

A children's guide to foster care



Brighter futures for children in care



“Hi! I’m Brother Bear,
I’m here to tell you what
foster care is.

This booklet is yours
to keep and to use,
whenever you want to
find something out.”



This booklet belongs to:

.....

.....

.....

I am this many years old:

.....



What is a foster carer?

Foster carers are special people who have been carefully chosen to look after children.

Foster carers do all the things parents do, such as setting rules and helping you with things like going to school and making sure you eat the right food.

Your foster carers work for the children's charity, TACT.

Why do I have to live with a foster carer?

When a child cannot live with their own family, they can move into a foster home where they will be safe.

Children live with foster carers for all sorts of reasons, but it's not because of anything you have done.

What about what I want?

Your social worker should find out what your wishes and feelings are. They should take them into consideration, depending on your age and understanding.



Wishes are what you want to do, what you want to happen or what you want someone to do for you.

Feelings are about being happy, sad, ok, worried or frightened about something even if you don't understand what is happening.

What does my own social worker do?

Your own social worker is someone who likes children and works for social services. It is their job to make sure you are OK, so you should think of them as someone who is there to help you.

Your own social worker will visit you regularly and talk to you about what is happening in your life. They care about you and you can talk to them about anything you are worried about.

What does the TACT social worker do?

Your foster carers have their own TACT Supervising Social Worker. Their job is to make sure your carers are looking after you properly and have all the help they need. They will also talk to you to make sure you're happy and well cared for.

You can write down the contact details of your own social worker and the TACT Supervising Social Worker on page 15, at the end of this guide.



How will people look after me in my foster home?

There are certain ways you should be treated no matter what; these are called your 'rights':

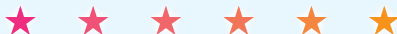
- ★ You have the right to be safe, secure and protected.
- ★ You have the right for adults to listen to you and treat you fairly and equally.
- ★ You have the right to information, advice, healthcare and an education.
- ★ You have the right to enjoy your religion and culture.
- ★ If you have a disability, you have the right to any help you need with it.

Please let your social worker know if you think someone is taking away any of your rights.



“Every family has rules. These are about how to treat each other, about listening to each other and keeping safe. What are your foster carers’ rules? You can write them down to help you remember.”

My foster carers’ rules are:





“My foster parents are Susan and Billy. They have a daughter named Alice. Can you draw your foster family?”





Who decides what will happen?

While you live with your foster carers, there will be meetings called 'reviews', where all the important grown-ups in your life will get together and make a care plan for you.

Before the review, you will be asked what you think and what your views are. You may be asked to write this down or to tell your social worker. If you are old enough, you may also take part in the meeting.

If you have any worries in between these meetings, you can talk to your social worker or the person who is in charge of the reviews, who is called the Independent Reviewing Officer.



"These reviews are all about you so you can say how you feel or what you would like to happen."



What about school?

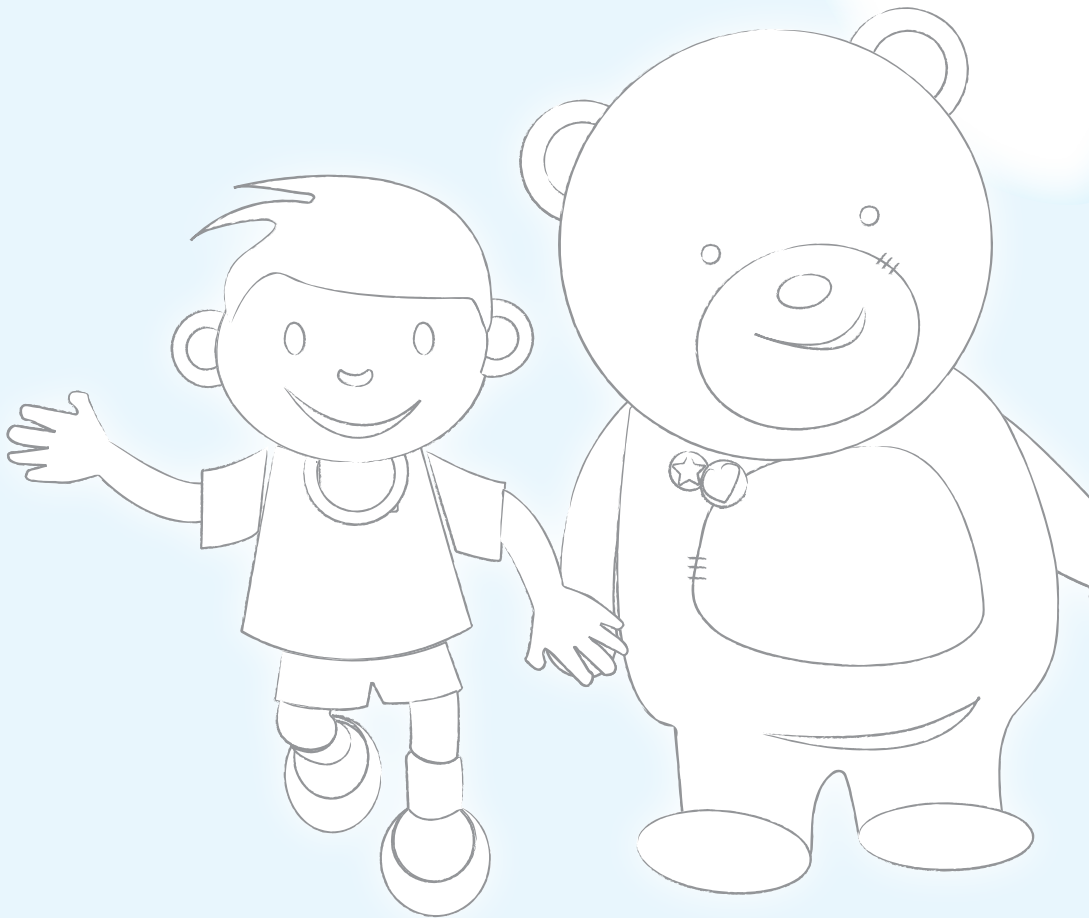
If you are already at school, we will try to work out if it is best for you to move to a new school or stay at your old one.

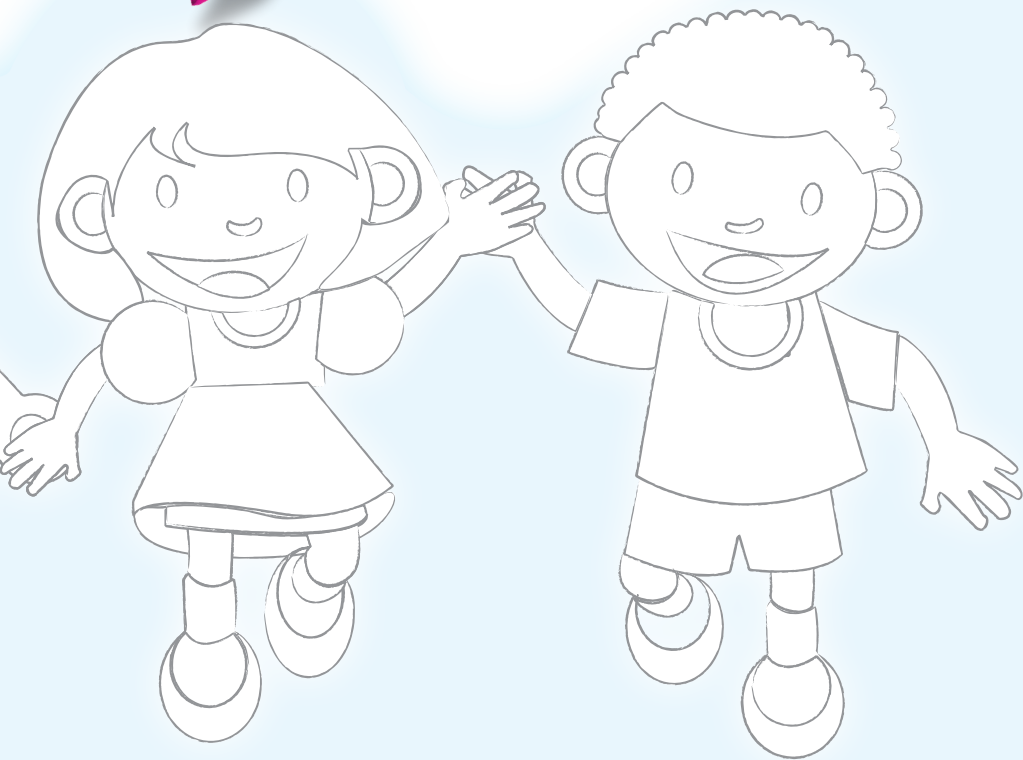
School is very important because it's where you learn about subjects, growing up, making new friends and allows you to take part in activities and hobbies after school.

Your teacher will know that you have gone to live with a foster carer, but it is your choice if you want to tell other people. If you have any problems, difficulties or are being bullied, you must tell your teacher, social worker or foster carer.



Colour in this picture...







When will I see my family?

Just because you live in a foster home doesn't mean that you have to lose touch with your family. 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. 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' or a 'child plan' and includes everything that's important to you such as your school, your health and when you see your family and friends and how long you will stay with your foster family.

Tell your social worker if there is anything in the plan that you don't like as they may be able to change this. If you ever feel worried about your future, tell your social worker and they will do everything they can to help.



“Sometimes you will feel happy,
sometimes sad and sometimes worried.
That’s OK!”

Your carers will not mind if you ask
them all sorts of things...

“What if I don’t like the food?”

“Can I have friends over?”

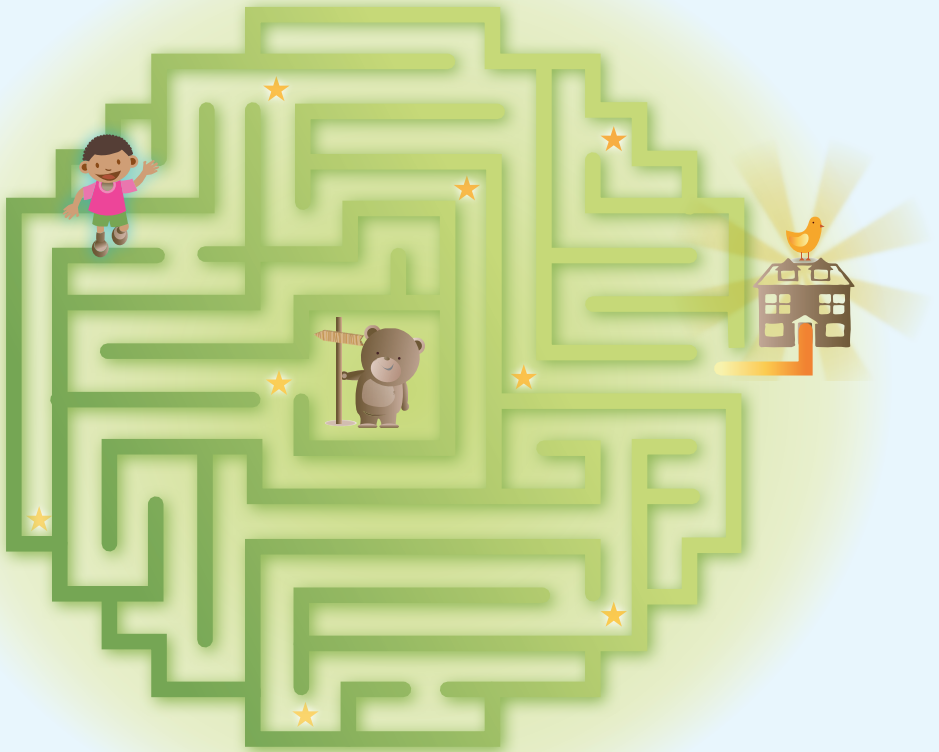
“Will I have to
move again?”

“What time do
I have to get up
in the morning
and go to bed
at night?”



"I know moving into a new and different family is not easy, but your social worker and your foster carers want to make sure you are in a safe, caring and happy home."

"Now it's your turn. Help the bear find his new home!"



What if I have a problem or I am unhappy?

We want to know if you have any problems at all, whether you are worried about something in your foster home or if you just don't like the food the foster carer gives you.

There are lots of ways you can tell us what you think or if you are worried or want to make a complaint and can't tell your social worker, foster carer or teacher.

You may want an advocate who is someone independent who you can visit to get your views across, for example in a meeting or to make a complaint about how you are being cared for.

You also have the right to talk directly to the organisation called Ofsted if you live in England, CSSIW if you live in Wales or the Care Inspectorate if you live in Scotland if you have any concerns or complaints.

Find their phone numbers and the numbers of other organisations on pages 17 and 18 of this guide which you can call to get help or advice.

Your foster carer is not allowed to hurt you in any way and nor is anyone else. If you are worried about anything at all, please don't be afraid to speak up as there are lots of people who care about you and want to help.



Who can I contact for help?

Write down their full names, telephone numbers and email addresses.

My own social worker is:

My foster carer's social worker is:

The Children's Officer for TACT is:

Name: The Director of Children's Services
and Quality

Tel: 020 8695 2310

Email: corporateadmin@tactcare.org.uk



Useful numbers

Here are some numbers that may be helpful for you to have. Some are for everyone, others are for young people who live in Wales and Scotland.

General advice and getting an advocate

ChildLine

24 hour helpline for children in distress.

0800 1111 (freephone) / (Ask questions through the website)

www.childline.org.uk

The Who Cares? Trust

The national charity for children in care.

Kemp House, 152-160 City Road, London EC1V 2NP

020 7251 3117 / mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk

www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk

Voice

This has lots of advice for children in care and provides help and support. They can take up your complaints too.

320 City Road, London EC1V 2NZ

0808 800 5792 (freephone) / info@voiceyp.org

www.voiceyp.org



England

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)

Picadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

0300 123 1231 / enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Children's Commissioner for England

33 Greycoat Street, London SW1P 2QF

020 7783 8330 / info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

The Children's Rights Director for England

Ofsted, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE

0800 528 0731 (freephone) / (Email through website)

www.rights4me.org

Wales

CSSIW (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales)

South West Wales

Unit C, Phase 3, Tawe Business Village,
Phoenix way, Swansea Enterprise Park,
Swansea SA7 9LA

01792 310420

cssiw.southwest@wales.gsi.gov.uk

www.csiw.wales.gov.uk



The Children's Commissioner for Wales

Freepost RRGL XLYC BHGC/R
Swansea SA7 9FS

0808 801 1000 (freephone) /

Free text: 80800 (start msg with COM)

advice@childcomwales.org.uk

www.childcom.org.uk

Voices from Care Cymru (VFCC)

This organisation provides help for young people who are or have been looked after by local authorities in Wales.

39 The Parade
Cardiff CF24 3AD

029 2045 1431 / info@vfcc.org.uk

www.voicesfromcarecymru.org.uk

Scotland

Care Inspectorate also known as SCSWIS (Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland)

Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee DD1 4NY

0845 600 9257 (Lo-call) /

01382 207100 /

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

www.careinspectorate.com

SCCYP (Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People)

85 Holyrood House
Edinburgh EH8 8AU

0800 019 1179 (freephone) /

0131 558 3733 /

inbox@sccyp.org.uk

www.sccyp.org.uk

Who Cares? Scotland

113 Rose Street
Edinburgh EH2 4DT

0131 226 9270

enquiries@whocaresScotland.org

www.whocaresScotland.org





www.tactcare.org.uk/YoungPeople

TACT is also on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr:

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- twitter.com/tactcare
- youtube.com/tactcare
- Flickr: bit.ly/fVfAD0



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