April 2021



Young Persons Guide

**Welcome!**

Aim High Fostering Services and our carers wish to welcome you to your new foster home.

To try and make sure you like living there we have put together this booklet to help you feel less worried, or upset about what is happening with your life.

If you do not fully understand the reasons why you are not living with your family, speak to your Local Authority Social Worker about this.

**In this booklet there is some information that you should find helpful.**

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***Who’s who?***

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* ***Supervising Social Worker***
* ***Independent Reviewing Officer***
* ***Local Authority Designated Officer***
* ***Looked After Children Nurse***
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***What is Foster Care?***

Sometimes, for many reasons a young person is not able to live at home with their family.

If things are not right at home, you, your parents or your Social Worker may decide that the best option is for you to be looked after by the Local Authority and live with foster carers.

Some young people remain in foster care for a short time and others for a long time.

***Who’s who?***

**Foster Carers** are specially chosen adults who can provide a safe and happy home for children and young people in care. They will help you settle in and support you with school, homework and finding local activities to get involved with. They will also try to keep you healthy and safe and make sure you feel part of the family.

Your **Social Worker** is employed by the Local Authority and is there to help and support you and your family. They also help you to understand and make sense of the changes that are happening in your life. They must also listen to you and include your wishes and feelings in your care plan. They should be in regular contact with you and visit you at least every 6 weeks. You can also call your Social Worker if you have any questions or are upset or worried about anything.

Your **Supervising Social Worker** is part of Aim High Fostering Services and is there to help your carer, who will in turn help you. The Supervising Social Worker is a link between the Foster Carer and other members of the social care team. They will visit your foster home every 4 weeks and will attend important meetings held at your school and home regarding your education, health and well-being. If you have any questions, or just want to have a chat, you can speak with the Supervising Social Worker when you see them or give them a call.

Your **Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)** will make sure that your opinions and wishes are heard and that they are considered in any future decisions and plans about your care. Your IRO will lead all your case reviews (meetings) which are held throughout the year. They will stand up for your rights

The **Local Authority Designated Officer** (LADO) is a person who chairs Child Protection Meetings and Reviews where an allegation has been made.

The **Looked After / Designated Nurse** will need to see you every year to make sure you are healthy. They will check your weight and height and make sure you are receiving the right medical advice and help if you need it. They understand issues facing children and young people in care and give advice and support with this in mind. They will write a report and send it to your Social Worker.

Your **Designated Teacher/Virtual School/ SENCO** will check your school or college understands the issues that might affect your education and keep track of how you are doing.They’ll be responsible for your Personal Education Plan (PEP), which should help you achieve your dreams. They will help your school/college support you and meet your needs, checking you are involved in setting learning goals and that there is a smooth preparation to change from school to college or to another course.

***Contact/Family time:***

Your Social Worker will talk to you and your family and aboutarrangements for you to see each other. There may be times when you see only some members of your family or a particular member and not all of them at the same time. Your Social Worker will try hard to accommodate everyone when arranging your family time.

We understand how important it is for you to see your family and sometimes people get upset if they can’t see them when they want, or if they don’t know what plans are being made. We will try as best we can to provide you with the answers as soon as we have them.

***What will Aim High Fostering Services do for you?***

**Careful Matching:** Aim High willcarefully match you with a foster carer who can best meet your needs.

**Happy Home:** We want you to feel happy in your new home. Sometimes it takes a while to get to know everyone and feel totally relaxed. This is normal and your Carers are there to answer any questions or worries you may have.

**Good Health:** Once you arrive at a new foster home, we will make sure you are registered with a local doctor, dentist and an optician and that you have all your medical needs taken care of. Your Carer will also encourage personal hygiene – showering, brushing your teeth, changing your clothes etc. and encourage you to eat a healthy diet.

**Safety:** We will try at all times to keep you safe from harm or danger by placing you with Foster Carers who provide you with a caring, happy home.

**Education:** We believe education is important for everyone and all young people must attend a place of education, be it a school or college until they are 18 years. We will have contact with your school regarding your progress and any additional help that you may need. Your Carer will you help you with homework and make sure you do not miss out on important school events, such as school trips.

**Achieve:** We will do our best to make sure you have every opportunity to full-fill your potential and achieve. This may be supporting you in pursuing a new activity, building on any talents or interests you have or finding out if you have any hidden skills. We want you to blossom whilst you are in our care!

**Support Groups and Activities:** Aim High will provide support groups for you, and support sessions where you need help in other areas of your life. We will also hold fun activities and trips for you and other children with our foster carers, to allow you to get to know the other children who live with other foster carers.

**Money:** We will make sure you receive pocket money and clothing money on a weekly basis. Your Foster Carer will also open a savings account for you, to which savings will be added each week. Your Foster Carer will ask you to sign for the monies you receive each week.

**Disability:** If you have a disability we will make sure you have all the help and support you need. Your Carer will find local activities and clubs that you can join, should you wish to.

**Religion:** If you follow a religion, we will make sure that you can continue to practice it in a comfortable way. If you want to attend a particular place of worship (Church, Mosque, Synagogue), please speak to your Carer and he/she will find out if there are any in the local area that you can go to.

***My Foster Home:***

The Foster Carer’s home becomes your home when you start living there and we want you to feel safe and happy and be able to try new things. This may be something that you have always wanted to do, or have already tried and enjoyed, so please let your Foster Carer know.

**What Do I Call My Carers?** It’s quite simple, just ask them. Most Carers want to be called by their first names, as no doubt you do, but just ask anyway. If you have a different name that you like to be known by, tell your Carers. It is not advisable to call your foster carers ‘Mum’ or ‘Dad’ and your Carers will certainly not expect it.

**My Bedroom:** You will have your own bedroom and your personal belongings. Your Foster Carer and the rest of the family should always knock on the door before they come into your bedroom, unless they are concerned about you.

**Rules:** As with every home, there will be rules and your Carer will talk to you about them when you first arrive. These will include things like keeping safe, time-keeping, bed-times, keeping your room tidy, how we treat each other, smoking, swearing, staying out of other people’s bedrooms etc. These rules are really important and you need to be aware of them, but if you think any of them are unfair, please speak to your Carer or your Social Worker.

**If You Do Something Wrong:** Your Foster Carer **is** allowed to ‘ground’ you for a period of time. They can also give a sanction of maybe additional household tasks if you have deliberately broken or damaged something belonging to the carer.

Your Carer will inform your Social Worker if your pocket money is being sanctioned to replace a deliberately broken item.

**Things Your Carer Is Not Allowed To do:**

* Shout at you or threaten you.
* Hit you.
* Lock you in your room.
* Withhold food, drink or your attendance at your leisure groups

If you have any problems or worries, remember you can always tell your Carer or Social Worker. If you don’t think you can tell them, there are other people you can talk to who are listed on the last page.

We really hope you settle in and are able to feel a part of the family.

***Food:***

Please talk to your Foster Carer about the kinds of food you like to eat and those you don’t. Your Foster Carer will not be aware of your favourite foods unless you tell them. Please let your Carer know if your religion does not allow you to eat certain foods or if your meat needs to be halal. You also need to inform your Carer if you have any food allergies.

Remember your Carer’s job is to keep you healthy and that will include eating healthy foods.

***Your Rights:***

All children have rights and whilst you are living with your foster family, your Carer should support with this.

Here are some examples to help you understand your rights:

* Feel happy and safe in your foster home.
* See or speak to your Social Worker if you need to and in private.
* Go to school and have a good education.
* Have contact with your family and friends.
* Follow your chosen culture and religion.
* Be listened to and asked about your thoughts and feelings.
* See a dentist, optician and doctor when you need to.
* Eat a special diet or food that is part of your culture or religion.
* Have suitable clothing to wear.
* Your own bedroom, unless you and your social worker agrees for you to share the bedroom with your brother or sister.
* Private time (privacy)
* Have pocket money.
* Complain.

***About Your Records:***

At Aim High Fostering Services children are supported in being able to read their files, should they wish to. You will be encouraged to read your Placement Plans and Risk Assessments so you are able to share your views during the time you are with your Carer.

It is important for you to attend all your LAC Reviews, as the decisions made during these meetings will contribute to your Care Plan (or Pathway Plan if you are 16years+).

Some information in your file may be confidential and cannot be discussed with you, but this will be explained by your Social Worker.

Your foster carer will encourage you to keep special items, certificates and important documents you will receive. She will also take photographs of your time living with them. These will be given to you when you move.

***Race, Equality and Diversity:***

Britain is made up of people who were born here as well as those who have come from other countries.

Race and equality means that all people, whether they are white, black, red or yellow have the right to be treated fairly and that everyone should have the same chances.

There are many different religions celebrated in Britain; here are just a few:

* Church of England
* Catholic
* Hindu
* Muslim
* Sikh
* Jehovah Witness
* Judaism
* Buddhism

It is good to know about these religions and why people from other countries and backgrounds believe, eat and wear things that are different to us.

***If You Want to Complain:***

If you have a problem, or you are not happy about the way you are being looked after, it is important to tell someone.

You should tell your Foster Carer or your Supervising Social Worker, most issues can be sorted out with a chat.

If you do not want to speak to either of these people, you can contact our Office Manager at the office. **Tel: 020 3744 4522**

If you are still unhappy, you should speak to the Registered Manager, Roxanne Artrey - Henry **Tel: 020 3744 4522**

You can also speak with your Social Worker.

If your complaint is about your Social Worker you can tell your Foster Carer who will write down the things that you are unhappy about. Your complaint will then be dealt with in the right way.

If you do have a complaint, Aim High Fostering Services will deal with it quickly, and in confidence. Everything you have to say will be taken seriously.

There are other people you may feel more comfortable talking to:

* The Independent Reviewing Officer
* Independent Advocacy, Barnados Tel: 020 8509 3432
* OFSTED Tel: 0300 123 1231
* The Children’s Commissioner for England: *Call free* on 0800 528 0731

Coram Voice – ‘Always Heard’ This service provides advice and advocacy for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and young people on the edge of care from 0-25 years old.



***What is OFSTED?***

OFSTED is the government Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills.

They make sure that everyone who works with children and young people are doing their job properly. Just like at school, when you get a report about how you have been doing, OFSTED also writes a report about Aim High Fostering Services.

You can ask to see the report at any time.

You can also complain to OFSTED if you are not happy with our foster agency’s services.

You can send a letter to: OFSTED National Business Unit, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD

Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0300 123 1231



**Who else to call if you want to speak to someone:**

**Foster Carer: ……………………………………………………………………**

**Foster Carer: ……………………………………………………………………**

**Aim High Fostering Social Worker: …………………………………………**

**Your Social Worker: ……………………………………………………………**

**Emergency Duty Team ………………………………………………………..**

**Independent Reviewing Officer: …………………………….………………**

**ChildLine: 0800 1111 (this call is free)**

**National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) Helpline: 0808 808 1001**

**Samaritans – 116 123 (this call is free)**

**Complaint Form for Children and Young People**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Date | Age |
|  |  |  |
| Tel: | Foster Carer’s Name | How would you prefer to be contacted? |
|  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **What are you unhappy about?** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Please tell us about your concern, who was involved and what happened.** |
| **What do you think should happen next? What would put it right?** |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Response sent: Name | Date | Time |
|  |  |  |