

CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE'S
GUIDE TO
FOSTERING

in Wiltshire



WELCOME to our guide to fostering which has been written to tell you a bit more about being fostered. You may be able to read this information yourself or you may want an adult to read it with you. You may have lots of questions and there may be things that worry you or that you do not understand – there are lots of people who can help you with this, including your foster carer, social worker or another adult.

You can also visit wiltshire.gov.uk/fostering for more information.

WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Fostering means going to live with another family when you are unable to live with your own. There are lots of different reasons why children cannot live with their own parents or families.

This can be really hard to understand and lots of children are not really sure why they have to live with a foster family. If you feel you don't know why you need to live with a foster family, it is okay to ask someone to explain it to you.

WHO DOES WHAT?

Social worker

You will have someone called a social worker to help you. Your social worker's job is to make sure that you are safe and well

looked after with your foster family. They can explain to you what's happening and why you need to be looked after by a foster family.

Foster carers

Your foster carers are people who want to help look after children and young people who can't live with their parents or families.

Lots of different people become foster carers. They can be younger or older people from all sorts of backgrounds.

There may be a foster mum and dad, two foster mums or two foster dads or a foster mum or dad on their own. They may have their own children.

All foster families are different and your social worker will try to find the best one for you.

A social worker for your foster carers

All our foster carers have their own social worker called a supervising social worker. The supervising social worker visits and supports your foster carers.

Meetings

When you are being cared for by your foster family there will be some meetings held for you. These meetings are to make sure you are being well looked after and have everything you need.

Placement Planning Meeting

This meeting happens just before or just after you move in with your new foster family. You will talk about the things that you need, your likes and dislikes and anything else your new foster family will need to know to help look after you.

Review meetings

This meeting is all about you! We would like you to be there too so you can tell us how things are going for you and what we can do to help you.

We will ask you about your health, your school, your family, things that are going well and anything that may be worrying or upsetting you.

You will meet the person who will lead this meeting beforehand. They are called a reviewing officer.

Educational Meeting

This is a meeting that is held at your school. This meeting is all about how you are doing at school and what you may need to help you learn. This meeting is sometimes called a PEP meeting.

Getting your wishes and feelings heard

We want you to tell us how you are feeling and if you are worried about something.

Going to live with a foster family can be a very confusing time and it can feel very upsetting if you feel you don't know what will happen to you.

Talk to your foster carer and social worker about how you are feeling and they can help make sure that your wishes are heard by the right people.

If you don't want to talk to either of these there are other people you can talk to called advocates.

Advocates are people who do not work with the other workers in your life. They can help you with the problems you may have and can speak up for you. You can ask your social worker or foster carer about this.

You can also talk to other people that you trust and they will be able to help you. This could be a

teacher or an adult from a club that you attend.

We also use a helpful app called One – Mind of My Own (MOMO). You can download it onto your phone or tablet, or your foster carer or social worker can download it on their devices.

MOMO helps you share your thoughts, feelings, worries or decisions to Wiltshire Council and your social worker will be told when you message. Details of the app are on the useful contact details section at the back of this leaflet.

What to do if you're being bullied

If you are being bullied or have any problems at school, in your foster home or anywhere else it is important to tell someone.

You can tell one of your teachers, your foster carer or social worker. If you'd rather tell someone else that's okay too.

There are some useful contact details at the back of this guide that can help.

Remember that there are lots of people who care about you and want to make sure that you are happy and healthy.

ABOUT FOSTER FAMILIES

Foster families are there to look after you and they will:

- Be there for you to talk to
- Listen to you
- Be interested in what you are doing
- Help you with any problems you may have
- Keep you healthy
- Keep you safe
- Help you with your schooling
- Let you have fun and play games
- Help you to stay in touch with the people you care about

MEETING YOUR FOSTER FAMILY

Your social worker will talk to you about the foster family they have found for you. They will tell you who is in the family, if they have any pets and a little about the sort of things they like to do. If possible, you will get the chance to meet the family before you move in with them.

Your social worker will usually try to organise a visit to the family home, perhaps for tea. This will help you get to know each other a little better and may help you to feel less worried about the move.

Sometimes, you may have to move in very quickly and there is not enough time for these visits to happen.

GOING TO LIVE WITH YOUR FOSTER FAMILY

Your social worker will take you to your foster carer's home and where possible will try and make sure that you have all of your things that you need with you. Your foster carer will show around the house and introduce you to everyone who lives there. You will be able to ask any questions you like about your foster family and their home.

You could tell your foster family the things you like to do. You will also be able to have some quiet time on your own or with your foster carers.

HOLIDAYS

You may also go on holidays or weekends away with family, friends or your foster carers. This will be talked about and planned with you, your family, foster carers and your social worker.

WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?

You may be worried that you have to move school. If possible, your social worker will try and make sure you can stay at the same school.

Everyone will make sure you are asked what you want. Your foster carer will make sure that things are going well for you at school.

Everyone will do their best to help you get settled. They will ask you if you are okay and what else will help you.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

There are many different ways that you can keep in touch with your family and friends. Tell your social worker who you want to see and keep in touch with. They will help you find the best way to do this.

Sometimes, there may be reasons why you can't see the people you want to and your social worker will explain these to you and help you find other ways of keeping in touch perhaps by text, letter or a phone call.

HOW LONG WILL I STAY WITH MY FOSTER FAMILY?

This can be different for every child as not everyone is the same. Your social worker will talk to you and your family about how long you might need to stay with your foster family.

The fostering team helps to find foster families for children and

young people who need them. Our job is to make sure you are well looked after and have everything you need to grow, learn and be cared for.

We listen to the children and young people and we try to use what they tell us to make us even better at helping children and foster families.

If you think there is anything we can do better please tell us. You can also talk to your social worker or foster carer if you have any questions or worries. We've put all the contact details you might need at the end of this guide.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

How to see the records that are kept about you

We keep records on children and young people in foster care and the foster families that look after them. We have to keep these records safe and secure.

You have the right to see the records kept about you by us, but only the records about you. If you want to see your records ask your social worker and they will be able to help you.

Making a complaint

If you feel that you have been treated unfairly or something has gone wrong, it is important you tell us so we can put things right.

To make a complaint you can talk to your social worker or contact the complaints team at Wiltshire Council.

If you feel the council has done something wrong then you can contact OFSTED, the details you need are on the back of this guide. Your social worker, foster carer or advocate will be able to help you do this.

My notes

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My foster carer

Name:

Phone number/email:

My social worker

Name:

Phone number/email:

My foster carer's supervising social worker:

Name:

Phone number/email:

My reviewing officer:

Name:

Phone number/email:



USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Caring for Communities and People (CCP)

Wiltshire Children and young people advocacy

Tel: **03003 658300**

Email: **wiltscypadvocacy@ccprojects.org.uk**

www.ccp.org.uk/childrens-advocacy-wilts

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)

Freephone: **08006 16101**

www.nyas.net

OFSTED

National Business Unit, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7LA

Tel: **08456 404040**

Email: **enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk**

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Childline

A free helpline for children and young people, available 24 hours a day.

Tel: **08001 11111**

www.childline.org.uk

Coram voice

Getting young voices heard. Confidential advice for children and young people in care.

Tel: **08088 005792**

www.coramvoice.org.uk

Become

Charity for children in care and young care leavers

Link Line: **0800 0232 033**

www.becomecharity.org.uk

Mind of My Own (MOMO)

Download the app called 'One – (Mind of My Own)'

The app has a green and purple icon with a lightening flash. You can share your thoughts, worries and feelings to your social worker.

www.mindofmyown.org.uk

NSPCC

Help and advice if you are concerned that yourself or another child that you know may be at risk.

Tel: **08088 005000**