

# My Fostering Guide...



**DMR** Fostering  
Services

This book belongs too:



# Let's help answer your questions...

## What is foster care?

Foster Care is a home for young people who cannot live with their family for a number of reasons. Some people might refer to this as “being in care”, “being looked after”, or “being fostered”. The amount of time that you might be in care will depend on a number of different factors and your social worker might be a good person to help you to understand this more. We know that living with foster carers might be worrying for you and that you might have a range of emotions right now. With these emotions will be a whole range of questions. It is important for your own wellbeing that you ask these questions and try to seek the answers you need. This booklet tries to answer some of those questions for you.

## What is a foster carer?

A foster carer is a person who looks after children, in their own home, when children cannot live with their own families. This might be short term or might be for longer periods of time. Foster Carers have been through lots of assessments, checks and training in order to take care of you. All carers will be a little different. Some may live with a partner, where as others may live alone. Some might have children of their own, whereas, others might not. Some might or might not have pets, some may foster other children at the same time as you. Before you go to live with a carer, some checks will be made to try and make sure that you will be safe and happy there. These checks would make sure that the carer could meet your needs, support you with a healthy diet, or promote your religion. Your foster carer will be supported by a Supervising Social Worker this person works for DMR Fostering Services. DMR Fostering Services will support the Foster Carer as much as possible to try to make your time happy and comfortable. This might include advice, guidance or additional training. If you are not happy at any time it is really important that you talk about this. Your Foster Carer or Social Worker might be good first points of call. There are other people that support children living away from home that you might also want to speak to. These might include ChildLine or different organisations providing advocacy. Contact Details for these organisations are provided at the end of this booklet.



# Let's help answer your questions...

## How do young people come into foster care?

Young people sometimes live in Foster Care because they were having a hard time at home and they needed help. These problems can vary but will often include some type of abuse. Sometimes the parents may have asked for help in keeping the young person safe. There might have been something happening that meant that the parent could not keep the child safe any more or that they might know that their parenting might lead to the young person getting hurt. Sometimes people who know the family, professionally or personally, might be worried that a young person is not being cared for properly. As a result of this concern they might have contacted Social Services whom have found that this abuse was happening or whom are working with the parents to help things to change. Sometimes living in care might be very short term whilst a social worker, works with your family in order to help things to change. Sometimes, things might be so serious that change cannot or will not happen. If this is the case, the Social Worker might go to Court in order to arrange for the young person to be safe for a longer period of time, living away from the family home.

## What is DMR services? ...

DMR Services is a private organisation, which is independent from Social Services. DMR Services have been working with Children, Young People and their families for a long time, providing advice, support, assessments, contact and places for young people to live when they cannot live at home.

DMR Services is owned and run by Social Workers who passionately care about the work that we do and making situations better for the people who work with us. DMR Services work with lots of Foster Carers and we will work really hard to make your experience as pleasant as possible.

The Supervision Social Worker who supports your Foster Carer is employed by DMR Services. This person is passionate, patient and caring and will support you alongside the carers.

Alison Corkingdale is the Manager of the Fostering Service. She has lots of experience working with Children who live in care. Alison really cares about the children and young people whom she works with and remains passionate in achieving positive outcomes for children.



# When will I be able to see my family? ...

This will be different for each person living in Foster Care. We understand that you will miss your family and might be really worried about what is happening for them whilst you are not there.

Your Social Worker will be making a plan about when and how it might be safe for you to see your family and therefore, your Social Worker might be a really good person for you to ask this question of.

Young people in foster care will have different ways to see family members. This is called "contact", for some young people this might be at a park, café, or restaurant, for others it might be at a place called a Contact Centre. Contact Centre's are buildings that have been specially designed in order for young people to be able to have a good time with family members. It can be the case that contact sessions are supervised or supported by staff that are trained to do this. These people will ordinarily make some notes to share with your social worker. Your Foster Carer or other professionals will support you in making sure that you can get to and from your family.

You may be able to write letters or have telephone calls with family, this would be discussed with your social worker,

You can display photographs of family in your bedroom if you wish.



# Can I see my friends? ...

Your foster carer will work with your social worker to help you to be able to see your old friends and to help you to make some new ones. Your carer will want to know when and where you want to see your friends in order to help to ensure that you are safe and to help you to plan for doing this.

If your foster carer and social worker agree that it is ok, it might be possible for you to have sleepovers at your friends or carers house. When this happens your carer will want to speak with the parents of the other child to make sure that this is ok and to put plans in place.



## Will I go to the same school? ...

Most children will go to the same school that they have previously attended, during the time that they are living in foster care. If your school is far away from where the carer lives or it looks like you might be with the the carer for a while then plans might be made for you to be able to change school.

School is really important and can have an effect on the rest of your life, therefore is is important that you arrive there on time, fully awake and ready to go.

There will be a meeting at school, which will involve putting together a personal education plan. It is normally a good idea to go to this so that you can help people to understand what support you might need and how to provide this.

## School...

School is important, they will help you to learn and provide you with a place where you are able to have fun and make new friends.

If things happen at school that you are not happy about, including bullying. It is really important that you talk to an adult about this. Your teacher, social worker and foster carer will all be able to help to make things better for you.

If you already go to a school, people will work with you in order to decide what is best for the future. If possible a plan might be made to help you to stay at your old school. Otherwise, people will help you find a new cool school.

Going to a school that you like is important and will add to your happiness. Going to a school that you like will provide you with opportunities to join clubs and to learn new skills.



# What can I expect from my foster carer ...

You can expect to feel welcomed and a part of the family.

You can expect that you will be listened to and that people will take the time to understand the things that matter to you.

You can expect the carer to do all they can to understand and meet any health needs that you might have. This will include helping you to get to the Doctor, Dentist and optician regularly.

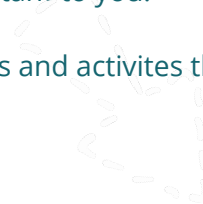
You can expect your carer to keep you safe. This might sometimes involve talking to your social worker and sharing information about things that might have happened to you in the past.

You can expect your carer to provide food that is healthy. Your carer will work with you to try and provide foods that you like or other foods that might be important to you. They will also find out the things you do not like.

You can expect your carer to help you to get to school and to support you with any educational needs to include homework, to help you to be the best that you can be.

Your carer will celebrate holidays, your birthday and other festivals that are important to you.

You can expect to attend swimming lessons, scouts or brownies or any other clubs and activities that you enjoy.



# What will my foster carer expect of me? ...

To be respectful of other peoples belongings in the home

To join in with family activities and meals.

To stick to agreements, like times you will be home etc

To attend school regularly

To be respectful of the people living in the home

To try and share my thoughts feelings and wishes.



# Different types of meetings

## **Placement Meeting.**

This is a meeting where you will meet the carer, your social worker, and your parents if appropriate. It is important for you to try to be at this meeting because it is everybody's chance to find out about you. During the meeting the following things will be discussed:

- Foods you like.
- Arrangements for contact with family.
- School arrangements.
- Routines like mealtimes, tv, bedtimes, homework times and times to come home.
- Pocket money.
- Arrangements for you to enjoy any hobbies, sports, clubs and other interests.
- Medical Needs.

## **2. LAC or CIC Review Meeting (Looked After Children/ Children In Care)**

LAC reviews take place at certain times, the first one should be within 72 hours of being in placement and the second one will happen within 4 weeks of the first one and after this they tend to be 6 monthly. LAC Reviews are a good opportunity to share information about your wishes and feelings. These meetings will be led by an Independent Chair Person who will ask the professionals about how they are meeting your needs. LAC reviews will explore.

- Information about you, and how things are for you.
- Your Placement,
- The plans that are being made for you whilst you are in foster care.

And,

- How you are getting on.



# What can I do if i'm not happy?

If things are happening that you are not happy about, it is usually best to talk to your carer first, they might be able to help to change things relatively easily, otherwise your social worker will also be able to help you. Alternatively you may feel you can talk with a teacher you are close to.

Other people that might be able to help could include a teacher or club co-ordinator. ChildLine also provide a listening service for children and young people and can be contacted in a range of different ways, including by email, phone or instant message. ChildLine also have a handy app that might be helpful if you are able to download this. Contact details for ChildLine are available at the back of this booklet.

There is an app on Charms that you can fill in, your carers will have access to this and the Registered Fostering Manager will see it and respond.

You could also contact an advocacy service who will work with you to make sure that your voice is heard and your rights protected. Again contact details for organisations like this are available at the end of this booklet.

You might decide that your complaint is not being taken seriously and that things are not changing. If this is the case you could make a complaint. The Local Authority that your social worker works for will have a complaints procedure in place and your carer or any other adult should be able to help with this.

It might also be helpful to think about whether Ofsted could be able to help to resolve the things that are happening for you. Ofsted is the government organisation that inspects the arrangements for children in care in order to make sure that they are good enough. Their contact details are also provided for you.



# What if I have a problem, or am unhappy?

My social worker

Name:

Number:

Supervising social worker

Name:

Number:

Coram Voice advocacy

Name:

Number:

0808 800 5792

Ofsted

Number:

0300 123 1231

National Youth Advocacy service

Number:

0808 808 1001

DMR Services

Name:

Alison Corkingdale

Number:

0121 352 1844



REVIEWED	DATE	PERSON REVIEWED BY
No Changes	Jan 2023	AC
Updated	June 2023	AC



**DMR** *Fostering*  
Services