



# Young People's Guide to Fostering



**Ages 12-18**

# THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

.....

## KEEP IT SAFE.

YOU MAY NEED TO LOOK AT IT FROM TIME TO TIME

NAME: .....

AGE: ..... MY BIRTHDAY IS ON: .....

MY FOSTER CARERS NAME IS: .....

THIS BOOKLET HAS BEEN DESIGNED WITH THE  
HELP OF FOSTER CHILDREN

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# WELCOME



This booklet is to help you understand what foster care is and what being looked after by Acorn means. You will be staying with foster carers who are registered with Acorn Fostering. We would like to help you settle with your foster carer.

We hope you are going to like living with your foster carers. Your social worker will talk to you about why you are living here and will help you to make plans for your future. While you are living at your foster carers, it is your home. We want you to be safe, happy and be able to try new things. Maybe there is something you have always wanted to do or have enjoyed before. Let your foster carer know.

It helps to talk to people about what you need. Your social worker, foster carer or teacher are always there to help explain things and to answer your questions. The fostering team makes a commitment to you that while you are being looked after, they will make sure that all the things they are able to do and help you with, will happen.





# MY IMPORTANT CONTACT DETAILS

You can ask you foster carer to help you fill this out.

**NAME:** .....

**I LIVE AT:** .....

**MY FOSTER CARERS ARE CALLED:** .....

**TELEPHONE:** .....

**MY FOSTER CARERS SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER FROM  
ACORN FOSTERING IS CALLED:** .....

**TELEPHONE:** .....

**I GO TO SCHOOL AT:** .....

**MY CLASS TEACHER IS:** .....

**MY DOCTOR IS:** .....

**TELEPHONE:** .....

**MY DENTIST IS:** .....

**TELEPHONE:** .....

**MY LA SOCIAL WORKER IS:** .....

**TELEPHONE:** .....

# MY LIKES AND DISLIKES QUESTIONNAIRE

MY FAVOURITE FOODS: .....

THE FOODS I DISLIKE ARE: .....

MY FAVOURITE BOOK IS: .....

MY FAVOURITE FILM: .....

MY FAVOURITE MUSIC ARTIST: .....

MY FAVOURITE GAME: .....

MY FAVOURITE SUBJECT AT SCHOOL: .....

MY ALLERGIES: .....

TELL US SOMETHING WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU:

YOU MAY WANT TO SHARE THIS WITH YOUR FOSTER CARER  
TO HELP THEM GET TO KNOW YOU BETTER.



# SECTION 1

## WHO ARE ACORN FOSTERING SERVICES?

Acorn Fostering Services provide foster carers to look after children who cannot be with their family. Acorn Fostering Services train and support foster carers to look after children and young people.

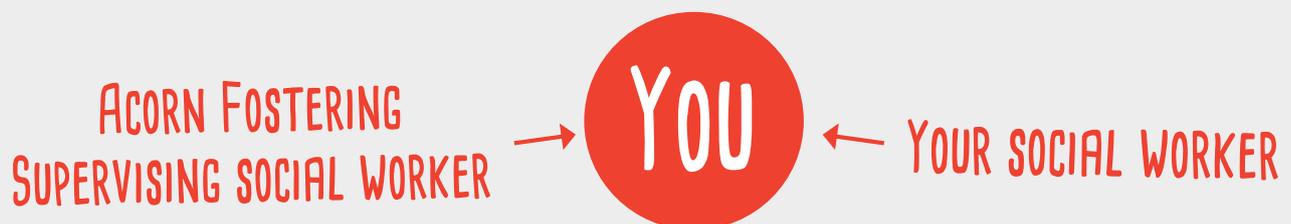
Your foster carer is registered with Acorn Fostering Services. You will have your own social worker who will visit you regularly to make sure you are looked after well.

### WHY ARE THERE TWO SOCIAL WORKERS?

There are two social workers:

You will have your own social worker, who will visit you. Your social worker and social worker from Acorn will work together to make sure you are safe, settled and well whilst living with the foster carer.

Your foster carers have their own supervising social worker from Acorn Fostering. Their job is to support foster carers and to make sure that they are providing you with a good standard of care.



**REMEMBER:  
WE ARE ALL HERE TO HELP YOU!**

- At Acorn Fostering Services, we want our foster carers to be kind, helpful and provide support and guidance to children and young people.

We understand that this can be a very difficult time for you and that we all react to change in different ways. You may be feeling upset, angry, confused or relieved. These feelings are not unusual but it often helps to talk about how you are feeling. Your foster carer will be there if you ever want to talk. We want you to settle and to feel safe and secure. We want you to be able to express your views freely, but always remember that your carer has to ensure that you are safe and will have some rules for your safety.

## ACORN FOSTERING AIMS TO:

'OUR AIM IS TO PROVIDE SAFETY AND STABILITY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLACED WITH OUR FOSTER FAMILIES'

Acorn Fostering's Statement of purpose



# SECTION 2

## BEING IN CARE



OTHER PEOPLE LIVING IN OR REGULARLY VISITING THE HOUSE:

.....

ARE THERE ANY PETS?:  YES  NO

IF YES WHAT ARE THEY AND WHAT ARE THEIR NAMES?:

.....

### WHAT BEING IN FOSTER CARE CAN MEAN?

Fostering means going to live with a foster family when you cannot live with your mum and dad. Sometimes this is called “going into care” or being “looked after”. There can be many reasons why children are fostered. Maybe your family cannot look after you or they aren’t looking after you adequately. Maybe they have hurt you and it is not safe for you to stay at home. If your family cannot look after you, a social worker will help you to be safe and well looked after with a foster family.



# WHY ARE YOUNG PEOPLE FOSTERED?

Young People come into care for a number of reasons. A child may ask for help as they are having a difficult time at home. Sometimes parents themselves may ask for help. This can be for a number of reasons such as they may be ill and can't cope. Or it may be because they know they are hurting their child and want to stop and need help.

## Did you know, the following famous people were fostered / adopted?



### **50 Cent**

The hip-hop mogul revealed in 2011 that he was adopted by his grandparents after his mother passed away.



### **Jamie Foxx**

Actor Jamie Foxx, who starred in Django Unchained, was raised by his grandparents, who adopted him when he was 7 months old.



### **Nelson Mandela**

Nelson Mandela's father passed away when the future diplomat was just 9-years-old and, as a result, he was adopted by Chief Jongintaba Dalindyebo.



### **Marilyn Monroe**

Marilyn Monroe was placed in 11 different foster homes as a child, after her mother was institutionalised. She also spent almost a year in the Children's Aid Society Orphanage in Los Angeles.



### **James Bond (Pierce Brosnan)**

When Pierce Brosnan's father left his mother, she decided to go to nursing school and gain a qualification which would help her care for her son. In the meantime, the actor was placed in the care of friends and family.



### **Jack Nicholson**

Jack Nicholson was a grown man when he discovered the woman he thought was his sister was actually his mother, and the woman he knew as his mother was his grandmother.

## INSPIRING QUOTES FROM FOSTER CHILDREN ABOUT FOSTER CARE

*' How does it feel to be a Foster Child? It's like being in a great world of your own '*

Mark, Age 12 (internet source)

*' We should all make our foster care family a possibility. '*

MeMe, Age 17 (Internet source)

*' The best advice I have from one foster child to another is that you never give up....Never think that you are worthless. '*

Jane, Age 10 (Internet Source)

## WHO ARE FOSTER CARERS?

- Foster carers look after children in their own home.
- They provide children with a safe and comfortable home. You will have your own bedroom (you may be able to share with your brothers or sisters).
- Foster carers provide food and clothing and pocket money.
- If you are not feeling well, your carer will take care of you, they may call a doctor or get you emergency medical help.
- Foster carers help children with their homework, go to school meetings and school events. They work with the school to make sure that you are getting on alright at school.
- Foster carers will arrange activities for you e.g. swimming, football, cinema, visiting the library, shopping, going to the park, photography etc. depending on your interest.
- Foster carers are willing to talk to you about any worries you may have.
- Foster carers may take you on holiday with them.
- Foster carers may have their own children

## YOUR FOSTER CARER WILL ALSO:

- Make sure you are well looked after
- Try and to make you feel part of the family
- Listen to you and try to help you when you feel sad or unhappy.
- Help you to learn new things.



## THEY WILL ALSO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE:

- A bedroom of your own
- Somewhere to put your clothes and belongings.
- A place where you can meet your social worker when they visit.
- A choice to celebrate your birthday and religious festivals

## ARE THERE RULES IN THE HOUSE?

Foster carers want you to:

- Show respect to people
- Join in the family meals and activities
- Attend school regularly
- Stick to family rules
- Share your views



## NO SMACKING POLICY

Our foster carers have agreed that they will not give unfair punishments to children and will not smack or hit children in their care.

## CULTURE AND BACKGROUND

We try to place children with foster carer's who have the same culture, religion, language as they do. Sometimes this is not possible. If it is not possible we will try and help you to experience your culture, customs, festivals and religious practices that you are used to.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### **How long will I be in foster care?**

The length of time you are in foster care will depend on your situation. You may stay for a short period like a few months or it may be much longer. Your social worker will advise you about how long you are likely to be in foster care.

### **What about my family, will I see them again?**

Your foster carer and social worker will help you to see your family and friends. The word 'contact' is used when social workers talk about children and young people keeping in touch with their families.

If this is not possible you will be told why you cannot see them. Your wishes and feelings will be listened to about meeting your family. If there are other people important to you and you would like to see them or talk to them on the phone, then let either your social worker or Acorn Fostering social worker know.



### **What about my education?**

When you come into care your social worker will try and ensure that you do not have to change schools. However if this is not possible, your social worker will ensure that you are involved in the decision about school. Your teachers will be told you are living with a foster family and there will be a special meetings called Personal Educational Plan (PEP) to see how you are getting on at school and if you need any help with anything and to ensure that

you achieve your full potential. The meeting will be chaired by someone from your school and will involve you, your foster carer(s) social worker and your parents.

This PEP plan will include your current grades, exam results, future targets and details of any additional support you need to make sure you meet the targets.

## SECTION 3 MEETINGS



### CARE PLAN

All children and young people in care have a care plan; this plan is to make sure you receive the support you need whilst in care. Your social worker will make a plan for you.

This is called your 'care plan', and includes everything that's important to you such as your:

- Information about why you are in care
- Your health
- Your education
- When you see your family
- How long you will stay with your foster family.
- You can contribute to your care plan.
- Information about your culture and background.

### MEETINGS

A number of different meetings will take place with your foster carer and social worker. Before the meeting, you will be asked what you think and you might be asked to write down or tell your social worker. You will be asked to attend some meetings.

#### **What is an Independent Reviewing Officer?**

You will be allocated an Independent Review Officer (IRO) when you come into care. The role of the IRO is to ensure that you are being looked after and the local authority is doing all they can for you and that the care plan is meeting all you needs. The independent reviewing officer will seek your wishes and feelings before making any recommendations to the social worker.

Foster carers also have a review meeting every year to look at what they are good at and what help they might need during the next year to help care for children. You may be asked to contribute to this review and asked to complete a questionnaire.

# SECTION 4 MY RIGHTS AS A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE

## MY RIGHTS AS A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE...

It's my right to be safe, secure and protected

It's my right to receive special help if I have a disability

It's my right to have access to a Children's Rights Officer

It's my right to have information, advice support with my healthcare and education

It's my right to enjoy my religion and culture

It's my right to have my views to be heard and taken into account

It's my right to have access to an Advocate

## INDEPENDENT VISITORS

When you live in foster care you are entitled to an Independent visitor. Independent visitors do not work for the local authority or Acorn Fostering Services they are volunteers who want to help and support a young person in care.

## AN ADVOCATE

An advocate is someone who will help you get your views heard. They do not work for the local authority. Advocates can support you:

- In review meetings or other meetings where decisions are being made
- If you are unhappy with any aspects of your care or if you don't agree with your care plan
- If you want to make a formal complaint
- If you would like your advocate to speak to your social worker or Independent Review Officer.
- An advocate could also support you with your immigration application

## A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS OFFICER

A Children's Right's Officer is independent from social workers, foster carers and all other adults concerned with the care of children and young people. A Children's Right Officer can also be contacted if you do not feel listened to. You can ask your social worker to help you contact them from your local area. The nominated officer would then make arrangements to visit and speak to you and follow up with subsequent actions. If you need to access any of the above or need more information your social worker will be happy to help you.

## SECTION 5 Complaints, Suggestions & Compliments

### SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT!

#### Complaint

Living in foster care isn't always easy, but it is important to remember that there are lots of people who want to make sure that you are happy and well looked after. If you are unhappy in your foster home, or about anything that is happening to you, you need to tell someone you trust.

##### You can talk to:

- Your Foster Carer
- Your social worker and your foster carers social worker
- A teacher
- The fostering manager at Acorn Fostering
- Your IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer)

If your complaint is about the foster carer, you can contact the Acorn Supervising Social Worker or the manager who will try and sort out the problem at any time:

##### You can write to us at:

Acorn Conference Centre, 78-80 Burley's Way, Leicester, LE1 3BD

You can telephone us : 0116 251 3550 (anytime)

You can email us: [info@acornfostering.com](mailto:info@acornfostering.com)

or you can complete a complaints card (see at back)



## Suggestions

Tell us your ideas on how we could make our services better:



## Compliments

Tell us if you are happy with a service, foster carer or social worker.



## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

When we receive your comment, compliment or complaint we will write to you and let you know that we have got it and what we will do. If you have made a complaint we will also tell you the name of the person who will investigate it and by when. Once it has been looked into, we will write to you with the outcome of your complaint. We will also tell you what you can do next if you are not happy with the result or you don't think your complaint has been looked into properly.

We promise to:

- Take your complaint seriously
- Deal with it promptly
- Keep you informed of progress until it has been resolved
- Try to find out what went wrong and why
- Tell you what we have done about it and what we will do to try to make sure it doesn't happen again
- Advise you of your right to appeal.

Remember you have a right to make a comment, complaint or compliment. You won't get into trouble if you make a complaint. We will listen to you and try and sort things out.



## IF YOU'RE UNHAPPY...

Did you know there are lots of other people who you can contact if you are not happy. These include:

### **Coram Voice**

Phone: 0808 800 5792 (calls are free)

Voice is a national charity that works with young people to speak up for them and support them in making improvements to their lives.

[www.voiceyp.org](http://www.voiceyp.org) or <https://coramvoice.org.uk/>

### **Childline**

Phone: 0800 1111 (its free to call)

You can contact Childline about anything. No problem is too big or too small.

### **NSPCC: Child Protection Line**

Phone Number: Free phone 0808 800 5000

### **Ofsted**

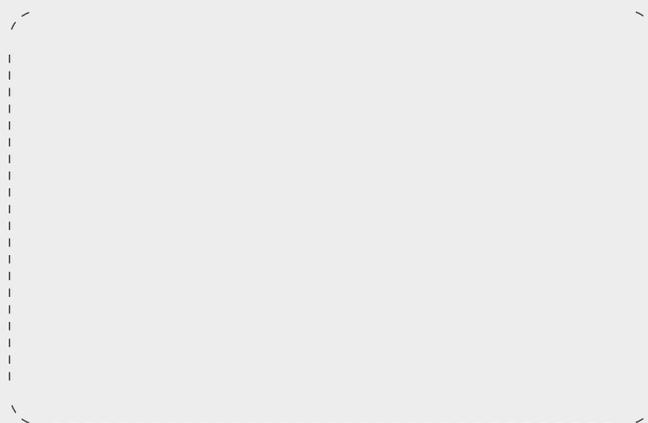
Phone: 0300 123 1231

EMAIL: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

OFSTED makes sure fostering agencies like Acorn Fostering Services are doing their job properly and looking after children placed with foster carers. The people who answer your call will listen to your problems and can check out what we are doing.

### **Children's Rights Director:**

[www.rights4me.org.uk](http://www.rights4me.org.uk)







You can ask your social worker, teacher, foster carers to help you fill out this form. Please give your completed form to your Acorn Fostering Social Worker. Your comments will be dealt with immediately and you will receive feedback on what actions we take.

If you have a Comment, Compliment or Complaint we would like to hear from you. Please ask your foster carers to cut these out.

My Name is: ..... Age: .....

My Address is: .....

My Phone Number is: .....

My comment is: .....



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My comment is: .....

Information from this document can be made available in alternative formats and in different Languages. If you require any further assistance, please contact us on the details below.



Acorn Fostering Services Ltd, 78-80 Burleys Way, Leicester, LE1 3BD

Telephone: 0116 251 3550

Email: [info@Acornfostering.com](mailto:info@Acornfostering.com) [www.Acornfostering.com](http://www.Acornfostering.com)