



A Children's Guide to Foster Care (under 12s)

This booklet is about foster care in Hertfordshire. It is yours to keep and use whenever you want to find something out.



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Hertfordshire



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What sorts of things will my foster carers do?

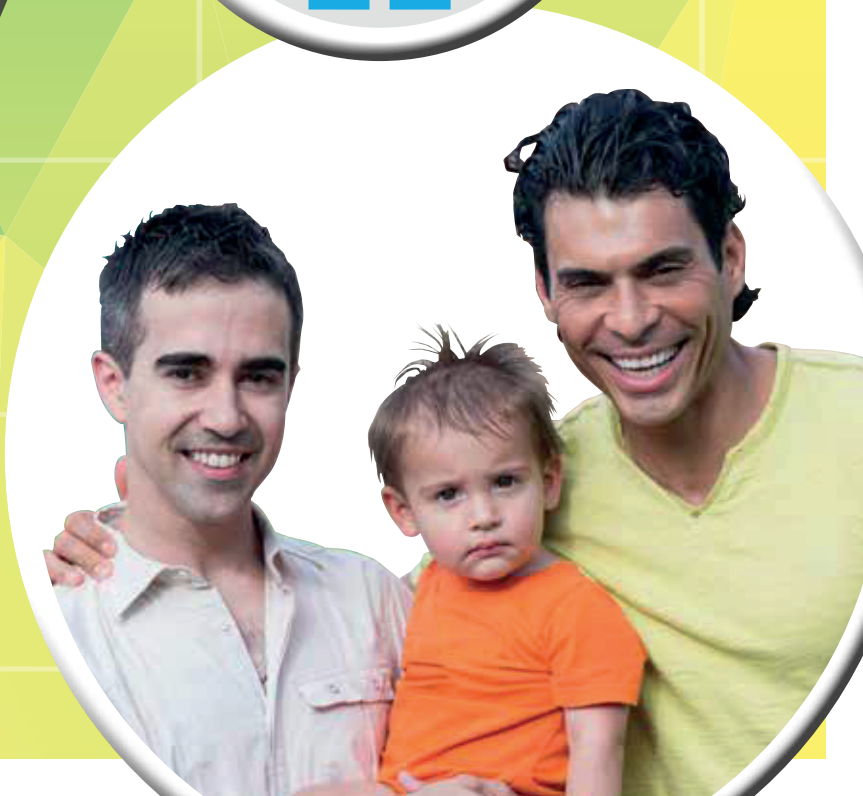
Your foster carers will do lots of things to make you feel happy and comfortable while you are living with them.



Your foster carers will:

- Make sure you are well looked after
- Try to make you feel part of the family
- Listen to you and try to help you when you feel sad or worried
- Help you learn new things

Foster carers will support you with contact visits with your family, they will help and encourage you with your school (college work) and any decisions you make around your education. They are also there to give you help and advice about friendships, and will encourage you to develop your hobbies and interests in sports and other activities.





They will also make sure you have:

- A bedroom of your own or shared with your brother or sister
- Somewhere to put your clothes and belongings
- A place to meet with your social worker when they visit
- Pocket money (how much you get will depend on how old you are)
- A chance to celebrate your birthday and religious festivals eg. Christmas.



Will I still see my family?

Just because you live in a foster home doesn't mean that you have to lose touch with your family and friends. Your foster carer understands how important your family is to you. This may include seeing your brothers and sisters and other members of your family either in your foster home or at another suitable place.

Your social worker will speak with you about when you can see your family and how often. You should tell them who you want to see so they can try and make sure this happens.



How long will I have to stay?

Your social worker will make a plan for you. This is called your 'care plan' and includes everything that's important to you such as your school, when you see your friends and family and how long you will stay with your foster carers.

If there is something in your care plan that you don't like, tell your social worker as you might be able to change it. If you ever feel worried about your future, tell your social worker and they will try to help you.



Rules

All foster homes have rules which will help to make sure you are kept healthy and safe. Your foster carers will let you know what the rules are as soon as you start living with them.

All foster carers will expect their family to:

- Show respect to everyone
- Join in with family meals and activities
- Attend school regularly
- Stick to the family rules
- Share your views



Meetings

A number of different meetings will take place with your foster carers and social worker. Before the meeting, you will be asked what you think and you might be asked to write this down or tell your social worker. You can also fill in a questionnaire online if you don't want to talk to anyone. If you are old enough, you might be asked to take part in the meeting. If you have any worries in between these meetings, you can talk to a social worker or the person who is in charge of these meetings, called an Independent Review Officer.



School

If you are already at school, we will try to work out if it is best for you to move to a new school or stay at your old one. School is very important because it's where you learn about subjects, growing up and making new friends and you can take part in different activities after school. Your teacher will know that you have gone to live with foster carers, but it is your choice if you want to tell other people.

If you have any problems or you are being bullied, you must tell your teacher, foster carer or social worker.





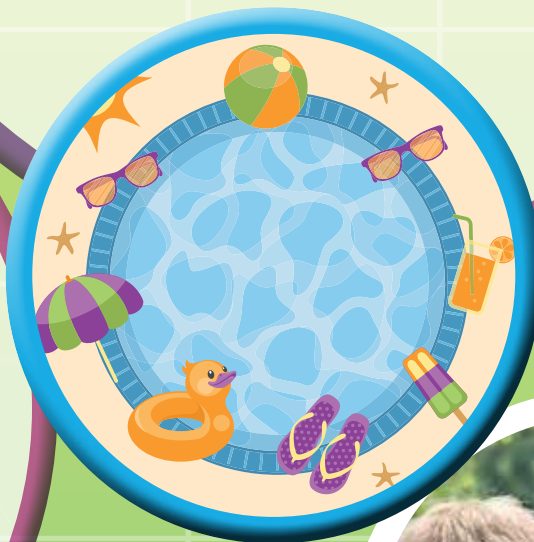
Activities and holidays

You should be able to continue with the same interests as you had at home and also find new ones. These could be things like swimming and dancing and joining clubs like the Scouts.

You may go on holidays, weekends away or day trips, maybe with your family, friends or foster carers. This will be discussed between you, your foster carers and your social worker.

If you are worried or upset

We want to know if you are worried or concerned about anything. There are lots of ways you can tell us what you think. You could tell your social worker, foster carer, teacher or Independent Review Officer. Or if you don't want to tell them, there are some phone numbers at the end of this booklet of people you can talk to.



Having your say

In Hertfordshire we have something called a 'pledge' which says what you can expect from us. It is based on what other children who are looked after by Hertfordshire County Council have said is most important to them.

We also have a Council for Children Looked After. Depending on your age, you can get involved with the council. You can also let them know what you think of fostering and any problems you are having and they can talk to people on your behalf. Your social worker will let you know about both of these things.

My Notes

My social worker:

Telephone number:

My foster carer:

Telephone number:

Other important people:

Other important information:

Hertfordshire County Council's Customer Service Team

The Customer Service Team can be contacted at:
Room 143 County Hall, Hertfordshire County Council,
County Hall, Hertford, SG13 8DF

01992 588 842

cs.complaints@hertfordshire.gov.uk

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) now provide the advocacy service for all children looked after children in Hertfordshire.

Helpline on 0808 808 1001

The Office of the Children's Commissioner

The Office of the Children's Commissioner Sanctuary
Buildings 20, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Tel: 020 7783 8330

Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Ofsted

Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England and Wales.

Piccadilly Gate Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

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