

Flourish Fostering

Welcome to Flourish Fostering and guess what?

The first thing you need to know is there's a clue in our name...

Our mission is to make sure we provide you with what you need to flourish and grow.



We get that we may not be among your favourite people right now

You haven't chosen to be around us or be living where you are now and sometimes that isn't a great feeling.

It's your life and you want to be in control of what happens

You don't know what we're about or what place we have in your life

So the next thing you need to know is we get that and you're right...

It is your life!

You know there are some things you don't get to have control of, but as much as we can we want to give you choices and options for yourself

We hope to get to know you so much more from what you choose to let us know; and we know that takes time.

So let's start by telling you a bit about us so you know who you're dealing with.

You probably have your own crew - friends and relatives who may or may not be there for you in the best way when you really need some help. We are your crew when you need action, your 'go to' people when you're scared, or angry, or sad, or even if you're happy!

We're also the people you can go to when you need to know something, anything, anytime... even if you have to ask a million times! We love questions, they keep us on our toes!

So let's start with....

Foster parents:

These guys are the adults who are meant to make sure you feel safe, protected and supported. At Flourish Fostering they are very well trained and lots of checks have been made to make sure they can do what you need them to.

Just like every family, each foster family is different; some are big families and some live on their own, some have other children, pets, and some don't. This is great because we're all different and that makes life interesting.



Then there are:

Social Workers:

Your Social Worker from your home place is the person who has been given responsibility by your Local Authority for overseeing how you are being cared for and to make sure you are safe and all your needs are being met in a safe

and nurturing way by your foster parents.

They are also the people who are responsible for decisions made about your care, including who you live with, where you go to school, when you can see your family, etc.

You will have regular visits/meetings with your social worker and they should also be there when there are meetings about your care, the place where you live and go to school, or if there are going to be any changes to how you are being looked after.

Meanwhile back at Flourish Fostering there are....

Supervising social workers:

Your foster parents will be given one of these, all foster parents have their own social worker too, and you will get to know them very well. Again there's a clue in the name, part of your foster parent's social worker's job is to make sure they're doing the best they can for you, including arranging their training & attending meetings etc.

Managers and everyone who works in the Flourish office:

Wherever you go in life there's always got to be back up. We are your back up... we are your crew when you need things sorted out, and it's our job to make sure everything's where it needs to be and everyone's doing what's in your best interests. That includes:

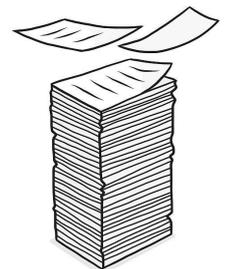
- *Making sure that we have all the information needed to help look after you properly.*
- *Providing the right people to supervise your foster parents.*
- *Checking up on your foster home to make sure you're safe and have everything you need.*
- *Attending all the meetings about you too.*
- *Writing reports about how things are going.*
- *Taking time to talk to all the people involved with you, like your social worker and school.*
- *Inviting you and members of your family to take part in activities and fun stuff, and we go along too (because we like to have fun sometimes!).*



So back to your foster parents...what's the deal?

Their job is to make sure you flourish and grow; this means making sure they do everything they can to help you settle, achieve and keep safe. To do this they have to do three main things:

1. Look after you, spend time with you and get to know you.
2. Attend lots of meetings and training.
3. Do a lot of paperwork - they have to keep a diary every day, do a monthly overview (you get to say what you think on this) and fill out an incident report if anything really worrying happens to you, or in your life.



So how do they make this happen? Some of the things they do are:

- Do a safe care plan to find ways of keeping everyone safe, including you, (you will be involved in this too).
- Help you get involved in things that interest you, like sports, music, clubs etc.
- Make sure you celebrate your achievements and help you believe in yourself.
- Help you solve problems and learn from things such as your experiences, when they work out and when they don't.
- Help you live a healthy life.
- Stand up for you if you need them too, so they make sure your voice is heard.
- Help you stay in touch with friends.
- Be really interested in how you're getting on at school and support you in achieving what's important to you.
- Providing you with clothes, shoes etc. from money that is provided for your care by your local authority.
- Making sure you get your weekly pocket money and making sure there is some money saved for you too.



So how do we find these amazing people?

Not everyone can be a foster parent. Because you are so important we have to be very careful and picky about who gets to look after you.

So... anyone who wants to be a foster parent has to go through loads of checks and meetings where they're asked tons of questions about everything they've ever done, including jobs and their health and so much more!

After that a social worker writes a huge report about the whole of their life! This is one of the ways we check that they're the right people to look after you and just to make sure we can trust



them with caring for you we spend even more time making sure, and checking them out.

Once we're sure we've done all the checks we can, they have to go through another important check called a fostering panel.

The Fostering Panel:

Is a group of people that meet to decide if they agree all the checks have been done properly and this means they can recommend that people can be trusted to become foster parents.



People on the panel will know about fostering; some will be social workers, others may have been looked after in foster care themselves when they were younger, or be foster parents. Some can also be teachers, health workers, or mental health specialists.

When the time comes the prospective foster parents have to sit in front of the panel and answer any questions they ask them about their life, or the report that the social worker has written.

So that's the story on foster parents and how they get to be looking after you!

So what's the story on where you end up?

Well like we said there's a whole group of us looking out for what's best for you and one of these is your social worker.

So as your crew we will talk to your social worker about who we think will be the best foster parent for you, based on what we all know about you; so we can think about you as an individual and which family could best work for you and your unique personality.

This needs to be someone who gets what you're about and can help you enjoy your life, and also get the right help when things really aren't so great

for you. Once we've got to this point, the most important thing is for your social worker to talk to you about the foster parent we all think is right for you. After all, you're the one who has to live with them - aren't you?

If this is all on target then hopefully you'll get to meet them before you go to live there, but sometimes that isn't how it works; so we also have pictures and information for you to check out just in case you don't get the chance.

So if all goes to plan what happens when you get there?

So let's get real here, this is not something you're used to and that can be a bit weird, definitely strange and maybe a bit scary? After all, it's someone else's house and you're going to be living there and you don't have a clue how all that works right? Or, maybe you've 'been here, done that' before and you've made up your mind you won't like them before even meeting them! Let's get real here - everyone's different and everyone deserves a chance to do things differently to how they've been done before - including you, so let's all make the most of this new opportunity and try to make things really good for you.



Well the good news is we know that your foster parents will be finding it all a bit weird too – that doesn't make it any easier but it might reassure you to know they know how difficult it might be for you.

So they'll show you around and introduce you to who else lives there. Don't worry, ask any questions you need to, or ask for some space to get your head together and just chill yourself into the zone. They'll get that you'll need to do this and they know it's not personal.

And if it helps, remember they'll be a bit nervous too; because they want this to work and just like you don't know them yet, they don't know you either.

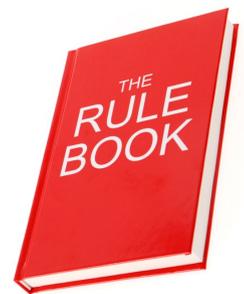
And of course there are going to be some rules. All homes have them and your foster parents won't be any different. Remember it's fine to check things out if you're not sure, it's going to take time for you all to get to know each other and how things work. It's a two-way street. At the very first meeting you have with your foster parents the house rules will be explained to you and it is okay for you to let them know the kinds of food that you like and anything else that is important to you; this is like having the chance to explain your rules too.

Generally you'll have your own bedroom, but if you have brothers or sisters who have moved to your new home with you, you might be sharing a bedroom with them. Your social worker will want to know that you're ok with that.

Right, back to all the nuts and bolts of this whole thing

Our nuts & bolts:

Just as we talked about you having to have some rules, we definitely have to follow some rules including having to have something called a Statement of Purpose. This is a very big document that covers everything about how we all work. As we said, it's big and we think we've included everything and if you'd like to see it that's cool because we're proud of it.



In fact we have to have policies (rules) for everything and you can see all of them if you'd like to; however make sure you've got a drink and some food because it'll take a while!

We want you to feel you can be involved in what your crew does, so how can you do that?

- Be part of a talking group for all our young people to have a say about things we do and how we run Flourish Fostering.

- Get involved in the activities we set up for you and make suggestions for activities you'd be interested in doing
- Add information or items you think are important to our info boards, including things that are going on or info worth knowing.
- Take part in trips, or events we organise.

We're sure you have lots to say and loads of great ideas and we'd love to hear about them.

And you know what...We can't do it if we don't know it!

So Now to All The Stuff We Have to Follow to Keep It All Ticking Over:

Your Care Plan:

This is a plan that lets everyone involved know what's important to you and how best to care for you and what you think and feel about your future.

It includes contact with people you care about, school/education, your health, mobile phone, internet access, things you're interested in, the food you like and how to keep you safe.

It really helps with you not having to repeat yourself over and over again!

Placement agreement:

This has all the info from your care plan and is worked out by your social worker, foster parent and their supervising social worker. It's their job to write it but you need to be involved, after all it's all about you and how you want to be cared for and how you think this should happen. It includes most of the stuff in your care plan, e.g. contact with people you care about, school, mobile phone etc.

So talking about school...

Hopefully you will still go to the same school, but if you can't it will be for very good reasons.



Some people, like your teacher, will know that you've moved, but you don't have to tell people, it's your private info and your choice who else knows.

If you need to, you might want to talk to someone you trust about who you want to tell and what to say.

Then there's your PEP:

This is an education plan that makes sure you're getting what you need from your education, or what help you might need to achieve the best you can.

Your Review:

This happens every 6 months and it means we all get together to make sure we're doing our best. So yes, it does mean your social worker, your foster parent and one of your Flourish crew will be part of this and will be talking about you. We know that probably sounds uncomfortable but you do get to say what you think and tell us if you want things to change. You can attend your review meeting if you want to and have your views heard - we think it's important for you to be there, and we hope to see you.



BUT... and this is really important... you don't have to wait for your review, anytime you're not happy with something, tell someone, or ring/email anyone on your Flourish crew and we'll get on it straight away. (Remember

those policies we talked about earlier? Well we've got one for complaints, and we'll fill in a bit more detail about that later on in this guide).

Then there's your pathway plan:

This happens when you're 15½, it looks at all your info, including the stuff in your care plan, as well as your ideas about your future as a young adult, so we can think about what support you may need for when you leave school and what you might do next like college or training.

Oh one last thing:

Your foster parents have a review every year too. Their review looks at how well they're looking after you and if they're doing their training etc. You play your part in this too because you get to tell us what it's like for you to live with them and how you feel about it.

So what do you do if you're not happy or something's wrong?

Making a complaint

- ❖ You have the right to make a complaint, even if you think no one will listen (they will!), so it's important that you do.
- ❖ We think it's important that if you're not happy, or feel you're being treated badly or unfairly, that you feel able to complain.
- ❖ You don't have to write your complaint, you can tell someone you trust, or contact any one of your Flourish crew and talk to them (we'll make sure you have our number/email).
- ❖ If that doesn't feel safe or OK, there are other people you can speak to. Loads of numbers etc. of other trustworthy people are given at the end of this guide.

- ❖ There are 'go to' people at Flourish Fostering who know how to listen to your complaint and we'll make sure you know who they are.

By the way...

If you have good stuff to tell us, we'd love to hear that too. We like knowing we're doing a good job, we're only human after all!

So emails, numbers and links and stuff:

- Talk to your Flourish crew No:
- Email:
- Out of hours No:
- Emergency duty No:

- Childline No: 0800 11 11
Website. www.childline.org.uk

- NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

- Ofsted: 0300 123 1231
Website. www.ofsted.gov.uk

- Coram Voice: (charity for young people in care) 0808 800 5792
Website. www.coram.org.uk

- Children's Commissioner for England –
Anne Longfield 020 7783 8330
Website:
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

The logo for Childline, featuring the word "childline" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.The logo for NSPCC, featuring the letters "NSPCC" in a bold, green, uppercase, sans-serif font.The logo for Ofsted, featuring three stylized human figures in blue above the word "Ofsted" in a dark blue, sans-serif font.The logo for Coram, featuring the word "coram" in a bold, red, lowercase, sans-serif font.The logo for the Children's Commissioner, featuring a stylized human figure in orange and yellow above the words "Children's" in a colorful, sans-serif font and "COMMISSIONER" in a grey, uppercase, sans-serif font below it.

And finally...

If you think we've missed out anything important, please let us know!

