

Facts 4 U 2: I'm going to be fostered - What does it mean?

A children's guide to the fostering service

(For under 11s)

This fact sheet can be made available in other languages or formats on request by contacting 0161 770 6666. For further information please see our detailed fact sheet - **Information for all.**

This fact sheet has been written to tell you a bit more about what fostering is. If you like you might want to ask your foster carers to read this fact sheet with you. If there is something you don't understand ask your foster carer or social worker to explain it.

What does foster care mean?

Foster care is when you go to stay with another family when you cannot live with your own family because there are problems at home. The reason you have gone to live with another family and how long you will stay there depends on what these problems are. It is not your fault you are in foster care. Children are **never** to blame for the things adults do even if they think they have been naughty.

Who are foster carers?

Foster carers are adults who have been specially trained to look after you. They will understand and help you to continue doing the things you normally do like going to school, church or mosque. They will know about your special days and the things you do to celebrate them.

Foster carers might have their own family but don't worry, you will be treated as part of that family. They will make you welcome and keep you safe.

Don't worry about asking your foster carers anything you need to know or tell them about things. They are there to help you. There will also be someone called a social worker who you can also talk to.

What is a social worker?

A social worker is an adult who works for social care who is there to help you and your family sort your problems out. Your social worker can also answer your questions about living away from home and keeping in touch with your family. They will tell you what is going on at home and what will be happening to you. If you do not like your foster carers or are not happy you can tell your social worker and they will listen to you and try to help.

What is going to happen to me?

You will be living away from your family but you will still be able to see them if it is safe. Normally you will be able to keep going to the same school and will be able to do the same hobbies. We will try to make sure that the things that are important to you stay the same too.

Will I be able to see my family?

When it is ok and if it is safe to do so we will make sure you can talk to or see your family and friends as much as possible. Your social worker will be able to tell you more about this.

What changes will there be when I am in foster care?

When you first start to live away from home, your social worker, foster carers and sometimes your family will come to meet you to talk to you. At this meeting we make plans for your future and talk about how we need to look after you. If you want to change anything you can talk to your social worker about this and they will help you. You can ask an independent advocate to help you with this.

What is an independent advocate?

An independent advocate is someone who talks to children about how they feel and what they would like to happen. They will listen to any worries that you might have about being fostered.

An independent advocate will ensure that your voice is heard in meetings between the adults, when they are talking about if you can see or talk to your family. Your independent advocate will meet you and find out what you think and they will ask if they can tell the people making decisions what you would like to happen. Your independent advocate will tell you after the meeting what was decided and will make

sure you understand what this means. You will be able to tell them how you feel about the decisions.

If you would like an independent advocate these organisations can find one for you.

Voice of the Child in Care

Freephone 0808 800 5792

Email: help@vcc-uk.org

National Youth Advocacy Service

Freephone: 0800 616 101

Telephone: 0151 649 8700

Email: help@nyas.net

Children's Legal Centre

Telephone: 01206 873 820

Email: clc@essex.ac.uk

Spurgeons

Telephone: 0161 621 9325

What if you are not happy?

If you do not feel happy at your foster home, then it is important that you tell your social worker or another adult you trust to sort things out. If you are not happy you should first speak to your social worker. If do not want to talk to your social worker or have told them and they don't sort it out you can contact another adult called the Children's Rights Officer. They will help you to sort things out and can offer other help and advice. You can ring the Children's Rights Officer on 0161 621 9325.

There is also another adult called the Children, Young People and Families Complaints and Representation Officer who you can talk to you can ring them on 0161 770 1129 and make a complaint. The Complaints and Representation Officer will try to find out why the problem has been happening. They will write to you within 10 days to tell you what they have done to solve your problem. You can also Email them at cypf.complaints@oldham.gov.uk.

The Complaints and Representation Officer only speaks English however if you wish we can arrange to visit you with an interpreter.

If you are not happy, you can also contact the National Care Standards Commission.

National Care Standards Commission

11th Floor, West Point

501 Chester Road

Old Trafford

Manchester

M16 9HU

Tel: 0161 880 2300

Fax: 0161 880 2350

Email: enquiries.ashton@csci.gsi.gov.uk

How can I contact the Fostering Service?

The Fostering Service

Unit 10, Whitney Court

Southlink Business Park

Oldham

OL4 1DB

Tel: 0161 770 6600

Fax: 0161 770 6682

Email: socs.family.placement@oldham.gov.uk

January 2007 OCFS-CHILD-FACTS4U18S (Version 10) PID159 CB