

# Children's Guide to Fostering

## 12 and under

Kent Pledge

This information is available in alternative formats and can be explained in other languages. Please contact your social worker for further information



**The main aim of Kent County Council's Fostering Service is to provide the best and safest foster care for children of all ages where all children are valued, supported and encouraged to grow and develop. (Fostering Statement of Purpose)**

In Kent we also have the Kent Pledge which sets out how we will work together to make sure children in care get what they need.

### **Who are Foster Carers?**

Foster carers look after children and young people who, like you, can't live at home. They will welcome you into their home and help keep you safe. They will listen to any worries that you may have.

They will treat you like one of their family and find out about the things you like to do. Your foster carers will play with you and make sure you can continue the activities and clubs you are interested in. They will also help you do your best at school and help you learn.

**An adult  
will always  
be here  
for you**



They will also make sure you are healthy, taking you to the doctors if you are unwell, seeing the dentist and also going to get your eyesight checked. They will want to know what your favourite foods are, and if there are things you cannot eat or don't like.

A foster carer may be a member of your own family or someone that knows you to and this is called Connected Persons Foster Care.

### **How will you find the right family for me?**

Your social worker will decide which foster family would be best for you and where they think you will fit in. They will also make sure you are involved and listened to and what type of family you would like to stay with.

Sometimes, in an emergency, you may have to move into a foster home quickly. If you need to move again your social worker will help you to settle into your new placement home.

We will try and make sure your foster family are of a similar background and culture as you and where possible share the same language or languages as you. The most important thing is that your foster carers want to care for you and do their best to give you all the care and support you need.

Your foster carer is part of a team making sure you are getting the things you need to help you do well. They will have their own Fostering Social Worker who will meet with them regularly to help them make sure that they are caring for you as well as possible.

## What sort of things will my foster carer do?

Your foster carer will do lots of things to make you feel happy and comfortable while you are living with them. They will:

- Make sure you are looked after and safe.
- Try and make you feel part of the family.
- Listen to you.
- Treat you fairly and with respect.
- Help and support you.
- Support you seeing your family when it is planned.
- Attend meetings about you including school meetings.
- Help you continue with your hobbies and interests and also find new ones.
- Carry out the plans agreed for you as part of your Care Plan.

**Foster carers are given an allowance to look after you and buy any food, clothes, toys or pocket money you need.**

## What will I be told about my foster family?

Living in someone else's home can feel strange especially if you are not sure what you can and can't do. Your social worker will tell you about the foster family and anyone else in their wider family, where they live and the type of house they live in. You will also know where your bedroom will be and the sort of things your foster family do. You can also ask your foster carer any questions if you are unsure of anything. They know things will be

new to you. Your foster carer will have written down some of this information in their Foster Carer Profile and may also use a “pop up house” to tell you about themselves and their family.

Before you are placed with your new carers we will try and make sure we share this information with you.

**A good  
education  
is very  
important**



### **What will my foster carer know about me?**

Foster carers need to know the important information about you and your family and the reasons why you need to be cared for by them. This will help them to make sure you are safe and that they are able to care for you and make you happy. They will want to know about your interests and hobbies, your health, where you go to school/college, your religion and customs. They need to know if you have brothers and sisters or other members of your family who are important to you. The adults will be careful to only share things about you with people who need to know to be able to care for you as well as possible.

## Going to live with my foster family?

A social worker will take you to your foster carer's home, where you can meet everybody that lives there. We will try and make sure that you meet your foster carers before moving in but this may not always be possible.

You can bring some of your belongings including those things that are important to you. You may have some favourite things or something that is special or valuable to you. Let your social worker and foster carer know this so that they can be kept safe.

A Placement Meeting will take place either before you move in with your foster carer or within 5 days of your move. This meeting is where you, your foster carer, your social worker and your parents may be invited to decide what is needed to help the foster carer(s) to look after you. This will include what food you like; any routines you have and things you like to do; any medication that you may take, and who you will see from your family and when.

**Good  
memories  
for the future**



You will also have a Care Plan which sets out how you should be cared for and what the plan for your future should be. There will be regular review meetings, called Child in Care Reviews, which are all about you and how you are getting on. You may want to attend these meetings but you can also share your views in other ways. The person in charge of these meetings is the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and they will meet with you before the meeting.

### **How will I know what I can and cannot do in my foster home?**

Every family has rules and your foster carer will tell you about their house rules. The house rules are to make sure everybody knows what to do. House rules may include when mealtimes are, where you may play with your toys, or when you can use the computer.

### **What decisions can my foster carer make?**

Your foster carer will make the day to day decisions for your care. This may include what clubs you attend and activities you do. They may also be able to decide when you visit your friends and if you can stay overnight.

There may be some things your foster carer will need to discuss with your social worker before a decision can be made.

## How long will I be in foster care?

It depends on the situation and your social worker should give you some idea of how long this could be. You may stay for a short period like a few days, or a few weeks but it may be much longer. The plans for your care will be carefully looked at including your views and it may need the court to decide what is in your best interests.

## Will I be able to see my family?

How often you see your family and where you may see them will depend on the reason you are in foster care. There are lots of different ways to keep in touch with your family and friends and your social worker will discuss them with you. Sometimes a social worker or another person may need to come with you when you visit your family. If you feel worried about seeing anyone you should always tell your foster carer or your social worker.





## The Kent Pledge

We understand that being in care is not always easy. If we are going to get it right for you we need to make a real difference to help you do your best and have success in your life. Our pledge includes a number of things we will do that will help make sure that your time in care is a positive experience. These are based around six themes:

- A sense of belonging.
- An adult who is always there for you while you are in care.
- A good education.
- Good memories for the future.
- Getting ready for being an adult.
- Championing your needs and interests.

## Children and Young People' Council

We know from talking to Our Children and Young People's Council (Children and Young People's Council) that it is important that you are involved and listened to.

Virtual School Kent organise council meetings for children and young people in care so they can have their say on what it is like being in care and what they'd like to change. Anyone who is in care aged 11 or over is welcome to join. The committee aim to meet up every few months. If you are interested in becoming a committee member please email: **VSK\_Participation@kent.gov.uk** for further details.

## What if I am unhappy with something?

If there is something you are not happy with its important to tell someone. You could talk to your foster carer or social worker about it or another adult you trust, like a teacher or your IRO. Often these things can be sorted out quickly.

You can contact the Head of Quality Assurance in the Specialist Children's Services Safeguarding Unit who is responsible for the IRO service:

**Safeguarding Unit, Sessions House, County Road,  
Maidstone, ME14 1XQ**

Kent County Council have an independent Advocacy Service with the Young Lives Foundation. They will listen to any concerns you may have and make sure your voice is heard and help you to sort out any problems. Advocates can attend your reviews with your agreement, contact people for you and tell you your rights. They can help with problems like understanding plans for your care. You can contact them directly or ask someone to by telephoning 01622 683815 or emailing **[advocacy@ylf.org.uk](mailto:advocacy@ylf.org.uk)**

If you want to complain about something you can also talk to or write to our Complaints Team and make a formal complaint on 0300 333 5384, email **[cscomplaints@kent.gov.uk](mailto:cscomplaints@kent.gov.uk)** or write to Kent County Council, Children's Complaints Team, Kroner House, Eurogate Business Park, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8XU. You can also send a text message to 07950 080802 - type in cscomplaints followed by a space and your message.

If you would like someone independent to help you make your complaint the Complaints Team will be able to get someone for you.

You can contact the Children's Rights Director at the:  
Office of the Children's Rights Director  
Ofsted  
Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE  
Tel 0800 528 0731

Ofsted regularly inspect Kent's Fostering Service. You can contact

Ofsted:  
Ofsted National Business Unit  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD  
0300 123 1231  
Enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You can also contact the Children's Commissioner for England by emailing <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>  
**or write to:**

**Office of the Children's Commissioner**  
**33 Greycoat Street, London, SW1P 2QF**

## Speak Up. Be Heard

Our Children and Young People's Council (OCYPC) and Young Adult Council (YAC) are groups of young people in care or who have recently left care who meet regularly around the county. The meetings give you the chance to meet others and have your say on how improvements could be made to help you and others.

**To find out more speak to your Social Worker, telephone 03000 412777 or email [VSK\\_participation@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSK_participation@kent.gov.uk)**

