

Parent and Child Handbook



Parent and Child Handbook

My Name	
Date of Birth	
My Address	

My mother's name	
Address	

My father's name	
Address	

Baby's Name	
Date of Birth	

Baby's father's name	
Baby's fathers parents name and address	

Any other supportive friend or relative	
Name	
Address	

My Foster Carer's Name	
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My Social Worker's Name	
Telephone Number	
Out of Hours Emergency Number	
My IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer)	

My Carer's Social Worker (supervising social worker)	
Name	

Other Important Names and Addresses	
Name	
Address	

Health Visitor Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Mobile	
Email	

Midwife Name	
Address	
Telephone	
Mobile	
Email	

Guardian & Litem Name	
Address	
Telephone / Mobile	
Email	

Other Important Names	
Address	
Telephone / Mobile	
Email	

Introduction

This is a welcome pack for you as a parent if you are thinking about or have started a parent and child foster care placement with UK Fostering. Please read this booklet together with the 'Handbook for 11 – 18 years of age' which will give you further information about your rights and responsibilities.

UK Fostering is a private organisation with skilled and experienced carers who have been asked by Social Services to provide you with an opportunity to parent. This booklet gives a brief explanation of what a placement includes, expectations about you as a parent and what UK Fostering will do to support you. It also contains simple explanations of the legislation (law) that professionals use in making plans for your child and you.



About UK Fostering

Guide for parents and their baby living with foster carers.

UK Fostering is an organisation that provides a home for your child and you. This is sometimes referred to by professionals as a placement. Our work is with children and therefore our primary responsibility is for the child.

Your child will have a social worker that helps plan and make decisions with you about their care and future. This work is either through a voluntarily arrangement which may include a child protection plan or because your child is subject to a court order. UK Fostering will provide a social worker (known as Supervising Social Worker) to help the foster carer give parents the right support for their child's care.

For example they help with:

- establishing routines
- feeding patterns
- sleeping
- bathing and stimulation.

Our carers also help parents learn or improve their skills and confidence to parent.

We want you to enjoy being a parent and working with the carers (If you are not a care leaver or over 18 you may not have a social worker, but you might have a link worker from other services such as housing, community services etc), therefore It is important that all the professionals and people that work with you and your child talk to you and to each other so they can work together for the placement to have a positive outcome.

Sometimes you may not agree with what is happening or the decisions that are being made, however the focus of any placement and plan must be what is in the best interests of the child and not the adult. Please talk to us and your child's social worker straight away if you are unclear or unsure about the plan for you or for your child.

Your child will have a placement agreement or care plan that lists what the carer, professionals and parents expectations and tasks are. This is set within measurable timescales of review dates. These are sometimes known as placement meeting and **Child Looked After Reviews**. These meetings are chaired by someone independent, which means they can look objectively and without judgement at what is best for your child. You will be expected to attend these meetings and participate.

What we will do for you

- Provide a safe, stable home where you and your child can live.
- Help and support you to meet your child's Care Plan.
- Encourage you to learn routines that support your child's development.
- Help you make safe, consistent choices and decisions for your child.
- Challenge you and say if something is wrong and offer suggestions.
- Help you make links with the Health Visitor, GP and community groups.
- Listen to what you have to say.
- Help you to feel confident about parenting.
- Make sure our carers have the right support to help you.
- Ensure that you and the carers know who to contact if something is wrong.
- Signpost you to your rights and responsibilities.

What else do we do

- Contribute to assessments through daily monitoring and record keeping.
- Assist to protect your child if you are unable to manage.

- Talk to you and social workers about any worries and concerns.
- Talk to social workers about what has been good.
- Attend meetings and reviews.
- Respect your race, religion, sexual identity, culture and belief systems.
- Respect your right to privacy.

What we cannot do

- Make legal decisions about your child.
- Remove your child from your care.
- Lie or cover up any mistakes you may have made.
- Stop you from leaving, but we would have to contact the social worker immediately and share our concerns.



Who's Rights?

In a foster placement the rights of the child come first. If it is a baby the same rights apply but an adult will advocate this. The prominent piece of legislation (law) that informs and underpins all work with children is the **Children Act 1989**. This Act sets out how Local Authorities (Department of Children Schools and Families/ Social Services) help Children and Young People and their Families.

You may have encountered this Act before through financial assistance with food vouchers, heating or nursery places. These services are known as **Child In Need**.

Sometimes the Local Authority Social Workers are worried a child is at risk of or likely to suffer significant harm. This type of intervention is known as **Child Protection**. A multi-agency decision is made along with a plan to help protect the child and lists what parent/s must do to keep their child safe. It might be that you need extra help with being a parent so part of your child's plan was to come into a parent and baby foster placement. If you have agreed to this then your child is placed in care as part of a voluntary accommodation. Sometimes concerns are so severe that a **Care Order** through the court is sought for a child. This happens when parents can not recognise risks or fail to keep their child safe. A Care Order means the Local Authority (Social Services) can share Parental Responsibility and make significant decisions about your child which could include long term permanency planning.

You can find out more information about the Children Act at the website address below, or UK Fostering can provide you with a paper copy:

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts>

You may hear Social Workers or solicitors talk about the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. This is a universal set of rights for Children and Young People aged 17 and under. It came into force in the UK in 1992. There are over 40 substantive rights. One you might hear is the 'Best Interests of the Child'. This means adults must do what is best for children and think about how decisions made will affect children. Other areas of help are special protection measures and assistance. A child's right is to develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential and to grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding.

All of the rights in the Convention apply to all children and young people without discrimination. Further information at the website address below, or UK Fostering can provide you with a paper copy:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters>

Parental Rights

You may also hear people make reference to the **Human Rights Act** which came into force for the UK in 2000. This Act recognises that some rights and freedoms are so important and fundamental that they have been written down and that Governments should safeguard and promote them. The Act gives a clear legal statement of a person's basic rights and freedoms, but an individual's rights must be balanced against another's (fairness and protection). However the Act is not straight forward to decipher. Rights are split into categories of absolute, limited and qualified rights such as 'the right and respect for family life'. If you feel your rights have been breached then you can seek legal advice. More information can be accessed at the website address below, or UK Fostering can provide you with a paper copy:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/docs>

You can ask the Child's social worker about areas that might affect you such as:

- benefits
- education

- employment
- health
- hobbies
- holidays
- independent
- visitors
- marriage
- medical cards
- name and changes
- passports.

You may also want to get advice about sex and sexuality, contraceptives, HIV, Aids and STD's, smoking, drugs and substance misuse, solicitors etc.

COVID-19

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has become an everyday part of our lives since early 2020 and is very likely to continue through the coming months. We need to learn to live with the threats of the disease but also implement procedures in how to protect ourselves and those around us.

The situation is ever changing and it's good to ensure you keep abreast of updated Government guidelines which are there to ensure your safety. UK Fostering have also produced an insert on which is included within this Handbook, so please do read it as it's designed to assist and help keep you safe.



Have your say (Complaint procedure)

If the complaint is about decisions or plans made about your child this must be put to the child's Social Worker or their respective department from the Local Authority. Most Local Authorities have a customer relations officer based at a main office like a town or county hall. Your Social Worker will be able to advise with this process.

If you want to make a complaint about UK Fostering please contact the Complaints Officer:

Ms Becky Norris
Complaints Officer
UK Fostering
Bridge House
High Street
Dartford
Kent DA1 1DJ
complaints@ukfostering.org.uk, Tel 01322 473 243

For details on how the complaint process works, please refer to the 'Handbook for 11 – 18 years of age'.

You can also contact Ofsted. This is the government organisation with which UK Fostering is registered with. Their details are as follows:

Ofsted
Ofsted Chief Inspector
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD
0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Children's Commissioner for England
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT
Tel: 0800 528 0731

We also want to hear your good comments. You can use the 'Have your say' form for anything you want to tell us and post it to our UK Fostering address (see above).

Jargon

Abuse – This is when someone hurts someone else – this can be neglect (not looking after you properly), sexual abuse, emotional abuse (this can be when it hurts your feelings) and physical abuse (if someone hurts your body). All abuse is harmful to children and young people. This is why some children and young people come into care – because someone has been hurting them, or there has been a high risk of them being hurt.

Accommodated – This is when a child is being looked after by foster parents or in a residential home with the agreement of parents.

Advocate – This is someone who speaks on your behalf, and helps you to have your say!

Boarding School - This is when you live somewhere and go to school there too. The house where you live is usually separate from the school site.

Care Order – This is when the Court says that a child or young person cannot live with their parents. This decision is made always to protect a child or young person from being hurt.

Care plan – This is something your social worker will write down about how your needs will be met. This includes things like where you will go to school, contact, health, legal status, money, where you will live and activities you would like to do.

Children Looked After Mental Health Service (CAMHS) – This is a health service especially for children and young people who are looked after to support you with your emotional and social needs.

Children Act 1989 - This is the law that all Councils must follow to keep children safe and free from harm.

Code of conduct – This is something written down that tells people what rules they must follow.

Consultation form - This is a form that you can write your views and wishes on before a review meeting. It is a chance for you to write down what you think!

Depression - This is a common condition which affects both males and females, young and old. You might be feeling very sad or low and generally cannot be bothered. If you have been feeling like this for a while you could be depressed. You can talk to a trusted adult about this.

Foster carer – This is a person or a family that looks after children and young people that can't live with their own family for whatever reason.

Key worker – This is an adult who usually works in a residential unit or a school/boarding school. It is their job to support you and help you to do the things you need to do.

Independent reviewing officer – This is an adult who works for the Council, but is separate to your Social Worker and Foster Carer. They run a meeting with you and the people helping to care for you once every six months. It is their job to make sure that you are being looked after properly.

Independent visitor - If you do not have much contact with your family your social worker will talk to you about having an independent visitor. This is a trusted adult that can visit you, take you out, give you advice and be a friend to you.

Looked after – This is a term used for children and young people who are not living with their family and are **accommodated** or in care. This means the Council is looking after you and must make sure all your needs are met!

Pathway plan – This is a plan that is written with you when you turn 16 which will help you to think about what support you might need to live independently.

Placement - This term is used by Social Workers and Foster carers sometimes. It means the place where a child or young person in care will live. This could be a foster **placement**, residential care, boarding school or secure accommodation.

Psychologist – This is a person who studies human behaviour and how the mind works. They can help children and young people to deal with difficult things happening in their lives.

Psychiatrist – This is a person who has a medical background and also studies human behaviour and how the mind works. Psychiatrists can prescribe medication to help children and young people who need extra help with their mental health.

Psychotherapy – this is a type of counselling.

Secure accommodation – this is a place which is locked where children and young people stay if they are a danger to themselves and/or others. A court order is needed if someone goes into secure accommodation for more than three days. This does not happen very often.

Social Care – This is the name of the teams that provide services to support children and families and make sure children are always safe!

Review meeting – This is a meeting where you and adults who care for you meet every 6 months to check that your **care plan** is working for you and that you are being looked after properly. It is important for you to have your say at review meetings!

Residential care – This is a place where children and young people might live when they are looked after. They will have their own room and live in a building where there are always workers to help and a staff team. This is usually called a children's home.

Visual impairment – This is when you don't have full use of your eye sight.



Helpful Contacts

Want more Advice about being in care? Check out these websites!

Carelaw

www.carelaw.org.uk

Gives useful information like rights, your education, health care for children and young people in care.

Children Act 1989

www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1989/Ukpga_19890041_en_1.htm

This is what the law says and is the ultimate guide to what your rights are.

National Youth Advocacy Service

www.nyas.net

Provides information, advice, advocacy and legal representation to children and young people up to the age of 25

The Children's Society

www.childrensociety.org.uk



Want Advice, Information, Support?

Childline

www.childline.org.uk

0800 1111

24 hour helpline for young people in trouble or danger.

Children's Commissioner for England

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0800 528 0731

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

Tel: 116 123 free from any phone

Samaritans provides confidential support, 24 hours a day for people having feelings of distress or despair.

Brook

www.brook.org.uk

Confidential information and advice for young people with links to your nearest Brook centre.

Refugee Council

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Unaccompanied minors will find this website very useful. The Refugee Council has a range of projects for asylum seekers and produces information in different languages.

RU-OK

www.ru-ok.org.uk

The website that helps you to help yourself – how to cope with common problems as well as using your strengths.

Youth Access

www.youthaccess.org.uk

Youth Access is the national membership association for young people's information advice, counselling and support.

The Mix

www.themix.org.uk

Tel: 0808 808 4994

Provides guidance, advice and support to young people under 25

Disability Information**Contact a family**

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/inyourarea/>

For families and carers with disabled children.

Mencap

www.mencap.org.uk

Information and advice on learning disability, housing, education, employment and leisure.

National Children's Bureau

www.ncb.org.uk

The National Children's Bureau has a project for disabled children's rights to be heard 'Making Ourselves Heard'.

People First

www.peoplefirstltd.com

Advice, information and advocacy service for people with learning disabilities.

RNID

www.rnid.org.uk

0808 808 0123

Useful information for deaf and hard of hearing people.

The National Autistic Society

www.autism.org.uk

0845 070 4004

For information, advice and support on autism.



Health

Food Standards Agency

www.eatwell.gov.uk

Information and tips on healthy eating, whatever your age.

Mental health

www.youngminds.org.uk

Information on children's mental health.

The Children's Society

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being>

For those who can't access mental health services and are at high risk of developing a mental health condition if they don't get the support they need

NHS

www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

111 is the NHS non-emergency number. It's fast, easy and free. Call 111 and speak to a highly trained advisor, supported by healthcare professionals. You should use the NHS 111 service if you urgently need medical help or advice but it's not a life-threatening situation.

No Panic

www.nopanic.org.uk

No panic information and confidential help for phobia's and anxiety disorders.

Royal College of Psychiatrists

www.rcpsych.ac.uk

Lots of useful information for young people about mental health.

NHS Live Well

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/>

Information and advice on healthy living.

Alcohol Concern

www.alcoholconcern.org.uk

Information about alcohol use and links to local services.

Drugscope

www.drugscope.org.uk

Information on drugs, the law, drug policy and latest research and policies.

Talk to Frank

www.talktofrank.com

0800 917 8765

Information and advice about drugs

**Help and Advice**

Here are some of the organisations that can help people children and young people with their problems.

You can contact Ofsted

Ofsted Chief Inspector

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231 Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Childline

0800 1111 Free, 24 hours a day

Offers a confidential “helpline” if you are worried or frightened or just need someone to talk to.

Kidscape

8-10 South Street

Epsom

Surrey

KT18 7PF

Email: info@kidscape.org.uk

Kidscape works to prevent bullying. They also produce leaflets for children

The Children's Society

0300 303 7000
Whitecross Studios
50 Banner Street
London
EC1Y 8ST91

Become

www.becomecharity.org
Tel: 800 023 2033 between 10:30am and 3pm, Monday to Friday
Email: advice@becomecharity.org.uk
For young people currently looked after or who have left care

CAB

Local advice on varying matters
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

CEOP

Online protection and reporting
www.ceop.police.uk

Gingerbread

Single parent helpline
0808 802 0925
www.gingerbread.org.uk

NSPCC

Helpline for children or to report abuse
0808 800 5000 (free and 24hr)
www.nspcc.org.uk

Stonewall

National lobby for Lesbian and Gay rights
0800 0502020
www.stonewall.org

Terrance Higgins Trust

Sexual health and information
www.tht.org.uk



