



Foster care

what's it all
about?

www.northtyneside.gov.uk



North Tyneside Council

There may be lots of reasons why you can't live with your own family, which your social worker and family will have talked to you about.

When you live in foster care you will live as part of another family, in a family home, just like your own. This may be for just one or two days, or it may be for longer.

Once we've found the right family for you, we'll make sure you know how long you will stay with the foster family and you will get to meet the family before you go and live with them.

They have decided to become foster carers as they think it is important that young people like you have a loving family to live with. They are very carefully trained and regularly checked. Their job is to make you as safe and happy as possible, and their home will become your home.

The foster carer's job is to support you and look after you whilst you cannot live at home. They'll make sure you get regular meals, space to do your own thing, give you pocket money and buy your clothes and other things you need.

They will also support you in contact with your family and friends and make sure you can still enjoy your hobbies and activities. They will also make sure you have regular doctor, dental and optician appointments.

They'll also make sure you do everything you're meant to do – like going to school or college, keeping your room tidy, coming home when you're meant to and doing your homework!

Each foster carer has their own social worker whose job it is to check that they are looking after you properly and well. You will meet this social worker regularly and they will keep in regular touch with you to check how you and your foster family are getting along.

In North Tyneside we have different types of foster carers.

You might hear your social worker use different names for them, so we have explained what each of them mean, below:

Assessment – These are foster carers who will look after you for up to eight weeks. During this time your social worker will work with you and your family to help you go home. During this time, the foster carers will also work with us to find a suitable family for you to stay with for a longer time, should you not be able to go home.

Short term – These are foster placements where you may stay for a longer time while your social worker works with you and your family to help you go home.

In cases where your social worker has to go to court to make sure you are safe you may stay with the foster carer for quite some time – sometimes as long as one or two years.

Emergency placement – These are foster care placements for children and young people who need somewhere to stay possibly for a night or a weekend. You may stay with them or you may move to another short term foster carer.

Specialist foster carers – These are carers who are specially trained to look after young people who need special care and attention.

Sibling foster care - If you have brothers and sisters who also need to live with a foster family, these carers can take you all together, unless the family is very large, if that is the right thing for you all.

Remand – These are foster carers who care for young people who have been to court and they offer a placement of up to six weeks as directed by the court.

Long term – These are foster families in which you can stay until you leave care, by either returning home when family difficulties are sorted or more often when you are able to live in your own house or flat. To go to one of these carers you will probably have lived with one or more of the other types of carers first.

Connected persons – These are relatives, friends or other people you have known who are assessed and approved for you to live with so you don't have to live with 'stranger' foster carers.

All about you

A placement planning meeting is held as soon as you are placed with a foster carer. At this meeting, people who are involved in your care, such as your social worker and your parents, will set out a plan that tells your foster family all about you, e.g. your likes and dislikes, your school routines and your sports and hobbies.

Your foster carers will also respect whatever culture you might come from, and also help you to continue to follow your religion in whatever way is best for you, while you are with them.

Your review

After four weeks, another meeting will be held to check that things are going well, or to iron out any problems if they're not.

This is called your review, and you'll have another review after two months, and then every five months after that.

You are able to attend your review, and if you can't or don't want to, your social worker will help you complete a review form to tell people at the meeting what you want. Your independent review officer would like to visit you in your placement before each review.

Your foster carer also has their own review every year to check they are still suitable to be foster carers, and you, your family and your social worker will be asked what you think of them as part of that.

Moving

Very occasionally, you might have to move from one foster placement to another.

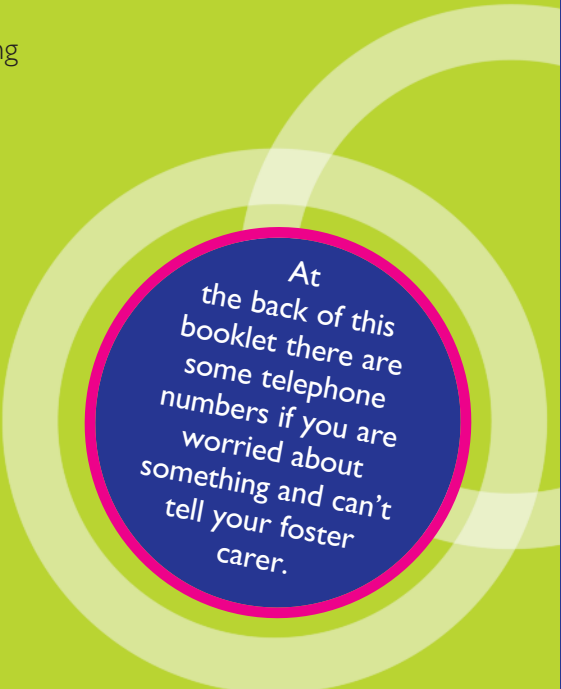
There could be lots of reasons why you have to move, for example you don't get along with your foster carer, or they are unable to care for you. No matter what the reason, if this happens to you, we will always try to give you lots of notice of this and let you meet your new carers before you live with them.

Complaints

If at any time you become very unhappy, you can speak to your foster carer. If you don't feel like you can tell them about what's making you unhappy, you can speak to your social worker.

If you are still not happy, you can speak to another social worker, and they can make a complaint for you. Social workers are there to help you and will take everything you say to them seriously.

An advocate can help if you are finding it hard to understand what is going on and why, and they will tell you what choices you might have. They can also help you tell people how you are feeling and support you through concerns and complaints.



At the back of this booklet there are some telephone numbers if you are worried about something and can't tell your foster carer.

Your social worker

Your social worker is there for you and you can contact them at any time if you need to speak to them. Their job is to listen to you and at meetings they will tell other people your views if you can't or don't wish to attend.

Your social worker's name is:

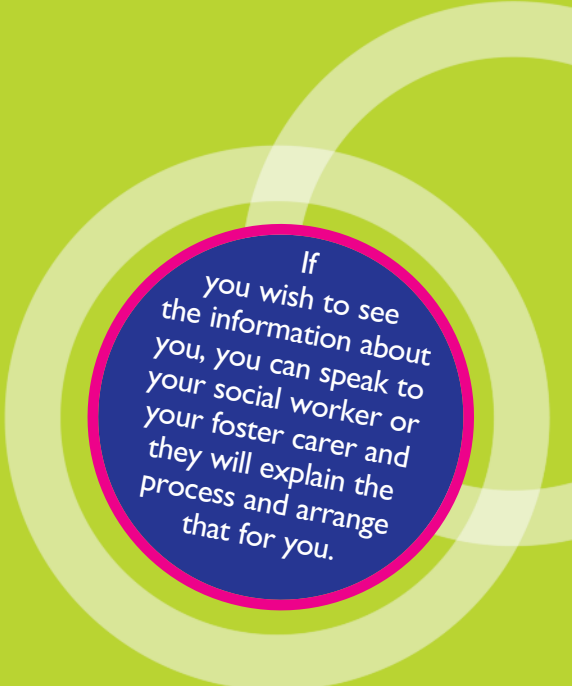
Her/his telephone number is:

When she/he is not at work ring the duty worker on:

Information about you

Your social worker and other professionals who work on your behalf may collect information about you and may share it with each other to make sure you get the best care.

The Data Protection Act 1998 gives you the right to have access to the personal information gathered about you by your social worker and other people who are involved in your care.



*If
you wish to see
the information about
you, you can speak to
your social worker or
your foster carer and
they will explain the
process and arrange
that for you.*

North Tyneside Council's Fostering Service

What we do:

Make sure that North Tyneside Council looks after and supports children in foster care and helps them to reach their full potential.

We would always want to have a choice of foster placements for all children who need to live with foster carers.

We try to find good carers who are capable of meeting all of your needs.

We aim to learn from experience and continue to improve and develop the Fostering Service. We will do this by asking for your views and your family's views, listening to these and taking them into account when we plan and deliver our Fostering Service.



Our
aim is to make
sure you feel
valued and cared for
and to experience
positive family
life.

North Tyneside Council Fostering and Adoption Service

Telephone:
(0191) 643 2540

Email:
fosteringandadoption@northtyneside.gov.uk

Out of hours:
(0191) 200 6800

www.northtyneside.gov.uk



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