

MY GUIDE TO FOSTERING

All you need to know
about what it means
to be fostered



THIS GUIDE BELONGS TO:

WELCOME MESSAGES

Coming to live with a different family can feel quite scary at first, but there are lots of other young people who have been in the same position. Here's what some of them have to say

"I have some advice for children/young people moving into new placements:

Moving into a new home is a scary thing, new people, new area, new lifestyle. But don't feel scared! Every child in care has been there. Take every day as it comes, step by step. Don't rush things. It will take time to adapt but you can do it. I've been there and I guarantee that many others have too! There's always someone available to help. If something's not right, use your voice, speak up about it – you have the right to decide what happens in YOUR life. Don't give up on anything you do, don't let the stereotypical view of young people in care get you down. Prove everyone wrong! And if you ever feel down, remember 'everything gets better in the end, keep your head up and your mind strong.' XOX"

SONYA, 15

"If you're a child and moving in with foster carers for the first time, there is no need to worry. Once you meet your new carers you will feel much more relaxed. Once you have got to know them, things will be different and you may feel more open and friendly with them. Your new foster carers will make you feel welcome in the house and if they have children, they will try and treat you the same way as they treat theirs. And you will be given a lot of support by your foster carers and your fostering agency."

ALEX, 16

"When I first was going to my carers' house I felt worried, nervous, and a bit excited. My Social Worker talked me through it and made me feel a bit better. When I got there, the carer had a big smile on their face, which made me feel happier. I don't know what I was expecting but they were nicer than what I was expecting. They made me feel welcome, showed me around the house and my bedroom, and the next day I went out and made new friends. I am glad to be here now."

KIMBERLEY, 12

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Hello! Welcome to Parallel Parents. This booklet tells you about our organisation and the foster care that we provide.

If you need to read this Guide in another language, or would prefer a different format, we can sort that out for you. Just tell your Foster Carer or Social Worker.

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Foster; Pronunciation: /'fɒstə/ verb

- **encourage** the **development** of (something, especially something desirable)
- **develop** (a feeling or idea) in oneself: appropriate praise helps a child **foster** a sense of **self-worth**
- bring up (a child that is not one's own by birth)

WHAT IS FOSTERING?

WHO ARE WE?

Parallel Parents is a fostering agency which offers care to children and young people in a foster family, if they are unable to live at home. We've been doing this for over 20 years.

At the moment, we have about 190 children and young people placed with families in the North, North West, Yorkshire, East Midlands and West Midlands areas of England.

WHAT DO WE DO?

Parallel Parents has a document called a 'Statement of Purpose' that explains in detail what we do. You can ask to see a copy of it if you want, but this Young People's Guide is a good summary of it.

We want to help you to sort out any problems you may have and to make the most of your abilities. All of us have plans for the future; things we want to achieve. Things you want are put into your Placement Plan and we work with your Social Worker and, where possible, family or other people important to you, to try and make your plans work out for you.

Parallel Parents is registered by an organisation called Ofsted who inspect us every three years to make sure we are doing our job properly.

WHAT IS FOSTERING?

REVIEWS

Reviews are held on a regular basis (usually every six months) to see how things are going and to change the Plan, if necessary. This is your meeting and it is very important. We can help you to express your wishes and views if you feel uncomfortable about being in the meeting.

YOUR SOCIAL WORKER & SUPPORT WORKER

You will have a Support Worker (official title is 'Foster Care Development Worker' or 'Supervising Social Worker') from Parallel Parents, who is responsible for making sure the Plan is followed and that you are listened to and supported. They also support your Foster Carer and try to make sure that everyone living in the home is happy. Our Support Workers are all qualified and experienced, and they will come to visit you on a regular basis. They will also want to speak with you in private sometimes, but this is nothing to worry about. It is just to make sure you can say what you're really feeling or thinking and that you don't need any extra support.

Of course, you will still have your Social Worker from your Local Authority. They will come to visit you too.

At the end of this Guide, there is a space where you can write down the names and telephone numbers of these people. You are welcome to phone them at any time. There is also a space where you can write down any questions you want to ask when they visit you.



WHO LIVES IN OUR FOSTER FAMILIES?

Children and young people who, for many different reasons, can no longer live at home or at the place they were staying. Some foster carers look after more than one child or young person. If appropriate, we will do our best to keep siblings together.

Some children and young people live with the foster carers for a short time, others stay for longer. You will be told by your Social Worker. You can also ask your foster carer to find out anything that you want to know.

HOW LONG WILL I STAY?

There are many different foster carers: different ages, different cultures, different backgrounds; some have children, some have pets, some households have two carers and some have one.

They are all assessed to make sure that they will look after you properly, treat you fairly and with respect, and keep you safe. We have a Panel that checks all foster carers carefully before young people can live with them. Foster carers also have a Review each year to make sure they're doing a good job.

You will live with a foster carer or carers that have been chosen to meet your needs. Our carers receive a lot of training and support to make sure that they can understand your worries and help with any problems that you may have.

THE FOSTER CARERS



ME & MY FOSTER FAMILY

MY FOSTER CARER(S) ARE CALLED: _____

ABOUT ME

Help your foster carer(s) get to know you, your likes and dislikes by answering the questions below. If you prefer, you could do this with your carer. Remember you can ask your foster family questions too!

WHAT FOODS DO YOU LIKE TO EAT?

WHAT FOODS DON'T YOU LIKE?

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DRINK?

WHAT ARE YOUR HOBBIES AND INTERESTS?

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN?

WHAT ARE YOU GOOD AT?

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU NEED HELP WITH?

WHAT ARE YOUR FRIENDS CALLED?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE COLOUR?

WHAT ARE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT BELONGINGS?

WHAT IS YOUR NORMAL ROUTINE (WHAT TIMES DO YOU DO THINGS IN THE DAY)?

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WANT YOUR FOSTER FAMILY TO KNOW ABOUT YOU?

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT YOUR FOSTER CARERS?

You will be introduced to everyone who lives in the house and also shown around so you know where everything is. You will be shown where you will be sleeping and where you can put your belongings. Your foster carer may ask you about what kinds of food you like to eat and other things, so that they can get to know you. You can ask questions too.

Your carer will help you to make a list of your clothes and valuables so we can make sure that your things do not get lost.

WHAT ABOUT...?

BEDROOMS

You will have your own bedroom, which your foster carer(s) will show you when you begin your placement. This is your own personal space, and you will be expected to look after it and treat it with respect. You may be asked to keep it tidy.

Your foster carer(s) may check your room (like your parents) but they will ask you if you wish to be present during these checks, except in exceptional cases.

BED TIMES & COMING IN TIMES

Bedtimes and coming in times or curfews will be agreed with you, but they must be seen as reasonable by parents/guardians and Social Workers. If you're old enough to go out by yourself in the evening or at weekends, and this has been agreed by everyone involved in your care, you will be asked to keep in touch with your foster carer so that they know where you are and can make sure you are safe. Remember that any rules are in place to ensure your safety!

CONTACT WITH FAMILY & FRIENDS

We feel that you must be helped to keep in contact with those people who are important to you, provided that this is in your best interests.

You may make free telephone calls to your parents/guardians, solicitor or Social Worker with the agreement of your foster carer. You can make these calls in private. Additional phone calls should be agreed with your foster carer, so that you have a weekly allowance for calls to friends and other relatives.

Your foster carer may also help to organise face to face contact with your family, if your Social Worker feels that this is appropriate. Sometimes, the contact you have with your family has to be supervised, and this might mean there is a Social Worker or Contact Worker present. Your Social Worker or Foster Carer will be able to explain more about this.

Some children and young people choose to stay in touch with friends and family using Social Networking sites or other Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Skype, Snapchat or Whatsapp. Access to these sites and apps will be agreed on an individual basis, taking into account your circumstances and ability to use them in a safe way.

If you keep in contact with significant people via letters, foster carers will assist you in any way they can.

MOBILE PHONES

You are allowed a mobile phone but only if you use it properly. Some things you should not do include, using it in lessons, using it to commit crimes, or taking any photos that might worry the adults looking after you, your Social Worker or the Police. We may not always allow mobiles that can connect to the internet because of the dangers. If you are not happy with this, you can speak to your Social Worker. Please also remember that mobiles may be bad for your health. If there is a problem, to protect you, we may have to remove your phone and then discuss with your Social Worker if, and when, it is safe for you to have your phone returned.

FRIENDS

We encourage you to make friends both inside and outside your foster family. Your friends may visit you, provided that they have their parents' /guardians' permission to do so and they do not cause any problems. Likewise, you can visit your friends, as long as you have permission from your foster carers. Any overnight stay must be agreed with your Social Worker and foster carer(s).

STAYING HEALTHY

It is very important to us that you stay healthy. Your foster carer will support you to attend any medical appointments you may have. You'll be registered with a local GP for a check-up and will also have to go to the dentist every six months and the opticians once a year for an eye test. If appropriate, your foster carer will encourage you to manage your own health appointments.

You will also be encouraged to eat healthy foods, do plenty of exercise and take care of your personal hygiene, e.g. brushing your teeth twice a day.

DIET

You may have a special diet due to religious or cultural needs, or you may be a vegetarian or vegan. If so, your Social Worker should let us know. If there are foods that you do not like, or foods you do really like, make your foster carer aware. You will be involved with the weekly shopping list and preparing the menus if you want to. We try to ensure that all children and young people maintain a healthy, balanced diet.

CLOTHING

Basic clothing allowance at the moment is £15.00 per week. As with spends, extra can sometimes be earned or given as a reward for effort. You can choose your own clothes, but your foster carer(s) may want to come with you.

REWARDS

We will also help you to behave well by offering rewards. This could be extra pocket money or a special treat. Both rewards and sanctions will be recorded on a sheet so we can see how you are getting on and discuss any problems.

SPENDS

Basic Spending money varies with age and good behaviour – special effort can sometimes get you extra.

People who are	aged 13yrs get	£7
	aged 14yrs get	£8
	aged 15yrs get	£9
	aged 16yrs and over get	£10

Sometimes, your Local Authority will ask us to give you a slightly different amount, but the amount shown above is the minimum amount you will get each week. This is usually given on a day you agree with your foster carer and you will sometimes need to sign to say that you have received it. Any money you owe (e.g. to pay for damage) is deducted from spends before they are given. If you have not behaved well during the week, you may not directly receive all your basic spending money for your age that week, but any money held back will be put in a savings account in your name. If you do not think this is fair, you can complain to your Support Worker or Social Worker.

Anyone below the age of 16 years will have the remainder of £10 placed in a savings account in their name.

Foster carers are also expected to buy you presents for your birthday and Christmas (or other religious/cultural festivals or celebrations). They will also pay for any structured activities that you want to do, such as swimming, sports, drama etc. up to the value of £15 per week. This money may not be given to you personally, as your carer(s) may use it to pay for membership to any clubs or groups you belong to. We encourage young people to try a range of local activities and hobbies. Your foster carer(s) will help you to find out where you can do the things you enjoy doing.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions are imposed for unacceptable behaviour. They may be extra housework or missing out on a planned treat. Sanctions will be agreed between yourself, your Support Worker from Parallel Parents and your foster carer. If you refuse to accept any sanction, then we could ask for a meeting with your Social Worker to discuss whether or not we can really help you.



EDUCATION

Your education is very important to us. We want you to do as well as you possibly can, as the choices you make now can have an impact on your future. We think that school is the best place for young people, if possible. You meet other pupils and can make lots of friends.

We do our best to make sure you can keep going to the same school as before, but in exceptional circumstances, you might have to move to a different school that's closer to where you are living. We know that changing schools is hard on young people and we will do everything we can to support you.

If you can't attend school, we will work with your Social Worker to arrange an education package. This not only involves formal education but may cover activities like visiting a museum. However, this would only be for a short time until we could arrange for you to go to school.

If you have left school (i.e. you are over the age of 16), we will support you to gain a college placement, apprenticeship or other form of training or employment.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

You are not allowed to have in your possession any alcohol or illegal drugs or cause them to be brought onto the premises. This includes solvents and cannabis. If foster carer(s) suspect that drugs are in the house they may have to ask the police to come and search the premises. In an emergency, to protect you, they may have to search you but will always try to contact your Support Worker/Social Worker and/or the police first!

You should not allow yourself to be talked into using drugs or alcohol; you should talk to your foster carer(s) or Social Worker if you think that this may happen.

There are also some useful telephone numbers at the back of this guide that you can call if you have any worries or concerns about your own, or somebody else's use of drugs/alcohol.

Remember that it is also illegal for young people under the age of 18 to buy tobacco products (cigarettes). Smoking will be discouraged by your foster carer(s), as will the use of 'legal highs.' A 'legal high' is a substance/drug that has not been made illegal yet, but it might not be safe to use and could make you ill.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR - INCLUDING VIOLENCE

We expect others to treat you with respect, therefore we expect you to treat others with the same respect. You will be challenged when we think that your behaviour or language is not acceptable, particularly if we feel that it is racist or sexist. If you damage property or attack another person, or hurt yourself, it may be necessary to act in accordance with guidelines and stop you. In some cases, we may even have to hold you. We also have the right to involve the police and you may be charged. The cost of any damage to property may be deducted from your personal allowances.

If you choose to assault anyone, your placement could end and we will have to call an emergency meeting with your Social Worker and parents/guardians.

BULLYING

Bullying can be very frightening, intimidating, and difficult to deal with; we do not want or accept bullying behaviour and will take action to stop it. Young people must feel safe and able to speak about their experiences to an appropriate adult.

Bullying involves behaviour which can make you miserable and unhappy. Bullying can be verbal (including name calling, teasing, intimidating, threatening etc.) or physical (including pushing, tripping, punching, kicking, taking or breaking your possessions etc.).

If you feel that you are being bullied or know a person who is being bullied, please tell someone – your foster carer, Foster Care Development Worker, teacher or Social Worker etc. If you feel unable to talk to the adults in your life, you can ring the useful telephone numbers in the back of the guide.

DO NOT SUFFER IN SILENCE

RUNNING AWAY OR 'GOING MISSING'

It is not uncommon for children and young people to run away from home, or to go somewhere without letting the adults responsible for them know where they are. Sometimes, young people just want to see their friends or family and may go out without getting permission from their foster carer(s) first.

It is very important that your foster carer knows where you are at all times, so that they can be sure you are safe. If they don't know your whereabouts and can't get in touch with you, your foster carer may have no choice but to report you as 'missing' or 'absent' to the police and your Local Authority. Even if you are just 'running late', it is important that you try your best to contact your foster carer and tell them, or the police might have to start looking for you.

If you are thinking of running away from your foster home, try to talk to somebody about it first – it could be your foster carer, Social Worker, Support Worker or teacher – even a friend. Sometimes, we can do things to make you feel happier or arrange for you to have more contact with family and friends.

There are some useful telephone numbers at the back of this guide for organisations you can call for more information or advice about this.

A CHARTER OF RIGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

HOUSE RULES

Everyone in your foster family household tries hard to:

- Sit together at meal times
- Take responsibility in keeping their own rooms tidy (with help, if necessary, from the foster carers)
- Choose not to use swear words or any other offensive language

They also have a few rules that help them to keep you safe:

- No smoking inside the house.
- They knock on bedroom doors and wait until they are invited in before entering. Your carers' bedroom is out of bounds and they will only enter yours if you agree for them to do so.
- TV/Internet usage is monitored by your carers to ensure you are looking at age appropriate material/websites.
- All members of the household ensure that they are clothed fully at all times, e.g. wearing dressing gowns/house coats on top their PJs.
- Locks are used on the bathroom door when someone is using the room.
- Hugs and affection are given with your permission. It's OK if you don't want a hug, and your carer will understand.

Whilst I am being cared for, I have the right:

- to a reliable adult who can be trusted to care for me
- to be accepted for who I am – my name, my family, my religion, my race, my culture, my beliefs, my sex, my age and to be respected as a person
- to expect the adults caring for me to protect me from predictable and preventable harm and to stop me hurting others
- to be treated as an individual and not as one of the crowd
- to expect the adults caring for me to behave with kindness and understanding and to be fair and honest with me
- to have appropriate boundaries and controls of my behaviour
- to live in a place where I will be looked after and given good health care, appropriate education and other opportunities to develop my skills and interests
- to have appropriate time, space and some privacy to myself
- to know how to complain if things go wrong and to have my complaint heard and dealt with
- to know
 - about my family
 - the reasons why I am being fostered
 - how long my placement is meant to last
- to have a say in what happens to me and be involved in making decisions and plans for my life, which are based on my personal circumstances and individual needs
- to see my personal file. To do this, I just need to ask my Support Worker or Social Worker. I know there are some things I may not be able to see.

THE FOSTER CARERS' CHARTER

Parallel Parents has also adopted the Government's Foster Carers' Charter. This document explains what fostering services, foster carers and Local Authorities have promised to do make sure 'children come first.' Your foster carer(s) should have a copy of it.

CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL...OR CICC

WHAT IS IT?

It's a group of children and young people who are looked after by the Local Authority, who meet regularly with important managers of the Council. The Government says that every Local Authority must have a Children in Care Council.

WHAT DO THEY DO?

They talk about things that are important to children and young people and influence the Local Authority's overall plans for looking after children. The young people involved get to have a say in big decisions the Council make that affect could them.

HOW CAN I JOIN?

Lots of Children in Care Councils have their own website, which will tell you what the Council is doing and how to get involved. You need to make sure you find the right one for the Local Authority that looks after you. If you can't find the right website, you can ask your Local Authority Social Worker or Independent Reviewing Officer about joining. Sometimes, you have to be a certain age to join.

WHAT ELSE CAN PARALLEL PARENTS DO TO HELP ME?

Sometimes, the Agency will write to you to see if there is anything we can do to improve your experience of living in foster care. If you are having trouble expressing your wishes and feelings, we will always do our best to help you share your views.

THERAPY

Sometimes, young people need some extra help to deal with the things that have happened in their life. Parallel Parents has trained counsellors/therapists who can provide this support, where appropriate.

INDEPENDENCE TRAINING

If you are 15 or older, Parallel Parents will provide you with a pack of information called '15 to Independence'. Your foster carer(s) or Support Worker will work through this pack with you, at your own pace, to help you learn about how to prepare for independent living. The pack covers things like: -

- Budgeting, benefits and banking
- Shopping, cooking, cleaning and laundry
- Applying for personal documents (e.g. provisional driving licence)
- Housing and utility bills
- Health, further education and employment
- Personal and practical skills and where to get help

COMPLAINTS

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It is our aim to try and make sure that you are properly looked after during your stay and that nothing happens to you that is wrong or unfair. A Support Worker will come and visit you and your carer at least every 3 weeks. They will speak to you in private at least every six weeks and give you the opportunity to mention any worries. They will also ask you to sign a form to show that this has happened.

We want you to tell us if, for example, there is something wrong with your room or food. We also want to know if anybody, carers, Social Workers or another young person, is saying or doing things to you that are wrong or make you feel bad or angry. We also hope that you will feel able to say if there is something that happened to you in the past, that you now think is wrong or is worrying you.

If there is anything wrong, you should speak to your foster carer. If you do not feel comfortable doing this then you must contact your Social Worker, or Support Worker who will try to sort it out. If they can not sort it on their own, they may have to tell somebody else to come and see you. You should know that certain things cannot be kept a secret and, once told, we must tell others.

Sometimes, after talking with you, we may think that only by telling your Local Authority can the problem be tackled, and together we would talk to them.

You can at any time ask and will be allowed to speak to a Senior Manager/the Responsible Individual or someone you trust in your social services department. There are also some telephone numbers in this booklet that you can ring for private help and advice. You will also get a copy of our complaints policy and form with a pre-paid envelope, which you can use at any time. Sometimes, we will write to you as well, to check that you are happy and to see whether you think there is anything we can do to make Parallel Parents better. You have a right to say if there is something you do not like! There is always something to dislike and most things can be sorted out.

If it is something serious that really is bothering or upsetting you, or you do not think it is fair – this does not mean having to go to bed at a certain time, or not being allowed to do exactly as you want! – you should contact your Social Worker or Support Worker, who will help to put your complaint in writing to the Responsible Individual, who will then investigate and usually reply to you within 28 days.

If you really do not want to talk to your foster carer, Support Worker or Social Worker, we can arrange for you to see someone called an independent advocate. This person has nothing to do with us or Social Services and will only be interested in doing what's best for you!! Speak to your Social Worker if you would like them to arrange this service for you. There are also contact details for some advocacy organisations at the end of this guide.

IMPORTANT!

You may also contact 'Ofsted' (the people who inspect us) if your complaint is serious or you do not like the way that we have handled your complaint. Their phone number is 0300 123 1231.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

ADDRESS BOOK

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People involved in my care

My Foster Care Development
Worker (Parallel Parents Social Worker) is:

Their telephone number is:

My Support Worker (Parallel Parents) is:

Their telephone number is:

My Social Worker (Local Authority) is:

Their telephone number is:

My Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is:

Their telephone number is:

My Leaving Care Worker (Local Authority) is:

Their telephone number is:

Parallel Parents – Responsible Individual, Complaints/Quality Department
The Responsible Individual is the Director of Parallel Parents and you can contact him about any complaint or problem. Alternatively, you can phone our Head Office and ask to speak to the Quality Manager. Anyone in Head Office can pass your complaint on to the Responsible Individual.

Telephone: 0800 023 4441

Email: qualityadmin@caretodayparallelpayers.net

Text: 80818 and start your message with the word 'talk'. For non-urgent matters only.

Write to: The Responsible Individual, Parallel Parents, 2ndFloor Lansdowne House, 85 Buxton Road, Stockport, SK2 6LR

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

Write to: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Telephone: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

The Chief Inspector is called: Sir Michael Wilshaw

Parallel Parents' Inspector is called: Sarah Oldham

What do they do? Ofsted is the inspectorate of education and children services including this agency. It inspects Parallel Parents to make sure we are doing our job properly

The Children's Rights Director – Dr Roger Morgan

Telephone: 0800 528 0731

Website: www.rights4me.org (there is a contact form on the website)

Address: Office of the Children's Rights Director, Ofsted, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London, WC2B 6SE

What does he do? His job is to make sure the duty to safeguard and promote the rights and welfare of children and young people is carried out.

The Children's Commissioner - Maggie Atkinson

Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

What does she do? The Children's Commissioner promotes the views and interests of children and young people in England.

Services for Children and Young People relating to Domestic Abuse and Assault

Rape Crisis

Website: www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 802 9999

What do they do? They can give you advice and support following incidents of rape or indecent assault.

Victim Support

Website: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Telephone: Supportline on 0845 3030 900

Email: supportline@victimsupport.org.uk

What do they do? Victim Support is the independent charity which helps people cope with the effects of crime. They provide free and confidential support and information to help you deal with your experience.

Domestic Abuse

Website: www.thisisabuse.direct.gov.uk

Visit this site for lots of links to other services and organisations who can offer advice and support on domestic violence, sex and relationships and sexuality.

Services relating to Drugs and Alcohol

Talk to Frank

Website: www.talktofrank.com

Telephone: 0300 123 6600

Text: 82111

Live Chat: from 2pm to 6pm

Email: frank@talktofrank.com

What do they do? Talk to Frank is a website and telephone helpline offering advice, information and support to anyone concerned about drugs and solvent / volatile substance misuse, including drug misusers, their families, friends and carers.

Drinkline

Telephone: 0800 917 8282

What do they do? Drinkline offers information and self-help materials to callers worried about their own drinking, support to the family and friends of people who are drinking and advice to callers on where to go for help.

Other useful websites:

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

www.drinkaware.co.uk

Children and Young People's Advocacy Services

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Services)

Website: www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 808 1001

Email: help@nyas.net

Voice

Website: www.voiceyp.org (there is a contact form on the website)

Telephone: 0808 800 5792

A National Voice

Website: www.anationalvoice.org.uk

Email info@anationalvoice.org.uk

Telephone: 0161 237 5577

Follow: on Twitter and Facebook

What do they do? An organisation run by and for 'care experienced' young people, with staff who have themselves been in care. Its main aim is to create positive changes to the care system in England.

Other information and support for Young People:

The Who Cares Trust

Website: www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk

Follow: on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube

Email: mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk

What do they do? They work and campaign to improve the experiences of looked after children and young people and their future lives.

Information for Looked After Children and Young People

www.info4carekids.org.uk

What do they do? They provide links to resources and information about your rights.

Welfare and Support Services for Young People

Childline

Website: www.childline.org.uk (visit the website to email, chat 1-2-1 or Ask Sam)

Telephone 0800 1111

What do they do? Childline is a free and confidential, 24-hour helpline for children in distress or danger. Trained volunteer counsellors comfort, advise and protect children and young people who may feel they have nowhere else to turn.

NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children)

Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Text: 88858

Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

What do they do? Its aim is to protect children from cruelty, support vulnerable families, campaign for changes to the law and raise awareness about abuse.

Get Connected

Website: www.getconnected.org.uk (visit the site to email or webchat)

Telephone: 0808 808 4994

Text: 80849

What do they do? Get Connected is a free, confidential helpline for young people under the age of 25, who don't know where to turn for advice and support. They can help put you in touch with the services you need.

Samaritans

Website: www.samaritans.org.uk

Telephone: 08457 90 90 90

Email: jo@samaritans.org

What do they do? Samaritans provides confidential non-judgemental support, 24 hours a day for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which could lead to suicide.

Services for Missing Children

Runaway Helpline

Telephone: 0808 800 7070

Further information available from uk.missingkids.com

Telephone: 116 000

What do they do? They provide advice for children and young people who are thinking about running away from home.

How to make a Reverse Charge call

If you run out of credit on your mobile phone, but need to phone somebody in an emergency, you can make a reverse charge call, which means that the person you are phoning will have to pay for the call.

1. Dial 0800-r-e-v-e-r-s-e (0800 738 3773)
2. Then dial the number of the person you want to phone
3. Record your name, so the person you are calling will know it's you
4. Wait for them to answer.

Services and Information for Young People Leaving Care

Information about Careers

www.gov.uk/careers-helpline-for-teenagers

Provides information about career choices.

Shelter

Website: england.shelter.org.uk

Provides information about housing.

Care Leavers' Association

Website: www.careleaversassociation.com

Provides general advice and networking opportunities for care leavers.

Citizens' Advice Bureau

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/advice4me

Provides information about benefits, debt, employment and housing to young people

Information and Support for Asylum Seeking Young People

Website: www.cfab.org.uk

Advice Telephone Line: 020 7735 8941

What do they do? CFAB is a UK-based charity that identifies and protects young people who have been separated from their family due to trafficking, migration, abduction etc.

Information about Rights for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Young People

Website: www.stonewall.org.uk

Other:

Other:

Other:

OTHER USEFUL INFO

MY NEW ADDRESS

LOCAL BUS ROUTES

NEAREST TRAIN STATION

NEW PHONE NUMBER

MY LOCAL AUTHORITY

GLOSSARY

Advocate – an advocate is a person whose job is to make sure children and young people feel listened to. Sometimes, it can be somebody you know, like a teacher.

Allowance – your allowance is the amount of money you can have each week.

Care Plan (Placement Plan) – this is a document that says how everyone should look after you, and what is going to happen in your care.

Contact – is when you get to see your family or friends.

Foster Care Development Worker (Supervising Social Worker) – this is another name for your Parallel Parents Support Worker.

Fostering Agency – a fostering agency is a company that helps Local Authorities to find foster families for children and young people.

Independent Reviewing Officer – this is the person that is in charge of your Review. They are called 'independent' because they are not involved in your day to day care. Foster carers also have Reviews and Independent Reviewing Officers.

Local Authority – your Local Authority, or LA, is the Government body that is legally responsible for you. Usually (but not always) it will be the city, town or county where you are living.

Panel – a panel is a group of independent people.

Placement – this is the word we use to mean 'living with a foster family.'

Responsible Individual – this is one of the people who is in charge of Parallel Parents.

Review – a review is a meeting where you, your parents and Social Workers decide what is best for you.

Social Worker – a Social Worker is someone who is specially trained to help make decisions about how you should be looked after.

Valuables – things that you own that are important to you.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2013, there were over 68,000 children and young people being looked after by Local Authorities in England.

75% (that's three quarters) were in foster care.

Lots of people who grew up in foster families have gone on to be famous and very successful. Examples include actor and comedian Eddie Murphy, singer Cher, John Lennon from the Beatles, Olympic athlete Phillips Idowu and TV cook and writer Lorraine Pascale, who has said "it's a great experience being in a situation where you need a home and just have people come forward and welcome you in."

Use this space to keep notes or photos, and write down any questions you would like to ask your Social Worker or Support Worker.

What would you like to happen?

IMPORTANT!

this Young People's Guide may include additional sheets related to you and your placement following this page.

APPENDIX 1:

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Who are we?

Parallel Parents is an Independent Fostering Agency that is inspected by Ofsted. The Agency was established in 1994 and currently has over 170 approved fostering households that provide needs-led family placements to children and young people. All of our foster carers are appropriately trained and are supervised by experienced Social Workers. We do not function in exactly the same ways as Local Authorities, but we do work in close partnership with them. Ofsted awarded Parallel Parents an 'Outstanding' inspection rating in 2010; this means that the children and young people our foster carers look after have achieved, and continue to achieve, excellent outcomes.

Why have I received this leaflet?

This leaflet may have been given to you by a child/young person you know – perhaps your son or daughter – or one of the professionals involved in the care or development of that child. You may, yourself, be one of those professionals: a school teacher, counsellor etc.

Our first priority is making sure that the children and young people

we look after receive the best possible care, are happy and safe, and go on to achieve their full potentials. Therefore, it is very important to us and our foster carers to work in partnership with you, and other people who are significant to each child and young person. The purpose of this leaflet is to give you a little bit of information about Parallel Parents – what we do, how to contact us and so on.

How to contact us or provide feedback

There are a number of ways to contact the Agency if you have questions or would like some information. The best person for you to speak to (apart from the Local Authority Social Worker) is probably the Supervising Social Worker, because they will know all about the child/young person and the foster family s/he is living with. However, you can also send an email to admin@caretoday.co.uk, which will go directly to our Head Office. There are various other ways in which children and young people can get in touch at any time of the day or night.

We are happy to receive feedback, both positive and negative, at any time, as this helps us to improve our service to the children and

young people we look after. If you would like to give some feedback on any aspect of our service or a specific placement, please email admin@caretoday.co.uk and mark your message for the attention of the Quality Team. The Local Authority Social Worker may also ask you about your views of the placement so that they can be included in the foster carer's annual review.

How to find further information

Several documents and resources are available on request.

Statement of Purpose

Ofsted Inspection Report

Complaints and Representations Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

Child Protection Guidelines

Foster Carers' Charter

If you would like a copy of any of these documents, please email your details to admin@caretoday.co.uk and mark your email for the attention of the Quality Team. You may also like to look on the Local Authority website for further information, but please note that the Local Authority which looks after the child/young person may not be the same as the Local Authority in which the fostering household lives.

What to do if a child or young person has run away

Young people who are looked after are three times more likely to go missing than young people who are not looked after. One of the most common reasons for children and young people to abscond from their foster placements is so that they can go and see family and friends. We do our best to promote contact with families wherever possible, but this must be done safely. If our foster carers

do not know the whereabouts of the child or young person they are looking after, they are required to report them missing to the Police, and this can be distressing for everyone involved. Therefore, if the child/young person whose name is on this leaflet comes to see you unexpectedly, it is very important that you contact somebody – preferably the foster carer – to let them know.

Our records

We are required to keep various records about the children and young people we have looked after, including foster carers' records, case notes, outcomes monitoring forms etc. Usually, when a young person is discharged from Parallel Parents, all of these documents are returned to the Local Authority that is responsible for the young person, but we do keep copies. Any information held is kept confidential and is completely secure. If you would like information about these records or how to access them, please contact the relevant Local Authority first, and they will make any necessary arrangements.

What our Young People have to say

'Well, [foster carer] is a really good carer. She looks after me properly, she treats me well and she treats us like a family. She's a nice mum, she helps me out with stuff and she's just a good person.'

'I have learned to save my pocket money and buy nice things; to eat healthy food. I haven't been ill in two years that I've been in care. I've learned manners. 100% attendance for two years at school. HAPPY!'

"we process some of your data on behalf of the Local Authority (this means that we hold some information about you). You are allowed to ask to see this information"