

Flourish Fostering



A Young Person's & Children's Guide

www.flourishfostering.co.uk

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Who are Flourish Fostering?

Welcome to Flourish Fostering.
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.

You haven't chosen to be around us,
or to 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.

It's Your Life

The next thing you need to know is that 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 & 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.

We are a part of the team around you, 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!

Who and What are Foster Parents?

These are the adults who are meant to make sure you feel safe, protected and supported. 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 & some live on their own, some have other children and some don't. This is great because we're all different, and that makes life interesting.



What is a Social Worker?

This is the person who has been given responsibility by the 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.

It is also the person who is responsible for decisions made about your care, including who you live with, where you go to school, when you can see your birth family, etc.

You will have regular visits/meetings with your Social Worker and they will 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 Parents' Social Worker's job is to make sure they're doing the best they can for you, including arranging their training and attending meetings etc.

Managers and Administration Team

Wherever you go in life, there's always got to be back up. We are your back up! We are a part of your team, and it's our job to make sure everything's where it needs to be and 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 Parents to make sure you're safe and have everything you need.
- Attending all the meetings about you.
- 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 your Foster Parents 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 lots 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 important happens to you, or in your life.

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.
- Provide you with clothes, shoes etc. from money that is provided for you by your Local Authority.
- Make sure you get your weekly pocket money, and make 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.

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

This 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 themselves or be a Foster Parents. Some can also be teachers, health workers, or mental health specialists.

When the time comes, they have to sit in front of the Panel and answer any questions they ask them about their life, or the report.

So, that's Foster Parents and how they get to be looking after you!

So, What's the Story on Where You End Up Living?

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.

As your team, we will talk to your Social Worker about who we think will be the best Foster Parents for you, based on what we all know about you; so we can think about you as an individual and who might 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 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.



Your Foster Journey

If all goes to plan, what happens when you get there?

We understand 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?

The good news is that we know that, and your Foster Parents do too - that doesn't make it any easier, but it might reassure you to know they know how difficult it might be for you.

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; just take as much time as you need. They'll get that you'll need to do this, and they know it's not personal.

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.

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.

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.

THE RULES

Right, Back to All the Nuts and Bolts of This Whole Thing

Just as we talked about you having to have some rules, we definitely have to follow some rules too, including having to have something called a Statement of Purpose. This is a very big document that covers everything about how we all work.

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 will take a while!

Be Involved in Your Journey

We want you to feel that you can be involved in what your team 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...we can't do it if we don't know it!



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, 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, food, 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, 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.

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 home, 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 your Personal 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 for you. So yes, it does mean your Social Worker, your Foster Parent and one of your team 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.



Other Things to Remember

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 team 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).

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.

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, so it's important that you do.
- We think it's important, if you're not happy or feel you've been 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 team 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 and contact details 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, links and stuff:

Talk to Your Team No: Flourish South - 01634 969 050

Flourish North - 0161 249 9420

Email: hello@flourishfostering.co.uk

childline

Childline

Tel. 0800 11 11

Website:

www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC

NSPCC

Tel. 0808 800 5000

Website:

www.nspcc.org.uk

Ofsted

Ofsted

Tel. 0300 123 1231

Website:

www.ofsted.gov.uk

coram

Charity for Young People in Care

Coram Voice

Tel. 0808 800 5792

Website:

www.coram.org.uk

Children's
COMMISSIONER
For England

Rachel de

Tel. 020 7783 8330

Souza Website:

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

And Finally...

If you think we've missed out anything important, please let us know. We're always pleased to hear any feedback, good or bad, or ideas on how we can improve our service and support for you.

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