



Ethelbert Fostering Services

CHILDREN'S GUIDE

over 11



Where Every Child Has Mattered For More Than 35 Years



Hi!

My name is Debi Atkin and I want to welcome you to Ethelbert Fostering Services. We have been asked to provide a foster family for you. I am what is called the "Registered Manager". It is my job to make sure that you are looked after well whilst you are staying with one of our foster families. I am helped by Leslie Davenport. He is the 'big boss' of Ethelbert Children's Services. Ethelbert Fostering Services is part of this.

I am also helped by people called "Supervising Social Workers". Supervising Social Workers help Foster Carers look after you but I will tell you more about Supervising Social Workers and Ethelbert Fostering Services later.

We all know how hard it might be for you to come to a strange place and to meet new people for the first time. So, we have made this 'Children's Guide' for you to help you settle in and tell you about things.

It includes:

- ❖ Foster Carers - the people you live with
- ❖ What to expect
- ❖ What should and should not happen to you
- ❖ Social Workers - the people who help you
- ❖ Supervising Social Workers - the people who help your Foster Carers
- ❖ Contact - this means keeping in Contact with your family
- ❖ Care Plans
- ❖ Placement Agreements
- ❖ Reviews
- ❖ Race & Culture
- ❖ Court Orders
- ❖ How Long Will You have to stay?
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Health
- ❖ What To Do If You Have A Problem

If this is the first time you have lived with Foster Carers, you may have lots of questions. Even if you have lived in a foster home before, you may still have some questions. We hope that this book will answer some, if not all of your questions.

This book contains a lot of serious and important information. You might want to take a break every now and then and so we have included a Word Search at the back for you.

You might want to read this book on your own or you could ask an adult like your Foster Carer to go through it with you. If you do not understand anything, talk to your Foster Carer. They will help you and explain things to you.

Foster Carers

Fostering is a way of looking after children and young people, who, like you, cannot live at home or with another member of their family. When you are being cared for in this way it is often called being “looked after”.



The legal term for being “looked after” is “in care”. If you have been told you are “in care” this means that your Local Authority has been to Court and a Care Order would have been made for you which includes the decision that you cannot live at home. The Local Authority is then responsible for looking after you. They feel that the best way of looking after you at the moment is for you to live with Foster Carers. There are different types of Care Orders but more about these can be found later in this book.

It may be that your mum and dad found it difficult caring for you. Being a parent is not easy and sometimes grown-ups need help to do this. Sometimes young people live with Foster Carers because their parents become ill and they need time to get better again. Another time when young people need looking after is when they arrive in Britain from other countries without their families and so need another family to look after them.

It is important to know that young people live with Foster Carers for all different reasons. It is **not** because you have done anything wrong.

Foster Carers are special people who have been carefully chosen to look after children and young people. All our Foster Carers have had training before they look after any foster child, regardless of age. They then have to keep on training so they can provide the best possible care they can. They are also ‘checked out’ to make sure they can offer you a safe place to live.

All foster families are different but they all understand how upsetting it can be for you to be living away from your own family.



Some Foster Carers are single, while others may be married or have a partner. Some have their own children, teenagers or grown up children still living at home.

Some Foster Carers have pets also.

They may already be looking after other children and young people who cannot live at home with their own families.

Therefore, you could be living with other young people who are in the same situation as you are.

The most important thing to remember is that they will treat you as one of the family.



What to Expect

Many young people find that living with a foster family for a while can be a good thing even if they didn't want to go in the first place. Sometimes it helps to sort out or work through a problem in your own family so you can live together again.

Everyone understands how important it is to have your own 'stuff' – this is called "belongings". You will be given a place where you can put all your belongings. If you have forgotten anything from your home your Social Worker will try and get this for you.

You may worry about what to tell people at school as to why you are living with Foster Carers. Some young people like to be 'up front' about this while others like to keep it to themselves. The choice is yours but it is a good idea to think about this first so you know what to say. You can talk to your Foster Carers and Social Worker about this. Remember, your friends will like you for who you are and not who you are living with.

Pocket Money, Clothing & Other Things!



Pocket Money

All children and young people who live with Foster Carers get Pocket Money. The amount you will be given will depend on your age – the older you get the more you get! .

Your Foster Carers will give you your Pocket Money every week. You will be able to spend this on something of your choice. The chart below gives you an idea of what Pocket Money you can expect to receive now

Pocket Money (From April 2008)						
Age	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	16+ years
Amount	£5.85	£6.45	£7.55	£8.65	£9.70	£12.20



You will also be encouraged to save some money for something special.

Clothes and Clothing Allowance

When you start to be looked after you should be able to bring clothes from your home. If you are being looked after for a short time you may have enough clothes to wear during your stay.

However, if you are staying for longer, your Foster Carers receive an allowance from which they can buy you clothes.

Like Pocket Money, the amount of Clothing Allowance depends on how old you are.



The Clothing Allowance includes all sorts of things such as, underwear, every-day clothes, best clothes, shoes, school clothes and equipment etc.,



The chart below shows what the weekly Clothing Allowance for you is now.

Clothing Allowance (From April 2008)						
Age	11 years	12 years	13 years	14 years	15 years	16 + years
Amount	£17.55	£18.60	£20.05	£21.20	£22.80	£24.95

Your Foster Carers must make sure that your clothes are mended and washed and that you have clean things to wear. As you get older you will be encouraged to help with washing and mending your own clothes. This will help you to learn to look after yourself. Your Foster Carers will also sometimes give you a chance to buy your own clothes. Of course you will have a budget (set amount that you can spend) for this and be given practical advice, such as not to buy sandals when you really need winter school shoes!! It is all about helping you to learn how to make choices when you only have a certain amount of money to spend.

Other Things!



Your Foster Carer also receives a weekly allowance to cover things such as toiletries, sports and hobbies – for example: Swimming, Scouts, Theatre workshops.

Therefore you won't have to give up doing the things you like to do.



A list of clubs and activities happening in your area will be given to you by your Foster Carers.

Foster Carers also get an annual allowance (that is a yearly amount) to pay for other things such as birthday, Christmas or festival presents, holidays and outings.



Therefore, you don't have to miss out on these things either.



What Should and Should Not Happen To You

When you arrive, your Foster Carers will want to get to know you as soon as possible and make you feel at home. They will want to know about what food you like to eat, your favourite games, hobbies – even what your favourite television programme is.

Your Foster Carer will explain how their family like to do things as often this may be a little different from your own family.

To help you with this there are some pages at the back of this book for you to fill in with your Foster Carers. They are :

- 1 All about Me (that's you!)
- 2 Things You Might Need To Know
- 3 Important Things To Know

Your Rights

There are certain ways you should be treated. These are called your 'Rights'.

- ❖ You have the Right to be safe, secure and protected from harm. Your Foster Carer is not allowed to hurt you in any way – nor is anyone else. Never feel you won't be listened to or have to suffer in silence
- ❖ You have the Right for adults to listen to you and treat you equally and fairly
- ❖ You have the Right to be helped to express how you feel and what you want. This includes being involved in making plans and decisions about your future
- ❖ You have the Right for privacy – this means any personal information about you will only be given to others who really need to know it
- ❖ You have the Right not to be discriminated against – this means being treated or being made to feel different because of :

Being in care, your race, your culture (including your religion and language), your age, your abilities (including physical, educational, medical) your gender (whether you are a boy or a girl)

- ❖ You have the Right to be offered Education, Health Care, play and leisure activities
- ❖ You have the Right to know why you live in a foster home and when you will next see your family
- ❖ You have the Right to be told about the things you can and can't do and why you can't do them
- ❖ If you have a disability you have the Right to any help you need with it.

If you feel **anyone** is taking any of these Rights away from you speak up – don't be shy or frightened. **Nobody has the right to deny you these things.**

Rules

Rules for You

Living with a foster family can be difficult sometimes as they may do things different from your own family or other Foster Carers you may have lived with. Although they will want you to feel at home, it is important for you to respect the way they do things.

Foster Carers have rules for everyone who lives in their home. Your Social Worker and Foster Carer will explain the main rules when you arrive. The rules should be fair and they are about keeping everyone safe.

So that your Foster Carers can keep you safe remember to :

- ❖ Talk with your Foster Carers if you are not happy about something
- ❖ Always ask your Foster Carers if you are allowed to go somewhere **before** you go and then agree the time you are expected home
- ❖ Do not talk to or go off with strangers (these are people you don't know)
- ❖ Be kind to your Foster Carers and other people living in your foster home (this also includes any pets or animals)
- ❖ Ask if you want to borrow something
- ❖ Take care of your belongings – clothes, toys, books, games
- ❖ Ask when you can invite friends to visit or stay over
- ❖ Always wear your seat belt in the car

Your Foster Carer will tell you what will happen if you break a rule. For example, not being allowed to watch TV.

Rules For Your Foster Carers

It is important you to know that there are also rules for your Foster Carers.

Foster Carers are **not allowed** to:

- ❖ Hit you (this is called physical punishment) or harm you in any way
- ❖ Call you names
- ❖ Make you feel bad about yourself
- ❖ Stop you from keeping in touch with your family or other people important to you
- ❖ Stop you speaking with or seeing your Social Worker
- ❖ Stop you having meals
- ❖ Lock you in your bedroom or any other room
- ❖ Stop you from having any medical or dental treatment
- ❖ Keep your belongings or presents that may have been bought for you (providing they are not dangerous or harmful)
- ❖ Stop you taking your belongings with you to a new placement or if you go home
- ❖ Bully you by calling you names or making fun of you
- ❖ Search your clothes – (you should not be asked to take your clothes off for them to be searched)
- ❖ Force you to join in their religion or make you attend any religious services they may go to.

Your Foster Carers want you to be happy. For example :

- ❖ They will encourage you to talk about your feelings, worries and concerns
- ❖ They will help you go to school and help you with any homework
- ❖ They will help you to be healthy and fit
- ❖ They will have somewhere to keep your things (your belongings)
- ❖ They will help you to see your family and friends and other important people in your life
- ❖ Help you to follow your religion – if you have one. For example, they will find the nearest Church, Synagogue or Mosque so that you will be able to attend. If your religion says that you have to eat certain foods your Foster Carer will arrange this
- ❖ They will give you Pocket Money
- ❖ They will provide you with clothes
- ❖ They will take you on outings and encourage you to carry on with your hobbies and activities, for example : comics and puzzle books, football sticker books, swimming.
- ❖ Help you to develop your talents, interests and skills



SOCIAL WORKERS

A Social Worker is a trained professional person who likes working with children and young people.

Your Social Worker will have helped to arrange this foster placement for you. It is their job to:

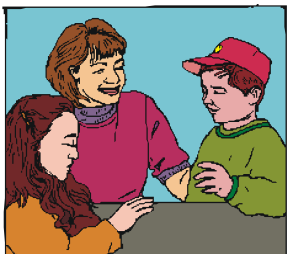


- ❖ Make plans for your care and to make sure that you are looked after properly
- ❖ Help you to be involved in all the plans that are being made for you. This includes talking to you about how you feel and what you want to see happening in your future. You may not be able to do everything you want, but your feelings and wishes will be taken into account
- ❖ Explain to you about all the decisions that are made about your life
- ❖ Make plans which aim to get you home to your family as soon as possible and where it is safe for you. If you have to stay in care for a long time, find you a permanent family to live with
- ❖ Visit you and help sort out any difficulties or problems you may be having

All young people have their own Social Worker who works for the Local Authority who brought you into Foster Care. The Local Authority has the responsibility to make sure that you are being looked after well and that you are happy. You will often hear them called the “Responsible Authority”.



You should think of your Social Worker who is someone who is here to help you.



Your Social Worker will visit you in your Foster Home and get to know you. Sometimes they will see you on their own. Sometimes they may see you with your Foster Carers. Sometimes they may take you out so you can have a longer talk with them.

During your first year of placement your Social Worker should visit you at least every six weeks. Sometimes they may visit you more often but this will depend on how much help you need. Once you have been in placement for a year you should get a visit at least every three months. Again if you need more support your Social Worker may visit more often.

Your Social Worker cares about you so you can talk to them about how you feel. If you have any worries or problems they will help to sort them out. If they can't help they will try and find someone else for you to talk to such as a Counsellor or a Therapist.

Your Social Worker will need to tell your Foster Carers the important things about you and your family. Your Foster Carers must keep this information safe.

If you want to see or speak with your Social Worker speak to your Foster Carer. Your Foster Carer will phone your Social Worker for you. Your Social Worker will need to know if you have any problems so they will know if they have to make an urgent visit to you or plan a visit in a short while. We will write your Social Workers name and telephone number down for you at the end of this book.

SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKERS

All Foster Carers have a worker from this Agency who visits them and makes sure you are being looked after well. They are your Foster Carer's Manager.

This person is called a "Supervising Social Worker". The name of your Foster Carer's Linker Worker is

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All Supervising Social Workers have had special training and they are also Social Workers. However, they don't replace your own Social Worker, but are there for you as well as your Social Worker. The Supervising Social Worker will regularly see your Foster Carer. They will also talk to your Social Worker. They will see you from time to time as well. This is another person you can talk to if you have any worries or problems. Their telephone number is at the back of this book.

Your Social Worker and your Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker may sometimes visit you together to make sure everything is all right. If anything is not right they will sort it out. They want you to be happy.

Every year the Supervising Social Worker will arrange a meeting to discuss the work your Foster Carer has done in the last year. This is called a "Foster Carers Review of Approval". You will be asked for your comments on this.

CARE PLANS

All young people who are in care have their own special plan. This is called a 'Care Plan'. It is information written down about you which will help us to look after you

It is about everything that is important to you such as what it is hoped to be achieved whilst you are being looked after and what needs to be done to help you. For example:

- ❖ Which members of your family or friends you will have Contact with and how often you will see them
- ❖ Your school (including any problems you may have and how they will be sorted out)
- ❖ Keeping well and healthy (such as making sure that you have a doctor and that you see the dentist regularly)
- ❖ It is also about things you want to do – such as how to make sure you can carry on doing the sports or hobbies that you like. If there is something that you want, but it can't be arranged you will be told why not.

Your Social Worker will write your Care Plan. They should talk to you and your parents about what is to be written and to get your views. They will then explain your Care Plan to you. If you agree with your Plans you will be asked to sign a form. If there is anything in your Care Plan that you do not like, tell your Social Worker – they may be able to change it.



Your Social Worker will keep your Care Plan and everything else that is written about you on a file. You can ask your Social Worker to see your file.

You and your Foster Carers will also have a copy of your Care Plan.

PLACEMENT AGREEMENTS

As well as your Care Plan a Placement Agreement will be written. This is about what will happen on a day-to-day basis where you live. For example :

- ❖ Your living arrangements, including who you will be allowed or not allowed to see, how much pocket money you will get, what time you have to be in
- ❖ Getting to school
- ❖ Your Health
- ❖ Any travel arrangements

Your Social Worker will write the Agreement with help from your Foster Carers. Your parents should also be involved in writing your Placement Agreement. If you are old enough and can understand what is happening, you will be involved also.

REVIEWS



There will be regular meetings to check out how you are doing. These are called Review Meetings. Review Meetings are to find out:

- ❖ How things are going on in your life
- ❖ If there needs to be changes in how you are looked after
- ❖ What needs to be changed in your Care Plan

People such as your parents, Foster Carers or teacher will be invited to go to this meeting.

You will also be invited to go to this meeting and have your say.

Your Social Worker will listen to you about who you want to come to your Review. Hopefully they will be able to sort this out for you. It may be that some people will talk first and then leave so they don't have to hear about everything that is to do with your life.



The person in charge of these meetings is called a "Reviewing Officer". The Reviewing Officer checks that your Care Plan is working for you, your Social Worker, your Foster Carer and other people in your life. They make sure that your school, health and keeping in touch with your family is as good as it should be. If you need legal help they can arrange this. They will want to hear from you. You will be able to talk to them or write things down before or at the Review Meeting.

If you don't want to go to this meeting this is OK. You can ask to speak with the Reviewing Officer on your own or you can tell your Social Worker or Foster Carer what you would like to say.

If you don't go to your Review, don't forget to ask your Foster Carer and Social Worker what happened - some decisions would have been made. A little while after the Review you should get sent, through the post, a document that says what all the decisions and recommendations were.



Reviews are held at a time and place to make it easier for you to come. Sometimes there may be more than one meeting. Reviews are often held in the foster home. If this is not possible it will be held somewhere else which is safe and comfortable such as our Offices.

A Review normally happens within 28 days of you being looked after by your Local Authority. The second Review is then three months after the first one. After the second Review, they normally then take place every six months. However, they can also happen more often if needed.

CONTACT

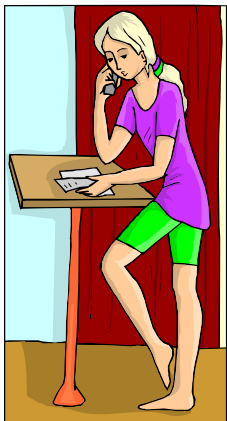
Just because you live in a foster home, it doesn't mean that you have to lose touch with your family and friends. Everyone knows how important your family is to you.

How often you see them and where you see them will depend on the reason you are being looked after. As soon as you come into care your Social Worker will talk with you about this.



Everyone knows that it is important for you to keep in touch with your family and friends. Adults call this keeping in touch - "Contact"

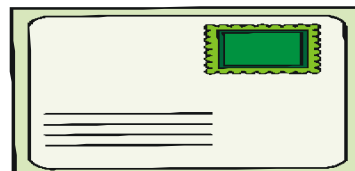
Sometimes a Contact Meeting will be arranged when you can see your family. Contact visits sometimes have to be 'supervised' This means someone else will be there with you and your family and speak about how the visit went. They will also have to write a report afterwards. If this happens you will be told about it **before** the visits happens.



Sometimes it is possible for you to speak with your family on the telephone .This is called "Telephone Contact"

and

Sometimes you may get and send letters. This is called "Letter Box Contact"



ETHELBERT FOSTERING SERVICES

As you read on the first page, Ethelbert Fostering Services has been asked to provide a foster family for you.

Like your Foster Carers, everyone who works for Ethelbert Fostering Services has been 'checked out'. Apart from Foster Carer's Supervising Social Workers and me, the Registered Manager, we are supported by office staff and other people who help with Contacts, driving, baby-sitting or other jobs. We also receive training and have an understanding of what fostering is all about.

You can contact anyone who works for Ethelbert Fostering Services at :

5 Cecil Square
Margate
Kent CT9 1BD

Our Telephone number is at the back with all the other important numbers.

We are what is known as a "Fostering Service". Your Local Authority is also a Fostering Service.

Every Fostering Service is inspected by a group of people who work for "Ofsted". They make sure that the service you receive is properly run and meets your needs.

If you, your parents or other members of your family are not happy about the care you are receiving from us, Ofsted can be contacted at :

Ofsted
National Business Unit
Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

Their telephone number is at the back of this book.

Statement of Purpose

Every Fostering Service also has to have a "Statement Of Purpose". It doesn't talk about any one person so your name will not be in it. It does say what our overall "aims" are. This is the grown-ups way of saying : *'what we are here for and what we hope to be able to do for you and other children and young people like you.'*

Our aim is to provide a special service within a secure family setting for children of all ages. We can provide foster homes for babies right through to older teenagers. Sometimes these teenagers are getting ready to leave care and live on their own. We understand that each child or young person placed with us will be different and will have their own histories and needs and therefore we know we have to be flexible in how we provide this care.

As well as providing foster homes we can also offer:

- ❖ **Education** – sometimes it is not always possible to settle you into a school straight away. When this happens we can arrange a teacher to see you at home and also some other activities. Sometimes we can offer you a place in one of our own schools.
- ❖ **Therapy & Counselling** – This is about the people you can speak to about the things that have happened in your life. Your Social Worker will talk with you about this if it is required.
- ❖ **Contact** – Where possible we will help you to have Contact with your family and other people important to you. Your Foster Carers have been specially trained and this includes knowing how important your family is to you.
- ❖ **Transport** – If you have to travel anywhere, for example, to a meeting or for Contact with your family, we can arrange for someone to take you and bring you back to your foster home. In many cases your Foster Carer will do this, but sometimes it will be necessary for us to arrange someone else to do it.
- ❖ **Organised Activities** – Sometimes we try to arrange an activity so that you can meet other young people living with Foster Carers. You can also meet their foster family.

If you or your family would like to see the full Statement of Purpose please ask your Foster Carer or their Supervising Social Worker to get one for you.

Bullying

Bullying is when a grown-up or other children or young people treat you or say things about you that make you feel uncomfortable or upset.

For example :

- ❖ Being called names
- ❖ Being lied about
- ❖ Being teased or pushed about
- ❖ Being hit or attacked
- ❖ Having your bag or other belongings taken or thrown about
- ❖ Having rumours or nasty stories spread about you so that people won't like you
- ❖ Being ignored and left out
- ❖ Being forced to hand over money or any of your belongings
- ❖ Being attacked because of your religion or cultural background



Grown-ups often talk about bullying happening in school such as on your way to or from school, in the playground, classroom or even the toilets. **But** bullying can also happen at home. Sometimes even grown-ups get bullied when they go to work. In fact bullying can happen **anywhere!**

If this has happened to you in a previous foster home or school or you get bullied now, or in the future you must tell someone as soon as possible. Such as your :

- ❖ Foster Carer
- ❖ Social Worker
- ❖ Teacher or
- ❖ Another grown-up you can trust.

It is important for you to know that if you are bullied it is not your fault.

More information about bullying can be got from www.kidscape.org.uk Kidscape is the first charity in the UK which has been set up especially to prevent bullying and child sexual abuse.

Culture and Race



Culture is often about the history, music and food that people enjoy in different countries. When people settle in another country, they like their family (that may be you) to continue to enjoy and celebrate their history.

This can also include the way people dress, their religious beliefs and festivals. The language that people use at home is also part of their culture.

For example, your family might be of an African, African-Caribbean, Irish, Eastern European, Arabic or English culture. There are many more than these and they are all important. Sometimes a family is a mixture of different cultures.

It is important that whatever your background you are able to enjoy the things you are familiar with or are part of your family background.

It is difficult often to provide a foster family that is of the exact same culture and race. Therefore, when your Local Authority were looking for the best possible place for you to live they looked for Foster Carers who would understand your cultural background and encourage you to continue with its traditions. This includes the music you listen to, the food you eat or the books you read. This might also include arranging for someone who of the same culture as is able to talk to you about this.

Although it is important that you learn about and understand your own family culture, it is also important to learn something about other people's cultures. The more we get to know and understand each other the more we can value the way other people live.

CARE ORDERS

There are 2 routes by which children and young people can become 'looked after'.

Accommodated on a Voluntary Basis

Accommodation or Accommodated are words used when a child or young person is looked after by a Local Authority with the agreement of their parents. This is sometimes known as "Section 20" or Voluntary Care"

An arrangement is made between your Local Authority and your parents. When a Local Authority has agreed to look after you in this way it is usually because your parents were having difficulties or were unable to care for you at that time and so asked Social Services for help. If you are over 16 years old you can make this arrangement yourself – even if your parents don't agree with it.

Records have to be filled in about how you are looked after and for how long. Your parents will still have what the Law calls 'Parental Responsibility' (there is more about this after this Care Order Section).

If your Local Authority feels that it is not safe for you to go home, a different type of Care Order will apply. This is sometimes called "Family Proceedings" and means that a Court will decide what is best for your future.

Family Proceedings

There are many different types of Care Orders which involve the Courts. Care Orders can be made in a Family Presiding Court by a magistrate or in County Courts or High Courts by a Judge.

Care Orders are legal documents which describe who is looking after you, for what reason and for how long.

When the Courts are involved they should also ask someone called a "Children's Guardian" to talk to you and find out what is in your best interest.

A Children's Guardian is an Independent Social Worker. This means they do not work for your Local Authority. Their job is to talk with you and find out what your wishes and feelings are and let the Court know. To help the Court decide what is best for you they will also have to find out information on you and your family.

Your Guardian will make suggestions to the Court on what they think is best for you and what they think should happen for you in the future.

Sometimes your Guardians suggestion may not be the same as the Plans which your Local Authority are making for you. It is the Court's responsibility to listen to all the suggestions made and then make a final decision which they feel will be in your best interests.

Here is some brief information on some of the more common Care Orders are:

Emergency Protection Order (E.P.O) - If you are living at home and the Local Authority has serious concerns for your safety then they can go to Court and ask for an Emergency Protection Order.

If the Court agrees you need to be protected they can make an Order which lasts up to 8 days. During this time the Local Authority will provide a safe place for you to live, such as with foster carers or in a Children's Home. Sometimes they may allow you to live with a safe family member.

After 8 days there will be another Court hearing to decide whether you can return home or whether you still need to be looked after.

Interim Care Order (I.C.O) - An Interim Care Order is made by the Court when a Social Worker has applied for a Care Order. However, because everyone involved is not ready for the full case to be heard an Interim Care Order is made. You will still be in care at this time.

When there is an Interim Care Order your Social Worker will need to find out as much information about you and your family as they can. When your Social Worker sees you, you should talk about what you want to see happen. You should also be given a Solicitor to represent your views.

There may be a number of Interim Care Orders made before the Court can make it's final decision. The first one can last up to 8 weeks. If the Court make further Interim Care Orders, each one can last no longer than 4 weeks.

Care Order (C.O) – Sometimes you may also hear this is also called a ‘Full Care Order’ or ‘Section 31’.

If you are on a Care Order this means that you are in the care of your Local Authority. They are responsible for making sure that you have somewhere to live which meets your needs and keeps you safe.

Your Local Authority must keep on caring for you until the Court Order stops. They should always ask you about your wishes and feelings before they make any decisions. They should also include your parents as much as possible and as long as it is in your best interests because they still have a right to say what they think is best for you.

A Care Order can give your Local Authority the right to make decisions about you but this does not include changing your name or religion.

A Care Order can last until you are 18 years old. However, your Local Authority will always try and work towards you returning to your home before this if it is safe to do so. If this is not possible they will try to find you a new family. If Adoption is a possibility then your Social Worker must talk with you fully about this and listen to what you want.

Ask your Social Worker if you have a Care Order and what this means for you.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parental Responsibility is the term used when describing the rights your parent(s) have to make decisions about your life. It also means the responsibilities they have to look after you properly.

When you are born your mum has parental responsibility for you. This means she has the right to decide where you should live, what medical treatment you should have, where you go to school, what religion you should have etc. She also has a duty to care and protect you as you grow up.

If your mum is married to your dad, then he also has parental responsibility for you and will share the decisions made about you.

If your mum and dad are not married then she may agree to share parental responsibilities with your dad. Or, your dad could go to Court and ask for a Court Order to give him parental responsibility.

When you are looked after by a Local Authority on a Care Order, they are also given parental responsibility for you. This means they can make decisions about your future. This responsibility is shared with your parents. It is your Local Authority who decide where you should live.

Your parents will still have a right to say what they want for you and should be involved as much as possible in the meeting that your Social Worker arranges.

So you see, a few people can share parental responsibility for you at the same time. Just because one person gets it, it doesn't mean another loses it.

Usually, the only way your parent(s) would completely and forever stop having parental responsibility for you is if you are adopted.

If you want to know more about parental responsibility ask your Social Worker.

HOW LONG WILL YOU HAVE TO STAY ?

Some families have problems which stop them from looking after their children.

This can be very upsetting and hard to understand. Some young people stay with Foster Carers for a short time. Sometimes this is longer because a lot of changes need to happen at home before you can go back to live there. You will be welcomed in a foster home for as long as you need.



Everyone will want you to go home to your family as soon as possible, but only if it is safe. Talk with your Social Worker and Foster Carers about this.

There are many young people going through the same thing as you. If you ever feel scared about what will happen to you in the future, tell your Social Worker and Foster Carer. They will do everything they can to help.

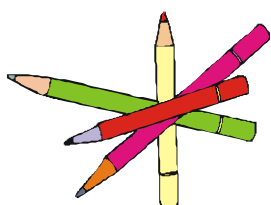
WHAT ABOUT SCHOOL?

The Law says that every child and young person between the ages of 5 and 16 should receive education appropriate to their age, ability and aptitude. However, you can choose to 'stay-on' at school until you are 19 years old. You can also go on to study at a University or Further Education College.

Your education is important therefore you will be expected to go to school. Sometimes, because you are living too far away from your old school, you may have to change schools. Please try not to worry about this. Your Social Worker and Foster Carer will help you with this.



Whilst you are being looked after, your Foster Carers should give you all the help they can with your education. This includes encouraging you to do your homework and speaking with you about what you are learning at school. This includes the subjects you like and don't like and finding out about the subjects you find difficult or hard to understand. They should also help you with your reading and writing and help you to join the local library.



When you go to school your Foster Carer will buy all the things you need such as school uniform, books, pens and pencils.

Your Foster Carer will take you to school. Depending on how old you are you may be able to make your own way to school or get a bus.

If you have any Special Educational Needs (sometimes called SEN) then your school, Social Worker and Foster Carers should give you any extra help and support you might need – such as :

- ❖ Making sure that your school has a special teacher who pays special attention to all the young people who are 'looked after'
- ❖ Make sure you have a Personal Education Plan (more about this in a minute!) which identifies all the support and services you may need
- ❖ Make sure that you have an appropriate school or educational place as soon as possible



If your first language is not English, but you would like to continue to learn the language which is spoken by your family, then you should talk to your Social Worker about trying to find someone outside of school who can teach you.

When your school holds 'Open Evenings' or other events for parents to go to, your Foster Carers should attend. If it is possible for your parents to attend then arrangements should be made.

All young people that are being looked after will have to have a Personal Education Plan. This is often called a "PEP".

PEP is a record of how you are getting on in school and helps you and your teacher to set targets for you. This is to make sure you get a good education.

Having a PEP means that teachers and Social Workers can help you deal with the changes that are happening around you during your time in care.

When you are 16 years old you have the right to see what is written about you on your education files. You should talk with your teacher, Foster Carer and Social Worker if you want to know more about this.

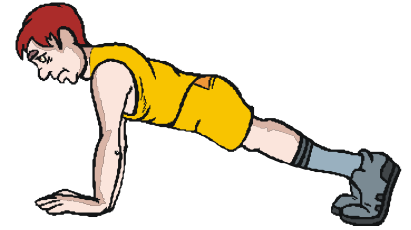
It is important for you to go to school and receive a satisfactory education. You should always let your Foster Carers know if there is a problem at school, or you are unhappy. They will then talk with your Social Worker about trying to help you.

Remember, even with all the problems you may have, education is still important and you can still achieve a lot.

HEALTH

Whilst you are being looked after it is important to make sure that you are fit and healthy.

It may be that you have missed out seeing the Doctor, Dentist or the school nurse.



When you come into care you will have a "Health Assessment".

This is nothing to worry about. A doctor will meet you, measure your height, weight and heart rate.

This is to make sure that you are healthy and that you get all the medication or treatment that you may need.

You will have a Health Assessment every year. There is no need to be scared about this. This won't hurt and it will not take long. It is a good chance to ask the doctor any questions you may have about your health.

You will also be helped to see the dentist regularly and have your eyes tested.

Remember everyone just wants to make sure you are fit and well.



LEAVING CARE

Most young people leave care when they are 18 years old but support can continue if you are in Further Education at college or University.

Sometimes it may be possible for young people to leave care when they are 16 or 17 years old. However, in most cases this will be within a 'supportive' environment, such as with 'Supporting Carers'.

As you get older, your Foster Carers will encourage you to do practical tasks for yourself. This is to help you when the time comes to leave care.

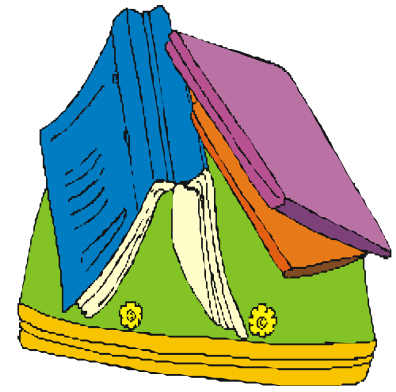
Your Social Worker should start to talk with you about what will happen when you leave care when you are 15 years old. Things to be considered are:

- ❖ What independent skills do you have and what do you still need to learn?
- ❖ Do you want to stay on at school or go on to Further Education?
- ❖ Do you want to live independently or in a supportive environment? If you want to live independently is this in a bed-sit or flat
- ❖ How will you pay for the rent – How much can you afford?
- ❖ Do you have a Connexions advisor who can help you think about what you want to do for a job?
- ❖ Can you return to live with your family?

Plans will start to be made. By the time you are 16 years and 3 months old a Pathway Plan should have been written for you. This does not mean you have to leave care then, as ideally you will stay until you are 18

RECORD KEEPING

As part of our work we have to keep files of information on Foster Carers, people who work for us and you. The main reason we have to keep a file on you is so that we can provide the best possible care and help you whilst you are staying with one of our Foster Carers.



Keeping records on you in this way helps others (for example your Social Worker and Ofsted) to check that you are being treated well and fairly.

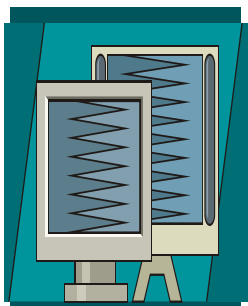
It is also necessary, during the course of your stay with them, for your Foster Carers to keep records on you as well.

Some examples of the different types of records that are kept are :

- ❖ Names, addresses and telephone numbers
- ❖ Day-to-day case notes
- ❖ A copy of your Care Plan
- ❖ Details about your Reviews
- ❖ Details about any illness or accidents you may have
- ❖ Details about incidents whereby you go missing (absent without permission or absconding) or if there is involvement with the Police
- ❖ Details about your education
- ❖ Your Health Records and Assessments



The records that are kept may be stored in either a paper file or on a computer. You can be assured that they will be kept safe.



Naturally, you have a right to ask to see any records that are kept. We will always discuss this with your Social Worker. However, sometimes it may not be possible to show you some of the information that you may wish to see. Usually this is because the information may also be about someone else or it has been written by someone else such as your Social Worker in which case we will need to get their permission. It may also be the case where the information will cause you to become very upset. If this is the case it will be explained to you.

You may also ask that someone else, important to you, sees your records, for example your mum or dad. Again this will be discussed with your Social Worker.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM OR COMPLAINT

Everyone will try and make sure that you are treated well and fairly. If you feel things are wrong or if you have a problem, you have the right to know you will be listened to about what you need and what you want.

You may be unhappy about something that is happening to you when:

- ❖ You visit your own family
- ❖ You are at school
- ❖ You are somewhere else

If there is something that you are not happy about it is **very important** to tell someone. It is important that you speak to someone you can trust.



In many cases, because they are with you most of the time, the best person to talk to would be your Foster Carer. They will do their best for you. Often this will also include talking with your Social Worker as they have overall responsibility for you.

You could also talk to your:

- ❖ Social Worker yourself
- ❖ Your Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker (can you remember ... they are the people who help your Foster Carer and speak with your Social Worker)
- ❖ or your teacher.

Don't keep what is worrying you to yourself – it is not good for you.

What to Do If You Have a Complaint

Now and then we all have our "moans and groans".

"Moans and groans" might be about being told to go to bed at a certain time which you might think is too early or, not being allowed to stay up to watch a late night television programme.

A "complaint" is usually something more serious. For example:

You may feel that your Teacher is being unfair to you – they call you stupid and make you stand in the corner.

Sometimes it may be possible that we can sort things out ourselves but sometimes we need other people to help us.



What If You Are Unhappy With Something At Your Foster Home?

Sometimes you may be unhappy about something your Foster Carer or someone else in the home has done. If this is the case there are other people you can speak with about what is worrying you.

You can speak with your:

- ❖ Social Worker
- ❖ Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker
- ❖ Anyone else at Ethelbert Fostering Services (everyone – Supervising Social Workers, Office Staff, Contact Supervisors, drivers etc. who works for Ethelbert Fostering Services understands about fostering and that sometimes you may not be happy about something or have a problem. They will listen to you and get the right help for you),
- ❖ Your teacher or
- ❖ You can also speak with me (Debi Atkin). I am the Manager here and my job is to make sure you are looked after well. And
- ❖ If you don't want to speak with me you can speak with Leslie Davenport. He helps me to make sure you are also looked after well.

It doesn't matter if you have a "moan or groan" or a "complaint". No one will think that you want to make trouble for your Teacher, Foster Carers or anyone else who has made you unhappy - it is all about having your voice heard and everyone trying to sort out the problem quickly.

it is important for you to know that we will try and make sure that you are treated well and fairly.

Someone Else To Help

We know that it is sometimes hard for you to talk with your Social Worker, or your Foster Carer or their Supervising Social Worker and you may want to talk with another adult.

No one will be angry with you. They will just sort out another person for you to speak with.

Or you can call Childline. Childline is free and has nothing to do with your Social Worker or Foster Carer. You can call them at any time. Their phone number is at the back of this book with all the other important numbers.

There are other Agencies you can also telephone. Their numbers along with Child Line are at the back of this book.

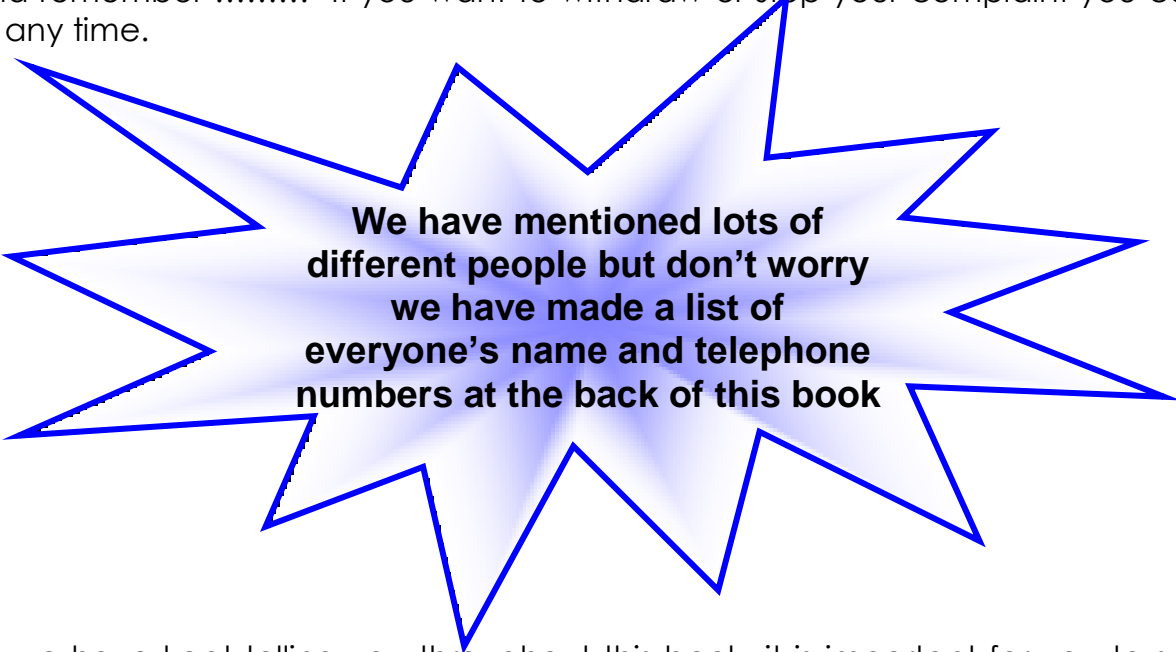
What If You Are Still Not Happy?

If after talking to these people you are still not happy or want to take your complaint further, write things down (help will be given to you if you want it). This will then be given to an 'Independent Person' who will visit you to talk about your complaint and advise you of the two ways that it may be dealt with. These will be :

- 1 *Using the system set out by your own Local Authority*
- 2 *Taking your complaint straight to Leslie Davenport who is the 'Big Boss' of Ethelbert Children's Services. His telephone number is at the back of this book.*

Never feel you won't be listened to or have to suffer in silence. In most cases complaints and problems are sorted out quickly and easily. It is helpful if you can talk about your problems and complaints before they become too BIG.

And remember If you want to withdraw or stop your complaint you can do this at any time.



We have mentioned lots of different people but don't worry we have made a list of everyone's name and telephone numbers at the back of this book

As we have kept telling you throughout this book, it is important for you to speak with someone you can trust if there is something worrying you or if there is something you are not happy about.

We are all here to help you and we will do our very best to do that.

To help you settle in there are some pages next for you to fill in with your Foster Carers.

There is also a page with the names of all the different people we have told you about and their telephone number.

Whether this is your first time 'in care' or you have been 'looked after' before, we hope that no matter how long you stay with us, it will be a happy and positive experience.

Thank you for reading this book.

All about Me

(Fill this in with your Foster Carer)

My Name is

I like to be called

I was born on

My family are

.....

.....

.....

Things I like to eat are

.....

.....

Things I don't like to eat are

.....

.....

Things I like to drink are

If I have a packed lunch for school I like

.....

My favourite TV programme is

Things I like to do

.....

.....

Sometimes these things worry me

.....

This is what I usually do at home

.....

Some Things I might need to Know

What time do I have to go to bed at night?

Can I keep a light on at night

What happens if I don't feel well at night?

.....

What time do I have to get up in the morning?

Do I need to ask if I want a drink or can I help myself?

Do I have to ask for snacks and treats such as:

Yes ✓

No X

- ❖ Fruit
- ❖ Biscuits
- ❖ Crisps
- ❖ Sweets

What other things can I have ?

How much pocket money do I get?

Who buys me clothes?

Can I watch TV when I want to?

Can I use the phone when I want to?

Can people phone me?

Can you think of anything else you want to know?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Important Things for Me to Know

The name of my Foster Carers

Other people in my foster home

.....

.....

The name of my Social Worker

The address of my Social Worker

.....

The name of my Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker

The Address of Ethelbert Fostering
Services

.....

The date I came to Ethelbert Fostering Services

The reason I am living here now

.....

.....

Who was looking after me before I moved here?

.....

The name of my new school is

The name of my Doctor is

The name of my Dentist is

Contact with my family is

.....

Name and Telephone Numbers That I May Need

Person	Name	Telephone Number
Foster Carers		
Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker the person who helps my Foster Carer		01843 229522 You can ring any time
Social Worker The person who is responsible for me whilst I am in care		
Registered Manager of Ethelbert Fostering Services The person whose job it is to make sure I am looked after well while I am with my Foster Carers	Debi Atkin	01843 229522 or 0208 2281305 You can ring any time
'Big Boss' of Ethelbert Children's Services The person I can call if I don't want to speak with my Foster Carer or their Supervising Social Worker or anyone else at Ethelbert Fostering Services	Leslie Davenport	01843 823762
The people who make sure everyone is doing their job right and looking after me whilst I am in Care	Ofsted	08456 404040
People I can call if I feel I have no one else to talk to	Child Line	0800 1111 You can ring any time
	Voice (used to be called the Voice of the Child In Care)	0808 800 5792
	NSPCC	0808 800 5000

WORD SEARCH

S	O	C	I	A	L	W	O	R	K	E	R	P	L	A
O	Y	U	N	G	P	E	O	E	L	E	E	O	O	L
C	U	L	D	A	M	I	L	V	H	E	A	L	T	H
I	D	T	E	C	A	H	R	I	R	E	V	I	M	W
P	O	U	I	N	D	E	P	E	N	D	E	N	C	E
O	O	E	S	O	C	A	L	W	I	E	I	W	L	O
C	A	R	E	P	L	A	N	S	V	A	W	F	O	O
K	A	R	D	O	O	L	O	C	S	L	E	A	T	H
E	D	U	U	C	A	T	C	U	O	L	O	M	H	P
T	O	S	C	H	O	O	L	L	C	O	O	I	I	L
M	E	D	A	C	A	T	O	T	I	W	O	L	N	E
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N	F	R	I	E	N	D	S	R	K	N	K	E	R	D
E	T	S	O	F	O	S	T	E	R	C	A	R	E	R
Y	O	U	N	G	P	E	O	P	L	E	C	F	O	S

- Care Plans
- Clothing / Allowance
- Culture
- Education
- Health
- Family
- Foster Carer
- Friends
- Independence
- Me
- Pocket Money
- Reviews
- School
- Social Worker
- Young People

