO AN ORGANIZATION CALLED OFSTED IF YOU LIVE IN ENGLAND. THEIR DETAILS ARE:

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,

Manchester M1 2WD

0300 123 1231

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

0300 123 4666

(Contact Ofsted about any concerns)

CIE@ofsted.gov.uk



THERE ARE ALSO OTHER ORGANISATIONS THAT YOU CAN CONTACT SUCH AS:

Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

020 7783 8330

info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Bullying UK

www.bullying.co.uk

For advice and support on dealing with bullying

0808 800 2222

BECOME

The charity for children in care and young care leavers

15-18 White Lion Street

London N1 9PG

0800 023 2033

advice@becomecharity.org.uk

NSPCC

The UK's Children's Charity

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road

London- EC2A 3NH

0808 800 500

help@nspcc.org.uk

Childline is a service provided

by NSPCC



EMERGENCIES

If you think there is an emergency call for help on 999

straight away - you will speak to a person called an operator who will listen to you and tell you what to do.

If you have a problem in your foster home at night, on weekends, or in the holidays and can't get in touch with your social worker you can call the Emergency Duty Team on and they will try and help you.

Remember to keep this little book somewhere safe so you can come back and read it any time you need to!