



COUNTY
FOSTERING SERVICE

County Fostering Services Ltd

Children's Guide

Welcome to County Fostering Services Ltd.

This is our brief guide to tell you a little bit about our fostering agency, your foster carers and where you are going to live. There is also some advice, contact numbers and names of people in case you are unhappy or need to talk to someone.

County fostering is a fostering agency that helps to find families for young people, who like you, need to live away from their own family for whatever reason.

All those who work within the agency will get to know you, and you, them. This means that no matter who visits, you will know who they are. We will also share fun activity times with you as we believe that we all need to work together to offer you the best possible experiences with us.

Living with your foster carers, we want you to:

- * Feel safe and cared for properly.
- * Be happy and supported.
- * Be healthy and active.
- * Be in, and enjoying school.
- * Enjoy Family time with friends and family.
- * Be encouraged to explore activities, old and new.
- * Have space to talk about feelings and worries.
- * Have someone to always be there when you need to talk.
- * Know everyone within the agency, and have their contact details.
- * Have fun!



What will my new carer's be like?

Before you meet your carer's, you will see profiles of the foster carers, including photos of them and their home. It will give you a bit of information about them too. Your social worker will be able to tell you more as they have agreed that this is a good match for you to be cared for there. Every home is different, and they all have house rules which are different too. They will explain these to you when you get there. If you don't know anything about the carer's and their house rules, just ask, there are no silly questions.

Foster carers also have something called a safer caring document which means that they know how to keep you safe within their home and when you go out.

Foster carer's are special people offering you a warm, loving, environment and the best care they can offer.





Family Time:

While you are looked after by foster carers, it is normal to miss your family. As long as it is safe to do so, most children will be able to keep in contact with their family, and sometimes their friends. This is called Family Time, but it used to be called contact.

Your foster carers' will support you with this as we know it can be difficult at times. If you are worried about it, speak to your foster carers or social worker.

Sometimes you will get a taxi, bus, train, walk or be driven to your family time.

Phone family times will be talked about at your planning meeting.

Mobile Phones

County fostering are aware how important mobile phones are to young people.

Sometimes these can be disruptive to placements if they are used inappropriately. All foster carers have house rules about what time to hand your phone in at night and the use of it, e.g. meal times.

Please respect these rules, they are for your safety and security.



Your Files and Records:

Your foster carer will have to keep a record of information about you, this is paperwork in relation to your background, placement, care plan, education, family time and health.

They will also complete a monthly report for us, and we send that to your social worker, so everyone can keep you safe.

You are welcome to write to us about anything at anytime.



Your Rights and Responsibilities:

With rights come responsibilities, its not always about what you want, but what you need to do too. Things such as:

Being valued, and treated with dignity and respect as an individual.

Be cared for as a child first, and to be kept safe in different situations.

To be offered the opportunities of independence and choice.

To be offered education and opportunities for fun.

To have privacy for yourself and your belongings.

To continue and build safe friendships.

Be supported with your spiritual, social and cultural needs.

To have the opportunity to complain or compliment.

To be told what is happening or being considered before anything happens.

Develop responsibility for your own words and actions.

Be kind and respectful of others.

I wonder if they like me?

What are they like?

Will I still get to see my family?

Will I go to the same school?

What will it be like?

You will have your own bedroom, unless you share with siblings. This can be decorated to your taste, and somewhere that you can put your special belongings, or somewhere to spend quiet time alone if that's what you want to do.

If you want to spend overnight with friends, that can be ok as long as we check with your social worker and know it's a safe place to go. Your social worker has the final decision on this one.

All families and homes are different and routines are very different. These will include: bed times, meal times, pocket money, going out, and times to come back home.

You may go on holidays, weekends or day trips with your carers and often other children in placement. You might even go abroad. You will have a weekly pocket money, savings and a clothing allowance.

Make sure you tell your carers what you like and dislike, this includes food, reading, TV, night lights and your activities and hobbies. They are good, but alas, not mind readers so you will need to talk to them about things like this.

Who does what, when I'm in foster care?

Your foster carer:

Your foster carer will look after you on a day to day basis. They will offer you a safe warm home to live in, support you with health and education, and offer your new experiences and opportunities.

Your foster carer's are always there for you if you have any worries or problems that you want to talk about.

County Fostering will invite you to join activity days, children's forums, quizzes and challenges within the company.

All the workers are also there to listen to you should you need them to, for any reason.

Your independent reviewing officer (IRO):

The IRO oversee your physical, emotional and mental wellbeing while you are looked after. They chair a meeting every 6 months and this is what your care plan is agreed.

They will visit you to see how you are feeling.

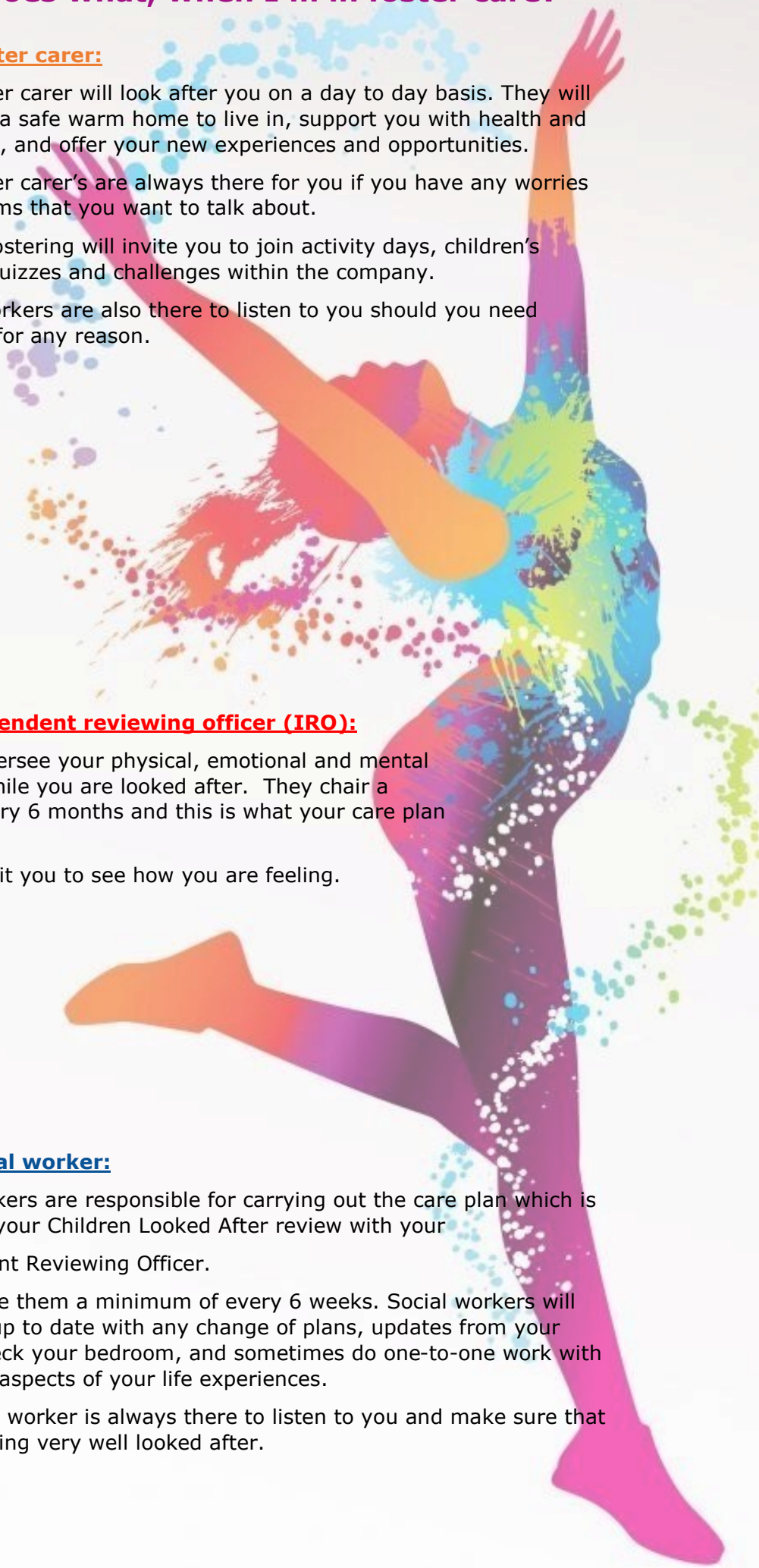
Your social worker:

Social workers are responsible for carrying out the care plan which is agreed at your Children Looked After review with your

Independent Reviewing Officer.

You will see them a minimum of every 6 weeks. Social workers will keep you up to date with any change of plans, updates from your family, check your bedroom, and sometimes do one-to-one work with you about aspects of your life experiences.

Your social worker is always there to listen to you and make sure that you are being very well looked after.



Useful Telephone Numbers

County Fostering Services Ltd—01604 438581

Ofsted—0300 1231231

National Missing Persons Helpline—0208 392 4527

NMPH—24 hour Free Phone Confidential Helpline
0500 700700

NMHP—Runaway Helpline—0808 800 7070

NSPCC—0808 800 5000

Childline—0800 10 19 96

Anti-bullying Helpline—0800 1111

Child Advocacy UK—0808 800 5792



COUNTY FOSTERING COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE for Young People



COUNTY
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HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

If something is upsetting you or making you unhappy then you should always speak to somebody about it.

We will always do our best to support you and try to resolve any issues you may be facing, ensuring that we are taking you seriously and treating you fairly.

In some cases you may feel like you need to make a complaint and we want to ensure we are able to support you through this and that you understand the process.



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PRINCIPLES

County Fostering make sure that:

- You know how to complain
- You are enabled to make a complaint or representation and are offered suitable advice and assistance in making complaints
- You will not be subject to any retaliation for making a complaint or representation
- Your complaints are treated seriously and responded to clearly
- You understand what happens as a result of your complaint
- Action is taken to address all parts of your concern
- Proper investigations are taken out
- Urgent action is taken
- A written record is made of your complaint, the action taken as a result of it and the outcome of the investigation
- If your complaint is in regards to the registered person, a qualified, independent person will be appointed to deal with the complaint



WHO CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT?

If something is making you unhappy, frustrated or angry, then you can make a complaint. Your Foster Carers, Social Workers or anybody else from County Fostering can help you with this or even make the complaint on your behalf. Your adults are there to support you and will make sure that you are fully supported throughout the process.

We will try to resolve your complaint by identifying a way forward with the complaint, which is informal and easily resolved.



County Fostering and your Foster Carers will help to deal with your complaints sympathetically and actively, whether the complaint is about the agency or the placing authority.

WHAT CAN BE COMPLAINED ABOUT?

- A problem
- The quality of a service
- The delivery or non-delivery of a service
- The way in which the agency carries out its policies and practices.



If you are unhappy about a change in your care plan or placement plan you should let your Social Worker know and they will try their best to make things better for you. If you are still unhappy, your Independent Reviewing Officer will help to support you further.

We want to make sure that you are happy and ask that you let us know of any problems, to do with anything are always spoken about. Don't keep your worries to yourself!



CAN I GET HELP TO COMPLAIN?

The simple answer to this is yes! of course...

We understand that sometimes you may need help to make a complaint. Your Social Worker, Independent advocate or Foster Carer are there to support you through difficult times and are there to assist you with this so please make sure that you ask for help if you need it.

Your adults can help you to access independent advice and support from your independent reviewing officer. Your Foster Carer may enlist the help of a supporter or advocate or your supervising social worker, as appropriate, to make a complaint about the Agency under this procedure or where appropriate, about the placing authority under the relevant local authority's Complaints Procedure.



THE COMPLAINT STAGES

There are 3 complaint stages:

We want to make sure that your complaint is resolved as soon as possible.



Local Resolution

The expectation is that the majority of complaints should be considered and responded to at stage 1. Stage 1 is an informal process where a meeting will take place between you and the supervising social worker, unless the complaint is about them or related to them, in which case we will proceed to stage 2. This meeting will be scheduled once a complaint has been received in writing or recorded by means of other communication.



Investigation

If you are not happy with the outcome of stage 1 then stage 2 will be activated. You will be advised to put your complaint in writing to the Fostering Manager who will then contact you within 7 working days to advise that they have instructed an Independent Complaints Investigating Officer in relation to the complaint and will advise you of their name and the expected time frame for the investigation.

3

Review Panels

This is the final stage of the complaints process. If you are not happy with the outcome of stage 2 then you will need to confirm in writing, including the reasons why to a Senior/ Manager/Director who will undertake to arrange for the case to be reviewed by an Independent Panel within 30 days. The panel will review the situation and reach a decision within 24 hours of meeting. You will then be advised of the outcome in a report.

The panel will be made up of:

- A fostering panel member;
- The Responsible Individual;
- A manager or staff member of the service;
- An independent individual of such background and experience as required;
- A chairperson if none of the above can fulfil that role.





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Independence Skills

Cosgrove Stay Over

SKILLS WORKING ON OVER THE TWO DAYS

- Budgeting/ Shopping
- Meal Preparation
- Barbeque
- Washing up & drying
- Using Laundrette washer & dryer
- Cleaning of mobile home
- Discussions on budget & banking

16-18 YEARS OLD

INDEPENDENCE ON SITE!



2 Bed/ 2
Bathroom
Accommodation

ACTIVITIES

- Swimming Pool
- Water Sports
- Bowling
- Skate Alley
- Crazy Golf
- Off Road Buggies
- Tennis Court
- Quadricycles
- Powerboat Rides