

A close-up photograph of three children's faces, smiling and looking towards the camera. The child on the left is a boy with brown hair, the child on the right is a girl with blonde hair, and the child in the center is a girl with brown hair. They are all smiling broadly, showing their teeth. The background is a bright, slightly blurred white.

Foster care

what it means
for me

www.northtyneside.gov.uk



North Tyneside Council



Foster
care is a safe
and homely place for
children and young
people to stay when
they can't live with
their own
family.

There may be lots of reasons why you cannot live with your own family, and your social worker will be able to talk to you about this.

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. During that time, social workers and other people will work with your family so you can go back home as quickly as possible.

Lots of people will be involved in choosing the family you go to live with, so we can make sure they are the right family for you.

We will tell you how long you will stay with the foster family and you will get to meet the family before you go and live with them.

Foster carers can be single people or they may be a couple. They may be the same age as your own parents, or can even be as old as your grandparents! They might have children of their own in their family, or look after other foster children like you.

What they all have in common is that they are special people who know how to look after children just like you and have had lots of practice with children. Their job is to make you as safe and happy as possible, and their home will become your home.

Each foster carer has their own social worker whose job it is to check that the foster carer is looking after you properly and well. You will meet this social worker lots and they will keep checking on you and checking that you are happy and safe with your foster carer.

In North Tyneside there are different types of foster carers.

- Some are there to look after children for just a short time, while your social worker works with you and your family to help you go home.
- Others are specially for children who have to stay away from home for a longer time. If you stay with this kind of foster carer, you get to know them very well. At the same time your social worker will make sure that you can still keep in touch your own family, if that is the right thing for you.
- If you have brothers and sisters, there are foster carers who will look after you all together, if that is the best thing for you.
- Sometimes a foster carer will look after you and your brothers and sisters just for a weekend so that your own family can have some rest.
- And some are specially trained so that they look after children who have a disability, or who find it hard to behave or concentrate.

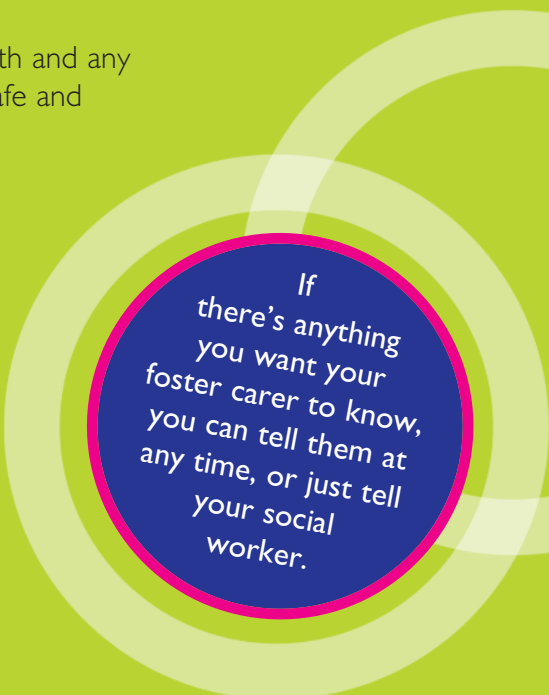
They all have one thing in common – and that is they will happily welcome you into their home for as long as you need to be there.

What will happen if I go into foster care?

We will make an agreement with your foster carer, which gives them lots of written information to help them look after you. We'll tell them all about you – things like your bedtime routine, your likes and dislikes, the food you eat, the clubs you go to, what you like to watch on TV and even the amount of pocket money you get!

We'll also tell them all about your health and any medicines you need, so you can stay safe and healthy.

Your foster carer will also make sure you do the things you need to do, like go to school, do your homework, clean your teeth and tidy your bedroom!



*If
there's anything
you want your
foster carer to know,
you can tell them at
any time, or just tell
your social
worker.*

What happens next?

All of the time that you are in foster care, no matter how long, your social worker will check that you are happy and well.

After you have been in foster care for four weeks, your foster carer and your social worker will hold a special meeting with other people whose job it is to make sure you are well.

This meeting is called your review and you will probably be able to go along to the meeting. If you can't or don't want to you will get a booklet where you can write down your views.

If you are still with your foster carer after three months, everyone will meet again, and again after five months.

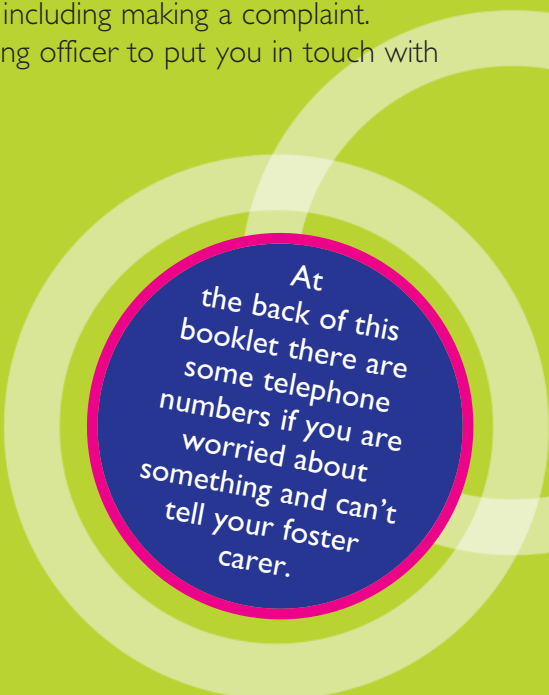
Your reviewing officer would like to visit you in your placement before each review.

Foster carers also have their own review every year to see if they are still suitable to be foster carers. You, your family and your social worker will be asked what you think of your foster carers, for this meeting.

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. Social workers are there to help you and will take everything you say to them seriously.

If you are still not happy, or would rather speak to someone else, you can speak to an independent person, called an 'advocate' who will listen to your concerns and help you deal with them including making a complaint. Ask your social worker or your reviewing officer to put you in touch with an advocate.



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

My social worker

Your social worker is there for you and you can contact them at any time. 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:

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 in our work.

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*Our
aim is to make
sure that 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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