



CARING
HEARTS
FOSTERING

CHILDREN'S GUIDE

11-18 years





WELCOME

CARING HEARTS FOSTERING have prepared this guide for Children and young people who are no longer living with their birth family and are living with a foster family.

We want you to read this guide. Don't worry if you are unable to read. We will ask your foster carers to help you to read and understand the information it contains as well as your rights as a foster child. Keep your Guide in a safe place, but if you misplace it please ask your social worker for another copy.

The important thing to remember is that Caring Hearts Fostering are here to meet your needs and to make sure that you are safe and well cared for in your foster family.

- 4** What is Fostering?
- 8** Your Social Worker
- 10** Your Family & Friends
- 14** About School
- 17** Your Rights
- 10** What type of roles do I have to follow?
- 18** Your Foster Carers
- 19** About Bullying
- 22** Complaints
- 26** Contacts



What is Fostering?

FOSTERING is when a single person or a couple is given permission to look after a foster child in their home. They help to keep children safe and feel like a part of their family. They will help foster children to keep in touch with your parents and other important people in your life. They will help them with schoolwork, look after their health and give them enjoyable activities to do. Foster carers do lots of things but the most important is to keep them safe.

Who is Caring Hearts Fostering?

CARING HEARTS FOSTERING is a fostering Agency with a Director, a manager a group of social workers and foster carers. We ask people from all sections of the community to take on the special role of becoming foster carers. We train them to look after foster children. Before we place you with a foster family, we ask a group of individuals to make sure that the people we have recruited are fit to look after foster children. This group is called a Fostering Panel. Our social workers will visit the foster home to make sure that your needs are being met. The social worker will talk to your foster carer and to you.

Who are Foster Carers?

FOSTER CARERS are everyday people who want to care for children. They have space in their home and want to give a child a home. Some foster carers may have young children and some may have grown up children who are no longer living with them. Foster carers want to love children and help them to do their best. Some carers have a partner and some are single.

FOSTER CARERS come from different backgrounds; some come from different racial groups, speak different languages, and wear clothes that fit their culture and religions. We match and place you with the foster family that will best meet your individual needs.



Why do I have to live with foster carers?

It is usually because you cannot live with your parents or other members of your family. It can be as a result of Social Care asking us to find you a foster home.

Do Foster Carers become my parents?

No. **FOSTER CARERS** cannot take the place of your parents, but they act like parents and look after your daily needs. They can help you to tell your social worker and a social worker from Caring Hearts Fostering if you are worried about something.



Living in a foster home...

Moving into a new foster home can be an anxious and frightening experience for a child, simply because you do not know the people who are going to look after you.

Everything will feel strange but as you get to know the family your fears will become less worrying.

Living in a foster home will be different to living with your own family. All families have different ways of doing things. You will need to settle down and adjust.

All families have rules such as bedtime routines, school routines, meals, tidying your room and so on. We ask foster family set out some rules and include you in saying what rules you would like to have. For example, one of your rules might be knocking on your door before anyone enters your room. Your foster carers' rule might be that there must be bedtime routines.

If you are unable to keep to the rules we will have a meeting with your social worker to discuss what to do to help you abide by the rules.

How long will I stay with a Foster Family?

The law says that if children need to live in a foster family, it can be for a short period like one night or for several weeks or months. Depending on what is happening in your family you could stay with a foster carer for several years and until you are 18 or ready to live on your own.

How do you plan for my needs?

When you go to live with a foster family we have meetings with your social worker and agree on a plan that will meet your needs. It is called a childcare plan. We attend meetings regularly to make sure that everything we do fits in with your plan. The childcare plan is like having a map to follow.

Who is a Social Worker?

A social worker is a person who has been trained to work with children and adults. When a child is looked after, Social Care has overall responsibility for the child. They will ask a social worker to visit you in the foster home to make sure that you are well cared for. If you have a problem the first person to talk to is your social worker. They can talk to us or ask for a meeting to sort out any problems.

Who is a Supervising Social Worker?

CARING HEARTS FOSTERING also have supervising social workers that they employ. They are also trained, but they visit the foster home to talk to the foster carer and will work closely with them to make sure that they are doing the job we ask them to do. We all work together for your best interest.

Getting to know you better...

In order to get to know you better your social worker will share some information about you with Caring Hearts Fostering and your foster carer. We will also share information with you about your new foster family.

Getting on with others...

You may not be the only child in the foster carer's home. They may have their own children or other foster children. Learning to live with and get along with them is important. You may not feel comfortable at the beginning of your placement, but the more you try to get along with everyone in the house the more you will enjoy living with your foster carers.



Will I have my own room?

Yes, we ask foster carers to provide a room for a child or young person. This will keep you safe and secure. It is important that you join in family activities as much as you can and not stay in your room all the time.

Can my friends visit me?

Yes, your friends can visit in the same way as if you were at home, but they are not allowed to go to your room. They must visit with you in the living room where the foster carer can keep an eye on you and make sure that you are safe.





Can I visit my friends at their home?

Yes, as long as it is agreed with your social worker and your foster carer knows where you are going. You must act responsibly and give them contact numbers and address where they can reach you. If you leave your foster home to visit one friend do not leave and go somewhere else without permission. That would make you unsafe and we do not want you to be unsafe.

Can I see my family?

Whether or not you are able to see your family will depend on your childcare plan and what your social worker asks us to do. In most cases children have face-to-face contact with their parents. If it is unsafe a responsible adult will supervise your contact. This may not be your foster carer. Your foster carer will take you to a venue where the contact is to take place and will collect you at a time that is agreed by everyone.

Can I have sleepover with my friends?

As long as a sleepover is arranged in advance with your social worker and your foster carer it is possible. Arrangements will have to be made before you leave the foster home. Your foster carers should know the friend you are going to sleep over with and feel happy that you will be safe. Your safety will always be the foster carer's responsibility.

What about other types of contact?

Yes, but it will depend on what your social worker ask us to do. You can have contact with your parents and people who are important to you by telephone, email, Skype and other social media but depending on your circumstances some of these types of contact may also need to be supervised. We understand that it is important for you to have contact with the people who are special to you.



Do I have to change my school?

It is important to maintain your stability while everything else around you is changing. School is very important because this is where you will see most of your friends. If you are attending school and everything is going well, we will help you to continue attending the same school.

What if my school outside the area where my foster carers live?

If you are living with foster carers who do not live close to your school but you are doing well at school we will arrange transport for you to get there.

Will my teachers know that I am fostered?

We work with professionals, so it will be important to tell your teachers that you are being fostered, but we will ask them to keep it confidential and only share information with people who need to know about you.

Can I do leisure activities?

- **YES.** It is important for children and young people to exercise to keep healthy. Each child is an individual and you will have activities that you are interested doing. Your foster carer will help you to continue any leisure activities you like or help you to develop an interest in new activities.
- You will be doing leisure activities at school such as sports and trips to interesting places, but you can also do activities after school and during the holidays.

What kind leisure activities can I do?

- Anything that you are interested in, as long as it is safe and you gain enjoyment from doing it.
- Having a holiday away from home is a leisure activity. It is a time when families go away, relax and have fun.
- Your foster family can take you on a holiday if it is agreed with your social worker and your parents in some cases. You can only go abroad with your foster carers if your social worker gives permission for you to do so and if you have a passport.



What rights do I have as a foster child?

You have the same rights as any other child living in the U.K. A law called the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that you have the right to:

- ✓ **LIVE IN A PERMANENT FAMILY:** this should be your own family, but when this is not possible it could be with a foster family.
- ✓ **RELAX AND PLAY:** so you can enjoy your childhood.
- ✓ **FREEDOM TO EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS:** this means that we must allow you to make a contribution to decisions that are made about you.
- ✓ **BE SAFE AND HEALTHY:** which mean keeping you safe and giving you the opportunity to eat a healthy diet and have regular exercise.
- ✓ **BE EDUCATED:** which means that you must go to school or college depending on your age.
- ✓ **ECONOMIC SECURITY:** which means that we must give you pocket money so that you can learn how to budget and save.

What if my social worker or my parents do not give permission?

We will talk to your social worker and to you about finding another foster carer for you to stay with for a short time. We will ask our foster carer to keep in contact with you while they are away.

You and your health...

All children should be healthy and happy. Our foster carers will give you a good diet and lots of activities to keep you healthy. We also ask our foster carers to make sure that you get rest by setting bedtimes. If you are unwell they will take you to see a doctor and get advice about how to look after your health.

Some young people can take themselves to see a doctor and we ask foster carers to help you do so.



Will I get pocket money?

Yes, you will be given pocket money and the amount you get will depend on your age.





Are you being bullied?

Bullying happens when one or more persons makes jokes about the way you look, the colour of your skin, your disability or just because you are different to them. They may ask you to hand over your money, to give them your lunch; they may hit you or force you to do something that you do not want to do. They may make you feel uncomfortable or afraid. If this happens to you, please tell your social worker, or a teacher or our social worker at Caring Hearts Fostering. We make sure that it stops.

Your Foster Carers must:

- ✓ Look after you like a good parent.
- ✓ Allow you to speak up and express your opinions.
- ✓ Ask you about your wishes and feelings.
- ✓ Involve you in any meetings like family meetings and planning meetings.
- ✓ Be your advocate. This means standing up for you when it is necessary.
- ✓ Keep you safe so you will not be harmed in any way, by anyone.
- ✓ Make sure that you have regular medical and dental checks.
- ✓ Give you a healthy diet and encourage you to exercise.
- ✓ Support you to see your family and friends if this is a safe.
- ✓ Make sure that you follow your religion, cultural traditions, and language.
- ✓ Give you pocket money and help you to budget and save for the future.
- ✓ Give you a room you can call your own and allow you to have privacy.
- ✓ Show you have to behave and have respect for others.
- ✓ Show you how to complain so that you can feel contented and happy in your placement.
- ✓ Help you to read this guide if you want them to do so.

CARING HEARTS FOSTERING will talk to foster carers and train them in how to support you at home and at school.





What is Cyber-Bullying?

CYBER BULLYING is when someone you know or do not know bullies you online and social media. They may make threats against you, send you pictures or ask you to take off your clothes. They poke fun at you or ask you to do things that make you feel uncomfortable. As soon as it begins tell someone you can trust like your foster carer or social worker or a teacher about it.

Your foster carer must:

- Have parental controls on all social media.
- Have telephones, televisions and computers in a place where they can supervise your use of social media.
- Help you to manage your mobile phone.
- Look at the sites you are visiting.
- Give you advice and information.

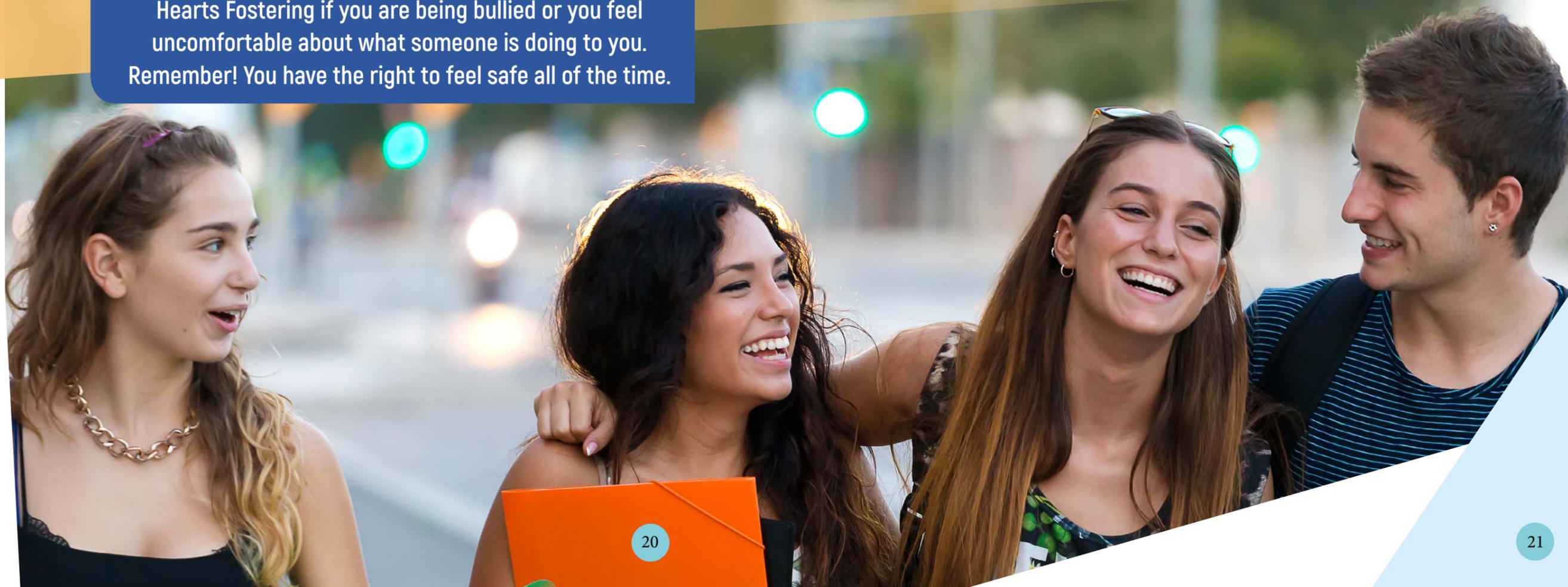
You can always come and talk to any person at Caring Hearts Fostering if you are being bullied or you feel uncomfortable about what someone is doing to you. Remember! You have the right to feel safe all of the time.

Moving on...

A time will come when you will move on from foster care. You may move because the foster family is:

- No longer meeting your needs.
- You are not well matched with them.
- Your behaviour is a problem.
- You are returning home.
- You are moving on to a residential establishment.
- You are leaving care.

In each of these situations we will prepare you to move on and help you will life skills. In some cases a young person may decide to stay on with their foster carer, but your social worker will make an agreement with us to enable you to 'stay put'.





How can I complain if I am unhappy about Caring Hearts Fostering?

Everyone has the right to complain if they are unhappy. We encourage you to speak up and tell us if you feel unhappy. Remember that people make mistakes from time to time and things do not always go as we would like them to. If you find that you are telling your foster carer about your unhappiness and nothing is being done about it, you have the right to make a complaint.

What you must do if you want to make a complaint?

When you make a complaint we must help you know that we are listening to you. Here is what will happen if you make a complaint:

What you must do:

- Do not shout and swear at people.
- Talk to us and tell us what your complaint is all about.
- You can make your complaint by email, text or by telephone.
- Making a complaint in this way is better than word of mouth because it will allow us to keep a record. But if you are unable to use the methods above, talk to us and we will record your complaint.

What can I do if I am unhappy in my foster family?

We would like you to tell us if you are unhappy. It is very important for us to listen to you so that you can have your say. You must not be afraid to tell us if you are worried or if there is something that you would prefer to happen. When you feel this way we want to hear about it so that we can do something about it. Caring Hearts Fostering will put your interest first and we will work closely with your social worker to plan how to meet your needs.

Caring Hearts Fostering will:

- Ask a social worker to talk to you and your foster carer
- Record the words you have used.
- Once we know about your complaint we will do something about your complaint within two weeks.
- Write to you and tell you what we will do.

UNHAPPY?

If you remain unhappy you must tell us about it.

CARING HEARTS FOSTERING will:

- ✓ Ask a senior manager to look into your complaint.
- ✓ The manager will write to you within one month and explain what more can be done to help you feel happy.

If you are still unhappy you must tell us about it.

CARING HEARTS FOSTERING will:

- ✓ Ask a person who is not working for them to look into your complaint.
- ✓ Talk to your social worker and keep him/her informed about what we are doing to help you.
- ✓ Write to you within four weeks to tell you the final decision.

You are entitled to:

- ✓ Have an advocate to support you. Your social worker will arrange this for you.
- ✓ Attend any meetings with your advocate.
- ✓ Minutes of any meeting that are held about to discuss your complaint.

REMEMBER! If you are being harmed in any way this process will happen must faster and we will follow child protection procedures to make sure that you are safe at all times. Always tell us if you feel unsafe or if someone has harmed you in any way.



IMPORTANT NAMES & CONTACT NUMBERS

Your Local Authority Social Worker will depend on the local authority that has made the placement with **CARING HEARTS FOSTERING**.

- **By post:** Caring Hearts Fostering,
Unit 26 Silicon Business Centre, 28 Wadsworth Road, London, UB6 7JZ
- **Phone:** 0208 810 6380 • **Or by email:** complaints@caringheartsfostering.co.uk

OFSTED

Is Responsible for inspecting schools and fostering Services – they have the power to check when things are not going right.

You can contact them by:

- **By post:** Ofsted,
Piccadilly Gate Store Street Manchester M1 2WD
- **Phone:** 0300 123 1231 • **Or by email:** ofsted.gov.uk

CHILDLINE

Will help any child young person being bullied abused or harmed in any way. They will help you if you are in distress.

You can contact them by:

- **Phone:** 0800 1111 • **Web:** www.childline.org.uk

THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR ENGLAND

Provide help for all children and young people.

You can contact them by:

- **Phone:** 0844 800 9113 • **Web:** www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS DIRECTOR ENGLAND

Is your responsible for the rights of children and young people.

You can contact them by:

- **Phone:** 0800 528 0731 • **Web:** www.rights4me.org.uk

VOICE

Helps with any issue affecting children and young people living away from home.

You can contact them by:

- **Phone:** 0808 800 5792 • **Web:** voiceyp.org.uk



CARING
HEARTS
FOSTERING

Contact us

Unit 26 Silicon Business Centre,
28 Wadsworth Road,
London
UB6 7JZ
T: 0208 810 6380
info@caringheartsfostering.co.uk
www.caringheartsfostering.co.uk