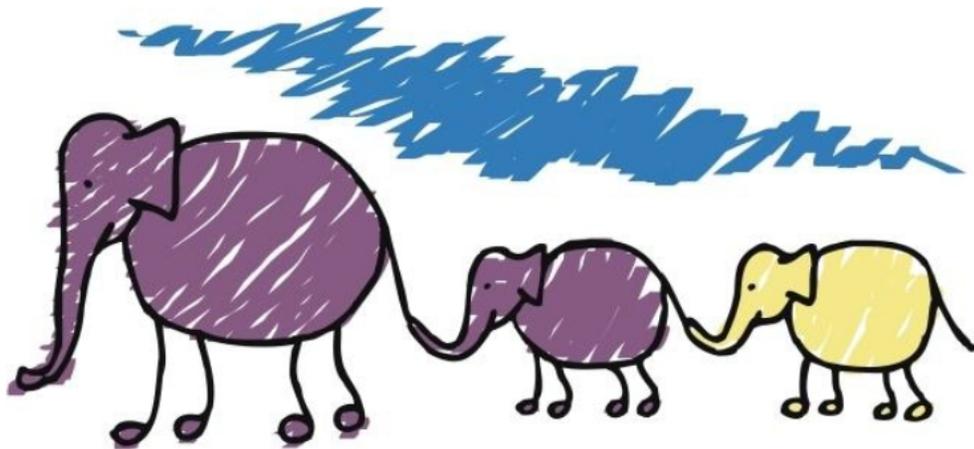


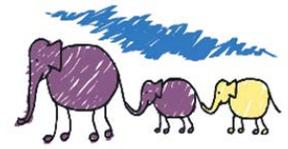
Children and Young Person's Guide



Regional Foster Placements

“Sharing the caring”

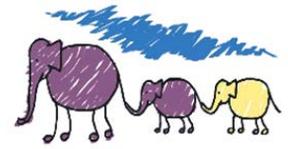
Information About Your Placement



Personal Information & Useful Telephone Numbers

Some of these numbers occasionally change for things like OFSTED. Your foster carers and social worker should check with you to make sure that they are up to date. If they haven't done this, please ask.

Your name DOB (Optional)	
Family telephone numbers	
Friends numbers	
Your Social Worker's name and telephone number	
Your Independent Reviewing Officer's Name and telephone number	
Emergency Out of Hours telephone number	
Regional Foster Placements office telephone number	01905 754653
Support Worker	
Foster Carer's telephone number	
Childline	0800 11 11
OFSTED	0300 1234 666 enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
CoramVoice	If you are a young person, you can get in touch by contacting our helpline on 0808 800 5792 www.coramvoice.org.uk
Compliments & Complaints Officer (for your Children's Services Department)	



Welcome to Regional Foster Placements

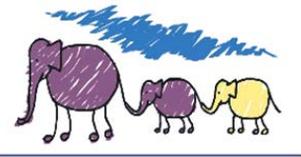
Going to live with Foster Carers can be a really difficult and emotional time. Every young person's circumstances are different. Some young people may be pleased to be fostered. Others may be scared and angry. It's natural to have all sorts of different feelings. This guide has been written by Regional Foster Placements to try and help answer some of your questions. We have worked with lots of young people over the years and this booklet tries to **answer the questions that children and young people have asked us over that time.**

"What is Regional Foster Placements, I thought I was in the care of Children's Services"

Regional Foster Placements is an independent fostering agency. We work with the social workers and managers at Children's Services to provide foster carers for children who need to be looked after.

"What is Foster Care?"

Foster care means living for a period of time with foster carers. Foster carers are people who have been specially recruited, assessed and trained to care for children and young people who can't live with their families. The most important thing for foster carers is to look after the young people who are placed with them and keep them safe. The foster carers are there for you and we hope that you get on well with them. Your foster carers will also work with the other people involved in your life, your family, your social worker and your teachers.



“There seems to be lots of people involved, who are they and what do they do?”

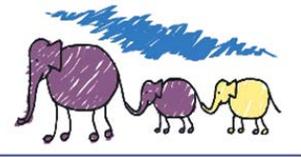
There are normally lots of people involved, too many to write about here, but the following are the ones you will definitely see:

Supervising Social Worker/sometimes called Foster Carer Support Worker:

This person's job is to supervise and support your foster carers to be sure that the foster carers and Regional Foster Placements are doing all that we can to help you achieve your potential. The Supervising Social Worker should visit the foster home regularly and sometimes they would like to talk to you to find out how you are feeling about living with the foster carers.

The Social Worker (your social worker):

This person is responsible for your case. It is this person's duty to make sure you are well cared for and to make sure that everyone is working to achieve your care plan (**what's a care plan? - more about this in a bit**). Your social worker should visit you regularly and explain to you what's happening, they should also listen to your views and things that you want to happen. This doesn't mean to say that they will do everything you want but they have to show to you and others that they have listened to you and taken your views into account when decisions are being made about you. You should be able to contact your social worker when you want to and it's a reasonable time to do so (not at 1 am!). If you have difficulties contacting your



social worker, talk to your foster carers and they should be able to help you get in touch.

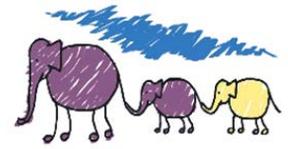
Independent Reviewing Officer:

This person is in charge of your review meetings, which is the meeting where the big decisions are made about you, like, how long will you be in foster care for, if you are going to move, where will you move to. It's very important that the independent reviewing officer and everyone who attends the review meeting knows what you think. Your social worker and foster carer should help make sure your views are heard. Please talk to your foster carers, if you feel able, to make sure they know what you think and what you would like to happen.

"What is a Care Plan?"

The care plan is the plan for your future and covers all the important things like:

- how long you are going to be in foster care
- where you are going to live
- contact with your family and friends
- your education
- your health
- leisure activities



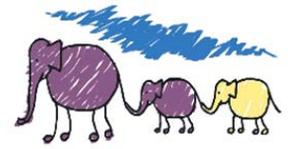
To start with the care plan is written by the social worker and their manager. After this, it is reviewed and changed whenever necessary at a review meeting

"What is a Review Meeting?"

Whilst you are in foster care you will have regular review meetings. All the people involved in your case attend the review meetings and agree the decisions about your care plan.



Your parents will normally be invited to attend the meetings but sometimes this will vary depending on your circumstances. The meetings are all about you and it is important that you are involved as much as possible. Your foster carer should help you with this.



The law says that you must have a review.

- Within four weeks after the start of your placement
- Within three months after that
- At least every six months from then on

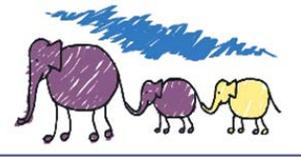
“What about my education?”

We want you to go to school because your education is important and we want you to learn.

Your foster carers know how important your school work is and they will encourage and support you. They will remind you to do homework and help you with it if you would like them to.

If it is possible, and it meets your needs, you will continue to attend the same school and your carers will help you with this. If you have to change schools, your foster carers and social workers will help you work out how this can happen.





As well as above, your foster carers will:

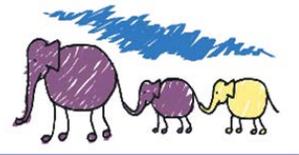
- Encourage you to take part in educational activities
- Listen to how you're feeling about school
- Liaise with the school and attend meeting when needed
- Make sure you have all the books, equipment and school uniform you need.
- Make sure you are not bullied while at school. But if you are, work with the school to help sort it out.

Education is about learning, but it can also be fun. It is not all linked to school and we will celebrate all your successes, both in and out of school. Your foster carers will give you lots of opportunities to take part in activities that are fun and from which you can learn.

All looked after children have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). Your social worker will ask the school to complete a PEP soon after you have moved to be with foster carers. The PEP tells us how you are doing at school and what the school and your foster carers can do to help make sure you achieve the best you can within education.

"What about my health, will I keep the same doctor and dentist?"

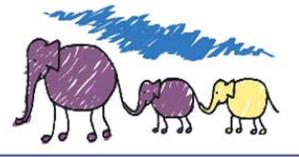
While you are with the foster carers, you will need to be registered with a General Practitioner (GP). It might be possible to stay with your existing GP if your foster home isn't too far away. If your foster home is too far away, you will be registered with the GP that your foster carers see.



Your foster carers will also make sure you have regular checks for your eyes and teeth. We want you to be, and remain, healthy, so your foster carers will offer you a healthy and balanced diet with different foods to choose from. Your foster carers will ask you what sorts of foods you like to eat.

Your foster carers will encourage you to be active and do lots of different things like sports. As part of encouraging you to be healthy, we may ask you to walk sometimes rather than be given a lift, for example when you are meeting friends. Your carers will only ask you to walk if they think it is safe to do so.

Some children and young people smoke. Smoking is not good for your health. Medical research tells us that young people who smoke are more likely to suffer very serious health problems as they get older. We would therefore rather you did not smoke. If you want to smoke you should talk to your foster carers about this. We would need written permission from your social worker or parents. We do not think it is a good idea to have cigarettes in the foster home and your foster carers will not buy cigarettes for you. If you do smoke and you would like to stop your foster carers will do all they can to help and support you in giving up. They can also, with your permission, get other people involved who can help you quit.

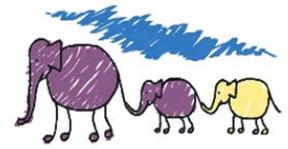


“Can I see my family and friends?”

Contact with your family is important to you and your foster carers understand this. Your foster carers will do all they can to assist you in having contact with your family. The care plan sets out the arrangements for your contact with your family and your foster carers will work with you and the social worker to make sure that you see your family according to the agreements made. Please tell your foster carers (if you feel able to) about how you feel about contact. Also, you can talk to your social worker and independent review officer so everyone knows your views. Your foster carer and also help you to make sure that everyone knows what you think because it is important.

We want you to be able to see your friends and we will help you with this. There may be some restrictions and we can discuss this with you. The most important thing is that your foster carers know where you are because they want to make sure that you are safe.

Regional Foster Placements does not provide you with a mobile phone. If you have a mobile, we will want to talk to you, your social worker and your family about how you use it, and make agreements about its use. We want to make sure that the people who contact you are not going to cause you any harm and that you can have peace, quiet and rest when you need it.



“Who will support me as I get older and need to move on?”

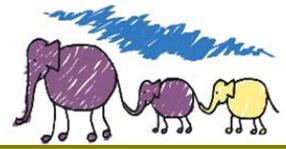
As you start to think about leaving school and getting ready for adult life your foster carers will do their best to make sure you have all the skills you need to move on. They will help you with cooking, washing, managing money as well as lots of other things depending on your needs. We will work with you, your social worker and everyone else involved to agree and follow your “Pathway Plan” to independence. We all need to make sure we do this when the time is right for you and you feel ready. If and when you move on, we hope that you will keep in touch with your foster carers and they will be pleased to keep in touch with you.

“How can I be sure that I am being listened to and taken seriously?”

Please talk to your foster carers if you want to, they want to listen to you and will do all they can to make sure that your views are heard by everyone involved in making decisions about your life. Talk to your social worker and reviewing officer. At the back of this booklet there is a list of people and numbers you can contact. Check with your foster carers and social worker that all the numbers are correct at the time that you read this.

“What can I do if I am unhappy, have a problem, or need to complain?”

If you have a problem with your foster carers, or something to do with your foster carers that you can't sort out, you have a right to complain and for that complaint to be taken seriously.



Following is how you complain and to whom:

- You can speak to one or both of your foster carers
 - You can telephone your social worker or the emergency duty team
 - You can write to your social worker, family, friends or others
 - You can telephone "Child Line" or you can telephone or write to Ofsted. The numbers are at the back of this booklet
 - You can also telephone Regional Foster Placements, email us on complaints@regionalfosterplacements.co.uk or write to us at:
-

Complaints Dept.
Freepost RRLR-BAAJ-HTHJ
Regional Foster Placements
113 North Hill
Plymouth
PL4 8JY

If you make a complaint to Regional Foster Placements then we will talk to you about that complaint. We will attempt to resolve your concerns and keep you informed of how this will be achieved.

If we have not done this within 2 weeks you can make a complaint to the Manager. The line manager will agree your complaint with you and confirm in writing to you within 7 days of your contact.

The manager will then make enquiries and provide you with a written report. If you are not happy with this outcome you can contact the



Director of Regional Foster Placements, Mr John Catterall. He will look at everything to do with the complaint. He may ask someone else to look into the complaint. He will then make a decision and inform you of this within 28 days of you contacting him.

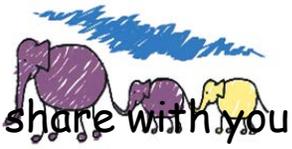
If you are not happy you can contact OFSTED on 0300 1234 666.

Other sorts of complaints: If your complaint isn't really about the foster carers or the services that Regional Foster Placements provides, it is possible that the complaint may be about Children's Services. There is a separate complaints process for these sort of problems. Your social worker should be able to give you a leaflet that tells you what to do. If you are not sure you can talk to your social worker or foster carer and there is probably a phone number that you can ring. Have a look at the back of this booklet.

Record keeping about you

Foster carers are expected to keep a record of the time that you are living with them, therefore, they will regularly write down the things that you do and the things that happen to you. The information they record will be shared with other people involved in your life, like your social worker. Information is only shared with people who have a proper reason to know about what is happening in your life. If you want to know who will have access to this information, about you specifically, you can ask your foster carer or

your social worker. The foster carer will keep any records about you, safe and securely within the home.



We encourage your foster carer, whenever possible, to share with you any information they are recording as they go along. You might like to agree between yourselves, a regular time to talk through what they have been recording and you are welcome to comment on this and the foster carer can add your comment to the record.

Sometimes your foster carer may be asked to write a report about you, for example, for your LAC review. If they do, they will show you this report before the meeting so that there are no surprises.

When you leave the foster placement your placement record will be passed back to Regional Foster Placements who will make sure there is a copy with your Children's Services Record.

You can see any records that are kept about you by Regional Foster Placements, whether you are in one of our placements or not, there can be some exceptions about some information but we will explain this to you. All you need to do is let anyone from Regional Foster Placements know that you wish to see your records. Someone will talk to you about the process and arrange for you to see the information that we have. We will also organise for someone to be available to talk the information through with you in case there is something you don't understand. Normally, we will be able to do this quite quickly, if there is a lot of information and any complications it might take up to twenty eight days to provide you with the information.

One of the reasons that we keep records is because it is important for you to have an accurate record of your time with Regional Foster Placements carers, so that you can look back and understand how and



why things happened, we also hope that they will remind you of good times!

If you find the text in this document difficult to read we can supply it in a format better suited to your needs. Please ask someone who speaks English to contact Regional Foster Placements.

Other Bits & Pieces

While in placement you will be given;

- Pocket money. This will be set by your foster carer. We have arranged this because many of our carers may have their own children and we want you to receive the same amount as they do.
- If you have any hobbies or any other activities you want then we will arrange this with you.

If you are not happy with your placement and feel unable to talk to your foster carers then you could talk to your family or Social Worker, a teacher or a member of Regional Foster Placement staff.

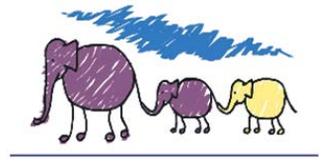
The aim within our organisation is for you to feel comfortable, safe and supported for however long you need our help.

Take Care

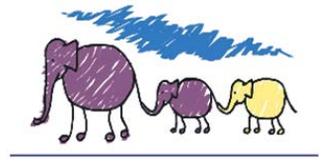
John

John Catterall - Director

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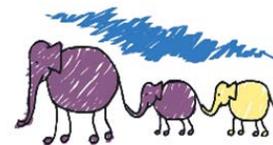


USEFUL CONTACTS

Our Head Office:

Regional Foster Placements
113 North Hill
Plymouth
PL4 8JY
Tel: 01752 220109
Fax : 01752 665032

Regional Foster Placements
Blackpole Business Centre
Blackpole Rd
Worcester
WR3 8SQ
01905 754653



Ofsted helpline : 0300 123 4666.

Children's Rights

Children's Commissioner Anne Longfield

I'm Anne, with my team I ask children and young people who live away from home what they think about how they are looked after. It's my job to report the messages you give to us to the Government and other decision makers so that things can be made better for you

See the leaflet attached for more information.

Regional Foster Placements
Registered in England & Wales Registration No. 4217642
Registered Office: 217 Clevedon Road, Tickenham, North Somerset, BS21 6RX

Some words of advice from Emily...

Hello, my name is Emily.

I was 13 years old when I came into care and I found it very difficult to speak to anyone.



I was confused as to why I could not live with my own family, but then could go and live with some other people I didn't know.



I lived with some different carers first for 3 months and we didn't get along well, so I moved to another carer and I have been with her for 4 years in December 2017.



There are many different feelings you may have like feeling scared, lonely, trapped, angry and emotionally exhausted. I felt all those things. I didn't want a foster carer, I wanted my family!



Positive things about being in care.....

Although it is hard at first there can be lots of good things about being in care. Here's my list:

➤ *I can see a different path in life for myself*



➤ *I have met lots of different people*



➤ *I've done well in school and am now in college enjoying my Public Services course*



➤ *I still get to see my family which I really enjoy*



So here's my final advice.....

➤ *If you don't like it somewhere, don't be scared to tell someone...*



➤ *Ask all the questions you need to until you understand what's going on.....*



➤ *Try to make the best of a bad situation because...*



YOU CAN BE HAPPY!

