



→ **WELCOME!**

YOUR GUIDE TO THE NEXT STEP

What parent and child foster care
means, what to expect and where you
can get support.



Rees
Parent & Child
Fostering

YOUR GUIDE TO FOSTERING

HELLO AND WELCOME!

We have put this guide together to help you understand what fostering means and provide you with all the information you may need, as well as important contact details.

We hope this guide will help answer some of the questions you may have about being cared for by a foster family.

If you still have questions after reading this guide, you can ask your social worker or your foster carer's supervising social worker for help.



WHAT DOES "LOOKED AFTER" MEAN?

Being looked after means that the local authority is helping to make sure you are being cared for properly.

They will be helping you, your parents and other people in your family and work with other people in your life. It also means you will be living away from home because, at the moment, it is not possible for your parents to look after you the way they need to. Sometimes this is called being in care.

This may be with the agreement of your parent/s or because the local authority where you lived think it is safer for you. When they arrange for children and young people to live away from home the law calls them 'looked after children'.

Sometimes adults shorten this and just say the word 'LAC'. However, we know young people do not always like this term and so at Rees Parent and Child Fostering we prefer to say "children in care".



WHAT IS FOSTER CARE?



Foster care is a family home for children in care (under 18) to live in when they are not able to live with their own family.

A young person may come into care for many reasons and they may stay with their foster carers for any amount of time, from a few nights, months or years.

WHAT IS PARENT AND CHILD FOSTER CARE?

Sometimes parents might need some extra help to care for their children.

And that's okay! Every family sometimes needs a helping hand.

Parent and child fostering means a parent and their baby or young child/ children are placed together with a fostering family.

As a parent, you may or may not be in care yourself. If you are, then this guide will tell you about what you can expect while you are in foster care.

We also have a parents guide which will explain more about parent and child foster care and what you can expect as a parent.



WHAT IS A FOSTER CARER?

Foster carers are people who look after children and young people in care. Children and young people come to live with them when they cannot live with their own birth family.

We have taken great care to make sure that your foster carers can look after you and help you to feel safe. Rees Parent and Child Fostering completed lots of checks to make sure they are the right people to look after you.

There are many types of foster carers, some live by themselves, some homes have two foster carers and some foster carers have children already living there. Foster carers might have pets and some might not!

You should be given a foster carer's profile to read before you come to live in their home, and this will tell you all about them.



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DID YOU KNOW THAT SOME FAMOUS PEOPLE HAVE BEEN FOSTERED...



Simone Biles

Olympic gymnast lived in foster care for a couple of years.



Eddie Murphy

US Comedian spent a year in foster carer with his brother.



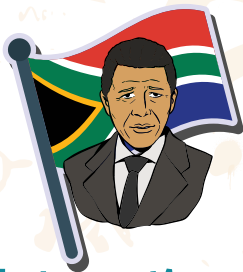
John Lennon

Member of the Beatles, was fostered by his aunt Mimi.



Barry Keoghan

Irish actor was in foster care for seven years during his childhood.



Nelson Mandela

Politician was fostered by the chief of his tribe when his father died.



Pitbull

The US rapper briefly spent time in foster care.

HOW WILL THEY FIND THE RIGHT FOSTER CARER FOR ME?

Part of your social worker's job is to find a foster family who most closely matches your needs and where they think you will settle in best.

We will try to find a foster carer who shares similar interests with you, shares your language or languages, and has a similar cultural and ethnic background.

If this is not possible, they will make sure you are placed with a family that understands and respects your background, culture and religion and supports you with your individual needs and interests.

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.



WHAT IS A SOCIAL WORKER?



A Social Worker is there to help people. You will have a Social Worker from the Local Authority, whose job it is to support you, check how things are going and inform you of any plans that might affect you.

You will be able to talk to your social worker and tell them what you think about being fostered and you will also be able to tell them what you would like to happen to you whilst you are in care.

Your social worker will act as your representative and will be able to discuss your care plan with you, your family, your foster carer and other professionals.

Your Social Workers are there for YOU, so you can always contact them if you have any worries or you need help with something.

WHAT IS A SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER?

All Rees foster carers have their own social worker who regularly visits them. They are known as a Supervising Social Worker (SSW). It is the supervising social worker's job to guide and support your foster carer so that they can look after you properly.

$$(\sqrt[n]{a})^m = \sqrt[n]{a^m} = a^{\frac{m}{n}}$$

WILL I STILL GO TO SCHOOL?

You'll probably get to stay at the same school, which is great because you'll get to keep seeing your friends and teachers.

But if you're going to be living with your foster family for a while and your current school is really far away, you might be able to switch to a school that's closer and easier to get to. School is important for your future.

That's why you'll be encouraged to go every day and get there on time. If you're struggling with homework, classes, or anything else at school, you can talk to your foster carer or social worker - they're there to support you!

You'll also get to be a part of a meeting at school, where you'll help create a "Personal Education Plan (PEP)" just for you.



Your foster carer, social worker and teacher should attend. This plan will outline what you need help with and what you need to succeed to do your best in school. It's like a roadmap to help you reach your goals and achieve your dreams!

WILL I SEE MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY?

We would like you to be able to stay connected with your family and friends. You may hear this being called “contact” but at Rees we prefer to say, “family time”. Most children who are in foster care do have family time, but it’s important that this is done in a safe way.

Your foster carer and social worker will talk to you about this. They will let you know when and where this is going to happen, and how often. Most of the time, you’ll get to connect regularly, unless your social worker or the court thinks it might not be safe.

Sometimes you may not wish to see your family or there may be other reasons why you might not want to.

Your safety, wishes and feelings are our top priorities while you're with your foster family. If there's something going on, your social worker will chat with you about it.



We know that your friends are important to you too!

Your foster carer will do their best to help you stay in touch with your friends, and make new ones. It will be important for you to agree with your foster carer and social worker when you are going to see them.

Your foster carer will want to talk to their parents if you are thinking of staying overnight with a friend. If your foster carer and social worker agree that it is ok, your friend's parents will want to talk to your foster carer if you invite the friend to stay overnight with you.

If you have any questions or worries, you can talk to your foster carer, your social worker, your IRO or an independent adult we can put you in touch with. The details on how to contact all these people are in this guide.

Your carers should never cancel planned visits with your family as a punishment.



WILL I GET POCKET MONEY?



Yes, you will get pocket money from your Foster Carer. Your family and your Social Worker will discuss pocket money and the amount will be worked out depending on your age.

When you reach the September after your 16th birthday, you will get a personal allowance instead of pocket money. This will help you to become more independent as you'll be able to start paying for some items yourself. This could include your clothes, shoes or toiletries.

You should talk to your foster carer/social worker before you start doing this so you can agree together what you will pay for and they can help you with budgeting.



**DO YOU WANT TO MAKE NOTES
ABOUT POCKET MONEY HERE?**



STAYING SAFE

Your Foster Carer will help to keep you safe in many ways, which may mean boundaries in place such as keeping in contact when you are out, or making sure you are home at a certain time.

Sometimes a young person can go missing, which means going off somewhere without permission and not telling people where you are or who you are with.

Rees Parent and Child Fostering wants to make sure you are safe so we take this very seriously. If you go missing, we will take immediate action to find you and put things right so you do not go missing again.

If there is ever a time when you do not feel safe, you are being hurt, or something is happening to you that you want to stop, you should talk to a responsible adult immediately. This could be your Foster Carer, Social Worker, Supervising Social Worker, or a teacher.

You will find their contact details at the back of this booklet.



STAYING HEALTHY

While you're in care, you have the right to stay healthy. All children and young people will be offered an initial health check with a doctor or a nurse. This is to make sure you're doing well and to identify any health issues. It's a great opportunity for you to speak with a doctor about your health and any concerns you might have, including issues related to your teeth and eyes.

If you're not feeling well, make sure to tell your foster carer or social worker; they're there to help you. It's also important to be registered with a local GP so you can get advice and take care of any health issues that come up.

NOTES AND QUESTIONS



WHAT CAN I EXPECT?



Your foster carer will make you feel welcomed and will treat you as part of the family. All of our foster carers have had lots of checks and assessments to make sure they are suitable to foster. They will have lots of ongoing training to make sure they can support you and meet your needs.

You have the right:

- **To be treated with respect and kindness**
- **To feel safe and protected from harm**
- **To feel heard and for your wishes and feelings to be taken into account when decisions are made about you**
- **To see your family and your views on this should be listed to and taken into account**
- **To be healthy and access the doctor and dentist regularly**
- **To access education and be supported and encouraged to reach your highest potential**
- **To practice your own religion (attending church, temple, mosque or other religious service)**
- **To celebrate your birthday and special occasions**
- **To enjoy your interests and engage in leisure activities**
- **To have an Advocate, who is there to make sure your views are being listened to**
- **To make a complaint and this will be looked into in a fair and considered way.**

WHAT WILL MY FOSTER CARER EXPECT FROM ME?

Like all families, foster carers will have some house rules to make sure that everyone in the family is looked after properly and you will be asked to follow these while you are living with them. Most of the rules are all about keeping you safe and helping everyone in the house get along.

Your foster carer will ask that you:

- **Treat people with kindness and respect**
- **Are respectful of your own belongings and other people's belongings**
- **Stick to agreements, like the times you will be home**
- **Go to school when you are supposed to**
- **Join in with family meals and activities**



MY CARE PLAN/ JOURNEY IN FOSTER CARE



When you start living with foster carers, your social worker will talk to you about why you are living there and how long you will be staying for. This will be written in more detail in your care plan. There will be different types of meetings that will take place. For example:

Placement meeting

This is a meeting that is held at your Foster Carer's home before or just after you move in. You will meet with your Foster Carers, Social Worker and Rees Social Worker to discuss living with your new foster family, things you like and dislike, things you may need and what school you will go to. It is a good chance to share your views so we can help you be as settled as possible.

The meeting will discuss things like:

- **foods you like**
- **arrangements for family time**
- **school arrangements**
- **routines like mealtimes, TV, bedtimes, homework times and times to come home**
- **pocket money**
- **arrangements for you to keep up any hobbies, sports, clubs, or other interests**
- **medical needs.**

All of this will be written down and everyone will have a copy of your placement agreement.

Review meeting

Within 4 weeks of coming into care, your care plan will be looked at in a meeting, which is called a Child Looked After Review, by someone called an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The second meeting will happen within 3 months of the first one and after this they will be every 6 months.

Your IRO is responsible for making sure that all your needs are being met and that all the people involved in caring for you are doing the best for you. You will be asked what you think and to share your wishes and feelings and invited to attend.

If you find it hard to talk with lots of adults in a room, you can speak to the IRO on your own before the meeting. You can also ask your social worker for an 'Advocate' and they can be there with you to help you put your views across.

Your IRO will meet with you from time to time to talk to you and make sure things are going well for you.



WHO'S WHO?



Hopefully by now, you will know who everyone is in your network that is making sure you are OK in foster care and safe.

These people will work together and listen to your views about how you are cared for and any worries that you may have.

YOUR FOSTER CARER IS:

YOUR FOSTER CARERS DETAILS ARE:

YOUR FOSTER CARERS SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER (SSW) IS:

YOUR FOSTER CARERS SSW PHONE NUMBER/ EMAIL IS:

YOUR SOCIAL WORKER IS:

YOUR SOCIAL WORKERS PHONE NUMBER/ EMAIL IS:

YOUR INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) IS:

YOUR IRO'S PHONE NUMBER/ EMAIL IS:

ADVOCACY

An Advocate can:

- **Speak up for you**
- **Attend meetings with you and help you get ready for meetings**
- **Help you to make a complaint**
- **Meet up with you in a place where you feel comfortable**
- **Speak to different workers for you about the things you are unhappy about and want to change**
- **Give you information about your rights**
- **Listen to you without judging you**
- **Help you to make your own decisions**

If you disagree with a decision that has been made, an Advocate can help you to get your voice heard.

If you have a disability, or complex health needs, an Advocate can work alongside your carer or worker to help you with whatever you need to be heard.



INDEPENDENT VISITOR

An Independent Visitor is a volunteer who will spend time with just you on a regular basis. They are someone that you can talk to, get along with and ask for advice. You could even ask your Independent Visitor to support you in your meetings.

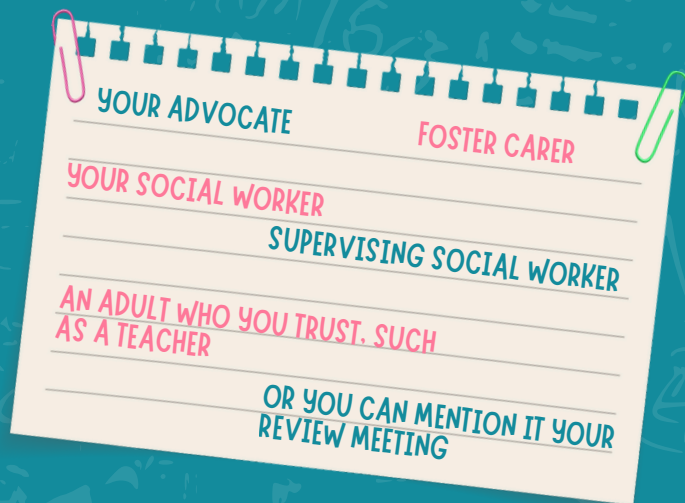
Before you start to see your Independent Visitor, we will make sure they are good, safe people. We try to find someone who has lots in common with you such as hobbies and interests. All young people in care have the right to an Independent Visitor up to the age of 21.

If you would like an Advocate or an Independent Visitor, you can let your foster carer know and they can support you with this or speak to your social worker.

WHAT IF I AM NOT HAPPY OR WANT TO MAKE A COMPLAINT?

If you are unhappy about anything, for whatever reason, it is important that you talk to someone about it. You might be unhappy with your foster carer or someone else who lives in the home. It may be something happening at school or when you see your own family or friends.

Whatever is making you feel sad or unhappy there are people you can talk to are:



If you think you have been unfairly treated, something has gone wrong or you do not feel like people are listening to you, then you have the right to complain.

To make a complaint, you can contact Rees Parent and Child Fostering using the details at the back of this booklet.

If you need to make a complaint about Rees Parent and Child Fostering, you can contact Ofsted via the details at the back of this booklet. More details about making a complaint can be found in our Complaints Policy on the website.

If you would like to speak to someone outside of the independent fostering agency, there are plenty of people for you to get in touch with on the 'useful contacts' page.

USEFUL CONTACTS



Ofsted make sure that we are all doing that we should for you.

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Call 0300 123 1231 or Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



The Children's Commissioner for England makes sure children are listened to and have a voice. Help at Hand, is the Children's Commissioner advice and assistance service.



Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT

**Call 020 7783 8330 or Email info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
Tel: 0800 528 0731**



Childline is a free, private and confidential service to talk about anything, at any time, day or night.

Call 0800 1111 or Web: www.childline.org.uk



IF YOU THINK YOU ARE BEING BULLIED, YOU CAN GET SUPPORT:



Helpline: 0300 323 0169
Telephone: 0845 225 578

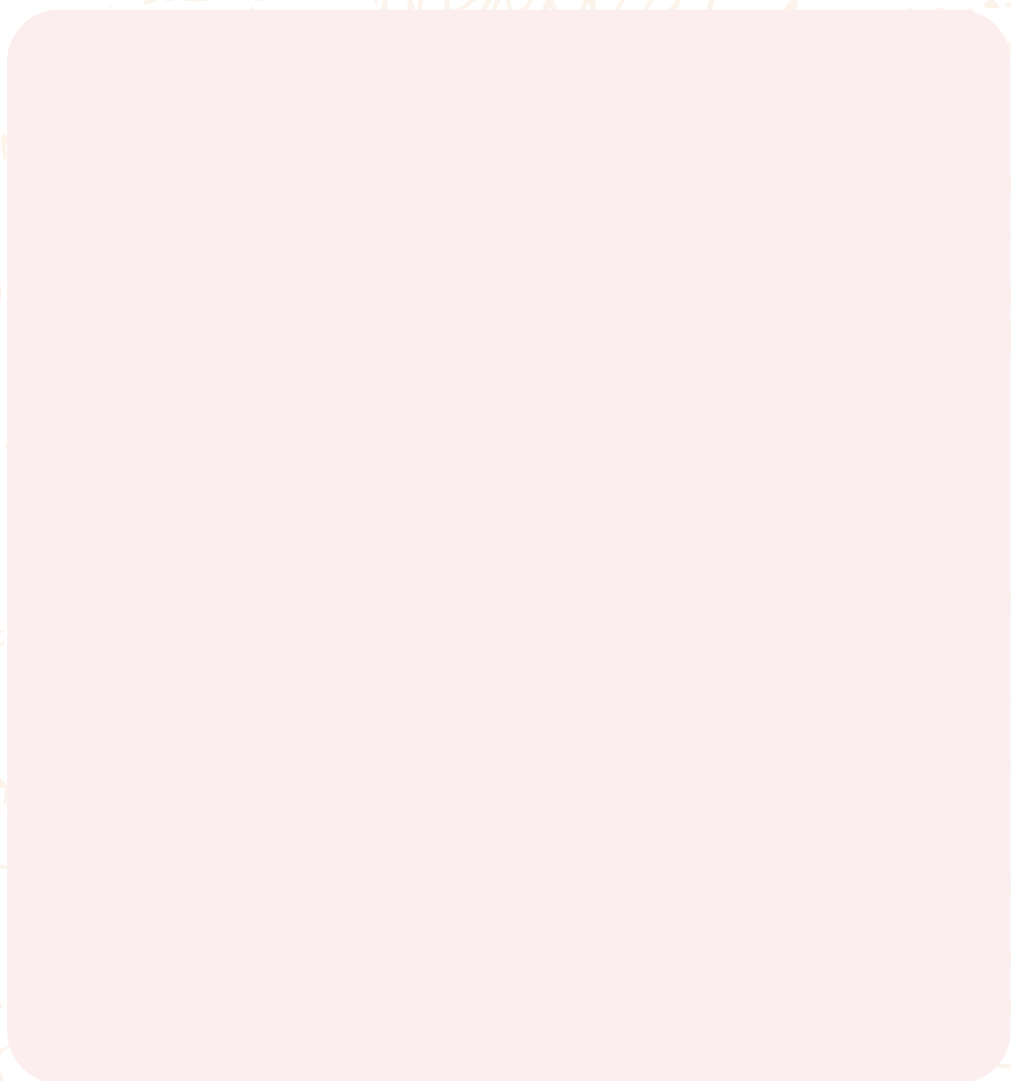
www.kidscape.org.uk

You should always call 999 in an emergency. This includes:

- **when someone's life is in danger or is unsafe right now**
- **someone is hurting you right now or threatening to hurt you**
- **if someone has been seriously hurt**
- **when a crime is being committed right now or someone is being put in danger**

This booklet, or information about us, can be made available in other languages or in a non-written format on request. We can also help with a translation service.

**YOU CAN USE THESE PAGES TO WRITE
DOWN ANY IMPORTANT INFO... OR
JUST TO DOODLE!**





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