



Fusion
Fostering

GO-TO GUIDE

**EVERYTHING YOU
NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT FOSTERING
AND FUSION**

CONTENTS

FOSTER CARE, SO, WHAT IS IT?.....	2
WE ARE FUSION FOSTERING WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU A WARM WELCOME	3
YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO WAS ALSO IN FOSTER CARE	4
WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE COME INTO FOSTER CARE?....	5
WHAT IS A SOCIAL WORKER, WHAT ARE THEY SUPPOSED TO DO?.....	6
WHO ARE FOSTER CARERS?.....	7
WILL MY CARERS BE RIGHT FOR ME?.....	8
WHAT HAPPENS TO MY FAMILY, WILL I STILL GET TO SEE THEM?.....	9-10
CAN I SEE MY FRIENDS?.....	9-10
CAN I BRING MY STUFF WITH ME?.....	9-10
WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL, WILL I HAVE TO MOVE TO A NEW ONE?.....	11-12
WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY FOSTER CARER, WHAT WILL THEY DO?.....	13-14
WHAT WILL MY FOSTER CARER EXPECT FROM ME?.....	15
WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT FUSION ?.....	16
MEETINGS MEETINGS MEETINGS WHAT ARE THEY ALL ABOUT?.....	17
WHAT IS A PLACEMENT PLANNING MEETING?.....	18
WHAT IS A REVIEW OR 'LAC' REVIEW?.....	19
'PEP' MEETINGS	20
HERE'S SOME MORE INFORMATION THAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW.....	21
MOVING ON AND LEAVING YOUR PLACEMENT	22
WHAT DO I DO IF I AM NOT HAPPY?.....	23
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT?.....	24
USEFUL CONTACTS	25

FOSTER CARE

SO, WHAT IS IT?

Foster Care is a home for young people to stay when there are problems in their own family. There are lots of reasons why young people need foster families. This could be because their parents are not well or perhaps they have problems they need help with. Some young people can live with other family members but when this isn't possible foster families are available to help.

This is called 'going into care' or 'being looked after'. Some young people stay with foster families for a few days and others might be with their foster families for a longer time, this all depends on what problems there are at home. However you come to be living with your foster family, everyone understands that living with a family you don't know can be worrying and upsetting. This booklet will help answer any questions you have.



WE ARE FUSION FOSTERING

WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU A BIG WARM WELCOME!

Fusion is a fostering agency that helps to find foster families for young people just like you. We are also responsible for making sure that Foster Carers do a good job and keep you safe at all times. All of our foster families have their own Supervising Social Worker who you will get to know really well. We are very friendly and here to help so please feel free to ask us anything.

We want to make sure that positive experiences are at the top of our list when you come to us!

ENJOY

We want everyone who comes into contact with Fusion Fostering to experience our kind and fun approach. We want you to have fun and enjoy your time with us.

FULL OF OPPORTUNITY

We will make sure that you have access to lots of fun and exciting opportunities that you will benefit from. Let us know what you want to do!

ACHIEVE

We want to help you achieve and will always celebrate your success, no matter how big or small.

INSPIRE

We want to help you feel inspired and we will support you in all your activities.

RESPECT

We will always respect you fully.

CREATIVE

We want to encourage creativity and help you find what you are good at (everyone has something that they are good at).

GROW, EVOLVE, ADAPT

We are always open to growing and we will welcome any new exciting ideas you may have. If you feel we need to change how we do things we would love to hear about that too.

YOUR RIGHTS

YOU HAVE A LOT OF RIGHTS - SOME OF THEM ARE LISTED HERE...

INFORMATION
TO BE LISTENED TO
NOT TO BE SHOUTED AT
NEVER TO BE HIT
EDUCATION
WARMTH
TO BE SECURE

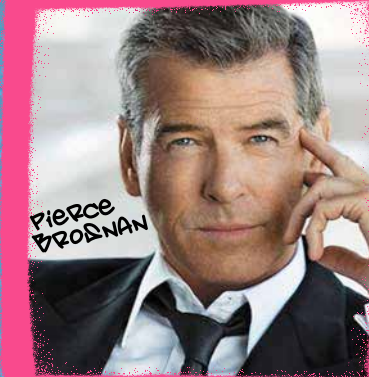
NOT TO BE AFRAID TO
SEE YOUR FRIENDS
AND FAMILY (IF IT'S
SAFE)
HEALTH NEEDS
SLEEP
FOOD
SUPPORT
RELIGION
TO GROW
NEVER TO BE CALLED

NAMES
NOT TO BE BULLIED
ADVICE
TREATED FAIRLY
PROTECTED
MEDICAL CARE
NOT TO BE
MISTREATED
ENCOURAGEMENT
ANY SPECIAL HELP
YOU NEED



WHERE THE HECK WOULD WE ALL BE WITHOUT OUR IPHONES, IPADS AND IPODS?

OH YES, STEVE WAS THE GUY WHO INVENTED APPLE, WE HAVE HIM TO THANK. HE CAME INTO THE CARE SYSTEM AND WAS ADOPTED AS A BABY.



HERE HE IS! YES, WE ALL KNOW HIM AS JAMES BOND OR MAYBE THE GUY FROM 'MAMMA MIA!'

PIERCE BROSCHAN IS A VERY FAMOUS ACTOR. HE CAME INTO THE CARE SYSTEM WHEN HIS FATHER AND MOTHER SEPARATED AND HIS MOTHER WENT AWAY TO NURSING SCHOOL. PIERCE WAS CARED FOR BY LOTS OF DIFFERENT FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO ELSE WAS IN FOSTER CARE

MANY CHILDREN THAT HAVE COME INTO FOSTER CARE GO ON TO BE VERY SUCCESSFUL IN LOTS OF DIFFERENT CAREERS. IN FACT HAVE A LOOK AT THESE FAMOUS PEOPLE THAT WERE FOSTERED OR ADOPTED BEFORE TAKING THE WORLD BY STORM.



FATIMA WHITBREAD IS A FORMER BRITISH INTERNATIONAL JAVELIN THROWER. DURING HER CHILDHOOD SHE GREW UP IN A SERIES OF CHILDREN'S HOMES. WHEN SHE WAS 14 SHE WAS ADOPTED BY THE WHITBREAD FAMILY WHO SHE SAYS 'GAVE HER A FUTURE'. FATIMA WENT ON TO BECOME A WORLD CHAMPION AND WORLD RECORD HOLDER. SHE IS ALSO A TWO-TIME OLYMPIC MEDALLIST.



NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER AND ANTI-APARTHEID LEADER, NELSON MANDELA IS ONE THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL FIGURES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. HIS FATHER DIED WHEN HE WAS 9 YEARS OLD, NELSON WAS FOSTERED BY THE CHIEF OF HIS TRIBE.

WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE COME INTO FOSTER CARE?

LET'S BE HONEST HERE, THERE IS NO SIMPLE ANSWER TO THIS REALLY. ALL SITUATIONS AND FAMILIES ARE DIFFERENT. BUT HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES THAT MIGHT HELP YOU UNDERSTAND.

It might be the case that a young person may ask for help because they are having a really bad time at home and they don't feel able to manage anymore. They may ask for help from a neighbour, a friend, a teacher or a social worker. Or, maybe they phoned Childline to talk about it. These people will let someone know if a young person is unhappy or unsafe and this can then lead to young people coming to live with a foster family

Sometimes a young person's parents may contact a social worker to ask for help. There will be many reasons for this: they may be ill and cannot cope; they may be hurting their child and need help to stop; or, may be using drugs and need help with this.

Sometimes other people like teachers, neighbours or a family member might be really worried. They may contact a social worker if they feel a child is in danger or is not being looked after properly by their parents or carers.

If a person has told someone that they are very worried about a child or young person, a social worker and sometimes the police will visit the home where the child or young person lives to see if they can help. Sometimes there may be an agreement with the family that the child will live with a foster family until the problems are sorted out. This is called voluntary care and this is when a parent agrees that their children need to go into foster care for a short time until they can sort things out at home.

If things are more serious at home, the social worker may need to go to court and explain to a judge what has happened. The judge will listen to the social worker and the parents and make a decision as to what would be in the young person's best interests. The judge will also be interested in what the young person has to say. After this the Judge may make an order for the young person to be 'looked after' by the Council. This can mean coming into foster care, this could be for a short time or until a young person reaches 18 years old. If an 'order' has been made by a judge this means that a family cannot remove their children from foster care, this is done to help keep children and young people safe.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL WORKER?

WHAT ARE THEY SUPPOSED TO DO?

YOUR SOCIAL WORKER IS

They work for the local authority in the area from where you are from. It is their job to help children and their families through difficult problems and times. Some young people have a social worker way before they come into foster care. They will work and try hard to help solve any problems in families. Coming into care is usually a last resort when problems don't get sorted out or children and young people are unsafe. When a young person comes into

foster care their social worker will still work with the young people and their family. Your social worker will see you on your own and will answer your questions about living away from home. They will also explain what will happen next, and why you are in foster care. It's important that you can talk to your social worker as they can help make decisions that are best for you.

YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR SOCIAL WORKER AT ANY TIME

ON THE PHONE _____ OR EMAIL _____

YOUR FOSTER CARER HERE AT FUSION ALSO HAS A SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER FROM THE FUSION FOSTERING TEAM. YOU MAY HAVE MET THE SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER ALREADY...

THIS IS _____

You will be able to talk to him or her too, if you want to. They are here to help too. A supervising social workers job is to make sure that the Foster Carer you live with is keeping you safe, making sure they care for you properly and try to make sure that you are as happy as you can be.

Fusion social workers are here to also make sure you're happy and they will see your Foster Carer at least once a month or more if this is needed, they will also want to chat to you about things that are going well and if you're happy in your placement.

YOU CAN CONTACT YOUR FOSTER CARERS SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER AT FUSION

ON THE PHONE _____ OR EMAIL _____

YOU CAN ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR SOCIAL WORKER OR SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER HERE AT FUSION IF YOU NEED TO SO PLEASE TALK TO US AND LET US KNOW WHAT IS GOING WELL OR IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY.

WHO ARE FOSTER CARERS?

So Foster Carers are people who want to offer a home to young people who cannot live with their own family for whatever reason. Our job at Fusion is to carefully select the best carers to take care of the young people that come to live with them. The Carers we have are very carefully checked and trained to make sure they can offer you a safe and comfortable place to live. A foster carer may live alone, with a partner or husband/wife, they may also have their own children at home.

There may be other foster children living there too. Some Foster Carers have pets and some don't. You should be given information about a Foster Carer to read before you come to live in their home. If you didn't get this you may have spoken to your social worker about the Carers you are coming to live with. All of our Carers have a family book which you should get that tells you a little bit about them and some pictures so you know what their home looks like and what they look like.

WILL MY CARERS BE RIGHT FOR ME?

YOUR SOCIAL WORKER WILL KNOW ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY AND THEY WILL CHAT TO US AT FUSION ABOUT WHO THEY THINK MIGHT BE THE BEST FOSTER CARERS FOR YOU. YOUR SOCIAL WORKER WILL ALSO CHAT TO YOU ABOUT THIS AND ASK YOU WHAT YOU THINK, YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO LIVE WITH A CARER THAT HAS A DOG OR THEIR OWN CHILDREN.

THERE ARE MANY FOSTER CARERS WHO LIVE IN, AROUND AND ALSO OUTSIDE OF THE AREA YOU LIVE. THEY WILL LOOK FOR THE CARERS WHO MOST CLOSELY MATCH YOUR NEEDS. SO IF YOU LIKE DOING LOTS OF ACTIVITIES OR SPORTS WE WOULD TRY HARD TO FIND CARERS THAT LIKE THIS TOO. OR IF YOU LIKE STAYING IN AND CHILLING OUT, WE WOULD LOOK FOR A CARER THAT LIKES TO DO THIS.

WE WILL TRY TO FIND A FOSTER CARER WHO SHARED YOUR LANGUAGE OR LANGUAGES AND/OR HAVE THE SAME RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS AND SHARE OTHER PARTS OF YOUR CULTURE. WE TRY REALLY HARD TO MATCH ALL OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH CARERS THAT ARE BEST SUITED TO THEM. IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY AT ANY TIME IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU TELL YOUR SOCIAL WORKER SO THEY CAN TRY TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE GET THIS RIGHT SO PLEASE TALK TO US.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY FAMILY? WILL I STILL GET TO SEE THEM?

IT IS NORMAL FOR YOU TO MISS YOUR FAMILY. WE TOTALLY UNDERSTAND THIS. YOUR SOCIAL WORKER WILL BE MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU TO SEE THEM IF THIS IS POSSIBLE.

'CONTACT' CAN BE ARRANGED WITH YOUR FAMILY IN THE RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES. THIS CAN HAPPEN IN THE FOSTER HOME, IN YOUR FAMILY'S HOME, OR SOMEWHERE ELSE, LIKE A CONTACT CENTRE. THIS DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN YOU'D BE GOING HOME TO YOUR FAMILY, BUT CAN DO ON OCCASION.

SOME CONTACTS ARE SUPERVISED BY A SOCIAL WORKER, THIS IS TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE HAPPY AND SAFE. IT MAY BE BEST FOR YOU TO KEEP IN TOUCH BY PHONE AS WELL AS (OR INSTEAD OF) SEEING YOUR FAMILY FACE-TO-FACE. IF THERE IS SOMEONE YOU DO NOT FEEL IT WOULD BE SAFE FOR YOU TO SEE, LET YOUR SOCIAL WORKER KNOW. YOU CAN TALK TO YOUR SOCIAL WORKER ABOUT ANY FEELINGS YOU HAVE ABOUT SEEING YOUR FAMILY. YOUR SOCIAL WORKER WILL HELP DECIDE WHAT WILL BE BEST FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED.

CAN I SEE MY FRIENDS?

Your Foster Carer will do their best to help you stay in touch with your friends, and also to help you make some new ones. If you have been moved away from your area, your social worker and Foster Carer can speak to you about how best to stay in touch with your friends. Please ask about this and we can all try to make this work for you in a safe way.

When you do see your friends it will be important for you to agree with your Foster Carer when you are going to see them, where you are going and when you will be back. We need to know this so that you are safe.


Your Carer may want to talk to your friend's parents if you are thinking of staying overnight with a friend. You might want your friend to stay over at your new home too. Lots of our young people have time away from their foster homes, we just need to check that you will be safe and cared for properly.

If your Foster Carer and social worker agree that it is ok for your friend to stay at your new home or for you to stay out at your friend's, it's good then for your Foster Carers to chat to the parents of your friend so that they can make arrangements.

CAN I BRING MY STUFF WITH ME?

YES. WHATEVER YOU BRING TO YOUR PLACEMENT IS YOURS AND YOU WILL KEEP THESE SAFE IN YOUR OWN ROOM. WE KNOW THAT YOUR THINGS ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU. YOU CAN BRING ALL OF YOUR BELONGINGS WITH YOU. YOUR FOSTER CARER WILL HELP YOU DECIDE WHAT NEW THINGS YOU MAY NEED TOO!

WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL, WILL I HAVE TO MOVE TO A NEW ONE?



MOST CHILDREN WILL GO TO THE SAME SCHOOL UNLESS THEY ARE MOVED TO A DIFFERENT AREA. IF YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE WITH A FAMILY FOR A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME AND YOUR SCHOOL IS FAR AWAY, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO CHANGE TO A SCHOOL THAT IS NEARER AND EASIER TO GET TO. SCHOOL IS VERY IMPORTANT. WE WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY AT SCHOOL AND TO ACHIEVE SO YOUR FOSTER CARER WILL HELP TO SUPPORT YOU WITH SCHOOL.

YOUR FOSTER CARER WILL ATTEND MEETINGS AT SCHOOL WHEN NEEDED TO HELP YOU WITH ANY PROBLEMS, AND THEY WILL ALSO HELP YOU WITH YOUR HOMEWORK OR COURSEWORK IF YOU NEED THIS.

IF YOU DO NEED TO CHANGE SCHOOLS WE KNOW THAT THIS CAN BE A LITTLE BIT WORRYING. YOUR FOSTER CARER AND SOCIAL WORKER WILL WORK WITH YOU TO FIND THE RIGHT SCHOOL THAT IS BEST SUITED TO YOU. WE WILL GRADUALLY EASE YOU IN WITH VISITS AND A CLEAR PLAN.

WE HAVE LOTS OF CHILDREN THAT ATTEND LOTS OF DIFFERENT SCHOOLS SPECIFICALLY SUITED TO THEIR NEEDS. THIS IS SOMETHING THAT WE WORK HARD TO GET RIGHT FOR YOU.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU GO TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY AND ARRIVE ON TIME SO YOU GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR EDUCATION. IF YOU ARE HAVING TROUBLE WITH YOUR HOMEWORK, YOUR WORK AT SCHOOL OR ANYTHING ELSE AT SCHOOL, THEN DO SPEAK TO YOUR FOSTER CARER OR SOCIAL WORKER - THEY ARE THERE TO HELP YOU.

YOU WILL BE ASKED TO TAKE PART IN MEETINGS AT SCHOOL TO PUT TOGETHER A 'PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN.' THIS WILL LOOK AT WHAT YOU NEED TO MAKE SURE YOU CAN ACHIEVE YOUR BEST AT SCHOOL AND BE HAPPY WHEN YOU ARE THERE. YOU WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO GET HELP FROM THE TEACHERS AT SCHOOL AND THEY WILL KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FOSTER CARER TO LET THEM KNOW ABOUT YOUR PROGRESS OR ANY WORRIES.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM MY FOSTER CARER, WHAT WILL THEY DO?

THIS IS YOUR FOSTER CARER'S PROMISE TO YOU:

When you come to stay with us we will do our best to make you feel welcome and part of the family. You will have your bedroom and we can help you choose how you want it to look. It might be a nice fun thing for us to do together. You can put up pictures and fill your room with all your own things. This will be your own private space for you to relax.

If you don't have a lot of things when you come to us don't worry, we can go out and get you all the things you need.

We will always listen to you so feel free to talk to us about anything. If you tell us something that we are worried about, for example, that someone has hurt you or is making you feel worried, we will have to report this to your Social Worker but we will always tell you that we are going to do this first.

We will celebrate your birthday and Christmas with you and other special occasions that are important to you. So let us know if you celebrate any other special occasions. We are happy to learn about them too.

School is very important and we will make sure that you are going to school and that you are doing the best you can do. We will help you with your homework and also chat to you about any worries you have about school.

We will make sure that you have a healthy balanced diet. Let us know about the foods you like and also foods you don't like. There may be foods you can't eat for health reasons and also for religious and cultural reasons. We are open to trying new foods so let us know and we cook special food for you.

We will take you to the doctor and dentist regularly - just to make sure that you're healthy and happy.

We will work closely with your Social Worker to make sure that you are happy. We will also talk to your Social Worker about contact with your family.

We will try and keep you safe, so it is important that we know where you are at all times.

We will save money on a monthly basis for your future and where possible, we can open a bank account for you to access when you are 18 years old.

You will get pocket money to spend on things you like. This will be talked about in your planning meeting at the beginning of your placement and we can decide and agree on how much.

We will make sure you have nice clothes and you can help us to find the things that you like to wear.

We want to know about things you like to do and also things you are good at. You may like football, tennis, dancing, horse-riding, singing or playing an instrument. We'll try to take you to activities of your choice.

Most importantly we will **NEVER** hurt you! We want you to feel safe and not worried. There may be times when you make mistakes and we want you to know that we will talk to you about them calmly and try to work things out.

WHAT WILL MY FOSTER CARER EXPECT FROM ME?

YOUR FOSTER CARER WILL ABOVE ALL WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY BUT THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT YOUR CARER WILL EXPECT FROM YOU. DON'T PANIC IT'S ONLY A COUPLE OF THINGS.

- Be yourself.
- Tell us about yourself and talk to us.
- Please try to respect other people in the home and their belongings.
- We want you to attend school and to do your best.
- If you go out we need to know where you are, who you are with and when you are going to be back.
- We would like you to try and get involved in family activities.
- We want you to be honest with us and tell us if you are not OK so we can help.

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAY ABOUT FUSION

MY ACHIEVEMENTS ARE:

- BUILDING A STRONG BOND WITH MY FOSTER CARER.
- GETTING MY PAIN UNDER CONTROL.
- FINISHING SCHOOL AND DOING MY EXAMS.
- DON'T HANG AROUND IN TOWN WITH A BIG GROUP.
- KEPT IN CONTACT WITH FAMILY.

I LIKE THE SOCIAL WORKER FROM FUSION, I SEE HER MORE THAN MY OWN SOCIAL WORKER. SHE IS EASY TO TALK TO AND HER HAIR IS ALWAYS A DIFFERENT COLOUR WHEN SHE VISITS WHICH MAKES ME LAUGH. SHE DOESN'T TALK DOWN TO ME AND TRIES TO HELP. I LIKE THAT SHE IS JUST NORMAL. I CAN RING AND TEXT HER IF I NEED TO AND SHE ALWAYS ANSWERS.

MY FOSTER CARER IS BRILLIANT. I KNOW I CAN BE A PAIN IN THE BOTTOM BUT SHE PUTS UP WITH ME BECAUSE SHE SAYS, 'I HAVE POTENTIAL'. I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR EVERYONE IN THE HOUSE WHO HAS PUT UP WITH ME, I KNOW THAT I AM NOT EASY TO LIVE WITH. HONESTLY, I AM SURPRISED I AM STILL LIVING HERE.

MEETINGS MEETINGS MEETINGS

WHAT ARE THEY ALL ABOUT?

In this section we are going to talk about what meetings will happen when you come into foster care and what they are for. Some young people like their meetings and take part fully. However, there are also lots of young people who find meetings sometimes scary or boring. This is sometimes because it hasn't been explained to them very well what each meeting is for.

Before we start, it's important that you know that the meetings are about you! So it's great if you can come along and tell us your thoughts and feelings. We want to get it right!

Some young people don't like meetings at all and if this is the case we can find ways to ensure that your wishes and feelings are included. There are professionals called 'advocates', they can help you lots by coming to meetings for you and ensuring that your voice is heard. An advocate is someone that is just for you and totally separate from any other professional. They will help you understand your rights and also support you with meetings if this is something that you need help with. An advocate will spend time with you on your own and talk about things that are important to you.

If you would like an advocate please speak to your Social Worker or Foster Carer who can get this organised for you.

Help with finding an Advocate:
Coram Voice - Helpline: 0808 800 5792
www.coramvoice.org.uk/alwaysheard

WHAT IS A PLACEMENT PLANNING MEETING?

This will happen right at the start of your new placement most likely within the first week. The people that come to the meeting are usually you, your Social Worker, Foster Carer, supervising Social Worker from Fusion and sometimes your parents or previous carers (if appropriate).

We basically get together to talk about how living with your foster carer is going to work and what everyone needs to do to ensure that you are cared for properly. It's important that you come to this too as you get to have your say!

The meeting will look at everything that is needed to ensure that you have all your needs met. Some of the things that we talk about are:

- Food you like and don't like
- What will be happening with school. So it might look at a school move or if you stay at the same school, how you will get there in a morning, etc.
- We will talk about what routines you need, such as bedtimes, mealtimes, TV time and computer time.
- Any activities you want to do will be discussed as you may want to keep up with a hobby or a club, like football or dancing.
- If you spend time away from the home with your friends we will discuss what time you need to be back and what to do when you are out and about.
- We will decide if you need pocket money and how much.
- If you have any medical needs we will talk about how best to ensure that they are taken care of.
- We might talk about what things make you happy but also what makes you sad, angry or upset. This is so that we can plan ahead and get to know you well.
- We will talk about your family contact too.



DON'T WORRY, ALL OF THIS WILL BE WRITTEN DOWN IN YOUR PLACEMENT PLAN. THIS WAY WE ALL KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING AND IT'S VERY CLEAR.

WHAT IS A REVIEW OR LAC REVIEW?

Some professionals call your review a LAC Review.

What does 'LAC' mean? - 'LAC' means 'Looked After Child'.

A Review or LAC review meeting is a chance for everyone to talk about:

- * YOU
- * YOUR PLACEMENT
- * THE PLANS THAT ARE BEING MADE FOR YOU WHILE YOU ARE BEING LOOKED AFTER
- * HOW YOU ARE GETTING ON

This meeting is for you, your parents or previous carers (if appropriate), your Foster Carers, your Social Worker - although there may be times when your teacher will also be able to come along.

You will have your own Independent Reviewing Officer too, this person is someone that will chair the meeting. Your reviewing officer will come and chat to you before your review and get your views about how you think things are going in your placement and if you want to make any changes. You will have a review soon after you come into your new placement and then usually one every 6 months.

YOUR REVIEWING OFFICER IS CALLED: _____

AND YOU CAN CONTACT THEM ANYTIME!

ON THE TELEPHONE _____

OR EMAIL AT _____

In the review everyone will look at the plans for how long you will stay in the foster home and if you are happy. We will look at what is going well and maybe chat about things that you may need extra help with. It's really important that you are at your review so that we make sure we get things right for you. If you don't feel able to be there, please let your social worker or foster carer know and they can speak to you before the meeting or arrange for you to have an advocate, who can go and speak on your behalf.



What is a 'PEP'? - Personal Education Plan.

A PEP meeting is something that is normally held at your school. The meeting is about how you're getting on in school, what progress you're making with your education and also if you need any help in school.

You, your Social Worker, your Foster Carer (sometimes your parents and previous carers), your Foster Carer's Social Worker from Fusion and your teachers will be at this meeting.

These meetings are great because if you need some extra support in school we can all work out what that would be and how to make sure that you get this.

We can also help you to celebrate any achievements in this meeting too.

Just like your other meetings it's great if you can be there so we can get a good idea from you how things are going at school and if we can help in any way.

That is pretty much all the info about meetings out of the way!
But ask if you are unsure about anything!

HERE IS SOME MORE INFO THAT YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW

BEING HEALTHY!

When you move in with your Foster Carer, you will go and see a doctor for your health assessment. This means that everyone can be sure you are healthy. You can do many things for yourself to make sure you stay healthy - like eating good food, getting plenty of exercise and enough sleep.

It is also important to have good personal hygiene (making sure your clean and washed) and also to see the dentist and optician on a regular basis. Your Foster Carer will help you with all of this. If you need to have any treatment, like injections or taking medicines, your Foster Carer will also make sure these are taken care of.

YOUR LIFE JOURNEY!

This is super important. Your Social Worker will help you put together your life story book, especially if you are to be looked after for a long time. This can include all kinds of memories about you and your family.

This book - and the work you do in putting it together - will help you understand why things happened and why you were unable to stay with your family.

Your Foster Carer will also be collecting 'memories' for you to remember your time living in the foster family with them. This may be photographs, video tapes or DVDs, tickets from events and memories of the activities you have enjoyed together. This book will be yours to keep for the future.

MOVING ON AND LEAVING YOUR PLACEMENT

YOUNG PEOPLE MOVE ON FROM THEIR FOSTER HOME FROM TIME TO TIME TO DIFFERENT PLACES FOR DIFFERENT REASONS. IT MIGHT BE THE RIGHT TIME TO RETURN HOME TO FAMILY OR YOU MAY MOVE TO A NEW FOSTER CARER. WE ALL KNOW THAT FOSTER CARE IS NOT FOREVER AND WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE REACH 18 YEARS OLD THEY WILL GET READY TO LEAVE FOSTER CARE WITH LOTS OF HELP.

HERE ARE SOME REASONS WHY YOUNG PEOPLE MAY MOVE ON:

- A move home to family - (This happens when a Social Worker feels that you can return home safely to your family). This will be planned very carefully with your social worker and Foster Carer. This will usually mean that you will see a lot of your family and may have overnight stays leading up to you going home.
- A planned move to a new Foster Carer - (this can happen for lots of reasons, it may be that a young person is not happy with their Foster Carer, or that a young person needs to move closer to their family). This will be planned very carefully and you will get to meet your new carers and have some time to get to know them first. This will also give you time to say good bye to the carers who have been looking after you.
- Emergency move to a new Foster Carer - (this could happen if something goes wrong and you need to leave your placement quickly.) This does not happen very often and only in very serious circumstances so please do not worry.
- Independent living - (When you are ready to leave foster care). When young people are older (around the age of 18 years and above), it's possible to move to a place where they have more independence. They are still supported to gain some more living skills; this is called 'semi-independence'. Your Foster Carer will work with you and your Social Worker to help you learn the skills you need to live on your own when you are ready to leave your placement. This will be written down in your 'Pathway Plan'.

Eventually, all looked after young people that reach 18 years and over will be considered for independent accommodation. This will not be given until everyone is sure that the young person will be able to cope alone. We need to make sure that young people know how to take care of themselves and this is usually a very planned and careful process.

WHAT DO I DO IF I AM NOT HAPPY?

We don't want you to be unhappy so it's really important that you know who you can speak to.

Whether you're feeling good or bad about living away from home, you can always talk about it with your Social Worker and Foster Carer. You can also talk to us at Fusion Fostering - we are happy to listen to you.

Hopefully our Social Worker and the Foster Carers should be able to sort things out that are making you unhappy so it's important to let them know.

You do have the right to complain if you are not happy; if you have any problems in your life; if you are unhappy with your social worker; or, you are unhappy in your foster home.

Here are the people you can talk to:

- Your Foster Carer
- Your Social Worker
- Another adult you may trust (like a teacher or family member)
- You can mention it at your review meeting or to your reviewing officer.
- You might want to send us an email at Fusioncontactus@fusionfostering.com
- You can also complete a complaints form which is part of this guide and included at the end and post this to us.

Please do not worry about letting us know there is a problem or a complaint. You will NOT be in any trouble for telling us. We know that not everyone gets things right all the time but we do need to know if you have any worries or complaints. We can then make sure that things are better for you and other young people.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I MAKE A COMPLAINT?

The first thing we would do when you have told us about your complaint is to try and sort it out by getting the Fusion Fostering Social Worker and maybe their Manager to chat to you about a plan and way forward. This is called **Stage 1**. They will let you know what they plan to do after speaking to you and then put this plan into action. If you are still not happy and feel the complaint or problem has not been sorted out, or if your complaint is very serious, we will ask someone from another part of Fusion Fostering to look at your complaint or problem. This is called **Stage 2**. This person will talk to you and everyone else involved, and write down what they have found out and what they think will make it better. You will have a copy of this report too and Fusion will tell you what they are going to do about it. They will again make a plan that they will tell you about. You may feel better at this point and the complaint may be all sorted. If you are still not happy and this has not been sorted out, you can ask for three separate people to look at this report and complaint, and then

have a meeting. This would include you; the person who wrote the report at Stage 2; someone who does not work for Fusion Fostering at all and a manager who can make important decisions if this needed. This is called **Stage 3**. This is the last way in which Fusion will try to sort out the problem or complaint. At the end of the meeting you will be told what else will happen, and you will get a letter a few days later which includes the plan and what has been done.

Remember – you are entitled to support and help from an adult you trust, or an advocate, all the way through the Stages. We will check with you if you would like this.

There is also an organisation called **Ofsted**, which looks after schools and also other services like fostering agencies, to make sure that they are helping young people in the way they should, and you have the right to contact them if you wish. Their contact details are at the back of this guide. You can ring on 0300 123 1231, write, or email Ofsted on enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

USEFUL CONTACTS:

YOUR SOCIAL WORKER: _____

YOUR REVIEWING OFFICER: _____

YOUR FOSTER CARER: _____

FUSION SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER: _____

OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS:

CHILDLINE

Tel: 0800 11 11 (free 24 hours)

Web: www.childline.org.uk

Childline is a counselling service for all children and young people. You can contact them about anything. No problem is too big or too small.

FUSION FOSTERING

Tel: 03301 239355

Web: www.fusionfostering.co.uk

Fusion is the fostering service that provides your foster carers, you can get in touch anytime you want to.

NSPCC

Tel: 0808 800 5000

FRANK

Tel: 0800 77 66 00

Website: talktofrank.com

You can talk to Frank about any questions or worries you have about drugs and alcohol.

OFSTED

Piccadilly Gate

Store St, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER FOR ENGLAND

Anne Longfield

The Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings,

20 Great Smith St,

London SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0207 783 8330

CORAM VOICE

Help with finding an Advocate

Helpline: 0808 800 5792

www.coramvoice.org.uk/alwaysheard

BULLYING UK

Help with Bullying

www.bullying.co.uk

KIDSCAPE

Tel: 020 7730 3300

www.kidscape.org.uk/childrenteens

WE HOPE THIS
BOOKLET HAS
HELPED YOU
A BIG WARM
WELCOME
TO FUSION
FOSTERING!!



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