

# A GUIDE TO FOSTER CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Age 11 years and Above



**Silver Lining Fostering Agency**  
*NURTURING DREAMS...*

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## WHAT IS FOSTERING?

If you are new into foster care you may be feeling confused and unsure of what is happening to you. Fostering is a way of providing a stable family life for children and young people who are unable to live with their own families or other relatives.

### THERE ARE 3 MAIN TYPES OF FOSTER PLACEMENTS WITH SILVER LINING:

- ❖ **EMERGENCY/RESPITE** This is for a very short time maybe a few days or weeks, this is usually for children who need to take some time out from their home. Social services will find them a family who they can stay with for a short time.
- ❖ **LONG – TERM OR PERMANENCY** This is when a child or young person is placed with a foster family for a long time, usually for a number of years or until they have grown up and reached independence.
- ❖ **SHORT – TERM FOSTERING** This is when a child or young person is in care for a short-term period, this can be for a few weeks or sometimes longer.

## **YOUR SOCIAL WORKER:**

You will have your own social worker who works for the local authority. This social worker oversees your care and welfare. You should get to know your social worker so they can support you through your time in foster care, tell them what you want or do not want, what you like and what you want to happen.

## **YOUR REVIEWS**

You should try to attend your review meetings; the meeting is all about YOU.

At your review there will be an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). They will speak to you and take your views and feelings into account. Be open and honest – that way everyone will know exactly what you want to happen.

## **YOUR INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER:**

### **Who is an independent reviewing officer?**

An independent reviewing officer (also known as an IRO) whose main job is to make sure that your care plan meets your needs.

They will do this by first, chairing your review, second, by letting you have your own say in your review and third, by following up to make sure that people actually do what they agreed to do.

These are your reviews, and it is very important that you make sure that the IRO knows how you feel and what you would want to happen.

The IRO also has a job to make sure that the local authority knows when it is not doing well enough as a “corporate parent” for children in its care. But, because sometimes good practice is not always easy to spot, IROs will also tell local authorities about where things are going particularly well for children.

## **TEN important things to know about IROs**

01. If you are in care (or “looked after”) the local authority must appoint an IRO for you
02. Your IRO chairs your case reviews.
03. If you have brothers and/or sisters in care they too will have the same IRO as you do.
04. You should know who your IRO is and how to make contact with him/her.
05. You should keep the same IRO for the whole time that you are in care.
06. If you are a parent yourself of a child who is also in care, you both will have the same IRO but in some situations will have a different IRO.
07. You should be given written information explaining the role of the IRO, and telling you what you can do if things decided at your review are not carried out.
08. If your IRO leaves (perhaps to go to another job or retire) they must introduce you to your new IRO.
09. Apart from your first week in care, you should never be without an IRO.

## **How to contact an IRO?**

Your social worker or the Agency’s supervising social worker can provide this information to you. You can also take your IRO’s contact details when you meet him/her at your first review

## **SILVER LINING FOSTERING**

Silver Lining Fostering Agency (SLF) is a young and dynamic fostering agency. The SLF is managed by experienced, qualified professionals who provide an innovative and needs led service to children and young people in foster care.

SLF understands that every child and young person is different and we do our best to find the right family for you. This process is called ‘matching’.

Your foster carers are supported by SLF experienced and qualified staff; who are called supervising social workers. Supervising social workers will support your foster carer and they will also work closely with your social worker.

You can ask your foster carer, supervising social worker and your social worker any questions that you want, they are there to help you.

**We as an agency work very hard to ensure that the young people in our care:**

- **Receive full support**
- **Feel happy**
- **Needs are met and exceeded**
- **Feel positive**
- **Achieve independence and**
- **Develop their education and future**

**YOUR VIEWS AND WISHES ARE OUR PRIORITY, PLEASE CONTACT US  
ON DETAILS BELOW SHOULD YOU WISH TO SHARE YOUR VIEWS:**

**Silver Lining Fostering Agency  
The Vista Centre, 50 Salisbury Road, TW4 6JQ  
Telephone – 07405234222  
Email – [info@silverliningfostering.co.uk](mailto:info@silverliningfostering.co.uk)**

# **YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS**

## **YOUR FAMILY**

- ❖ Your social worker will ensure that your family or anyone important to you know how you are and that you are safe.
- ❖ You may have contact with members of your family, it is important to remember that this has been arranged by your social worker and you should tell them how you feel about the contact you have.
- ❖ Your Foster Carers should support you in attending contact, you should discuss your feelings and emotions with them so they can continue to offer you their support and make sure that your social worker is aware of how you are feeling.
- ❖ Depending on your age and situation you may be able to choose who and when you can have contact. Discuss this with your Foster Carers and Social Worker so everyone is aware of what is happening, where you are and who you are with.

## **YOUR FRIENDS:**

- Can I see my friends? Yes – just because you are in Foster Care does not mean that your friendships have to suffer. You may find that your friends are a good support to you.
- Can my friends stay over and can I stay over at their houses? This depends on when and where, you should discuss this with your foster carer and social worker to ensure that it is an appropriate time (not a school night etc).
- Am I allowed out? Of course, as long as your foster carer knows and agrees to this, where you are, what you are doing and with whom. It is the foster carer's job to keep you safe so there will be lots of reasons, why you will be asked to stay at home.
- Try to work with your foster carers, tell them who your friends are and what you like doing when you are out on your own. Try to keep to agreed times to come home and communicate.

## **YOUR FOSTER CARERS:**

Moving In Your foster carers will welcome you into your new home, you should feel safe. They will understand that you may need some space or time on your own to settle in and they will be supportive of this. Remember that it will be important for them to know that you are happy in their home and that they are providing you with the things that you need and like. Something's will take time to get used to and everyone will have to change a small part of their own routine, it is about working together and talking things through.

Your bedroom Your bedroom should be warm and welcoming, it should have space for you to store your clothes and other personal belongings. Remember Although this is your space you should still take care of it. Keep it clean and tidy and take Silver Lining in having a nice place to relax.

House Rules We encourage our Foster Carers to have some house rules for everyone in the home. These will be things like, what time you return home, knocking on doors, speaking to each other respectfully etc. Your foster carers will discuss these with you and you can express your views and feelings. Everything should be open to discussion but you should respect your foster family's views as they will respect yours.

What if I am not happy with something? If there is something which you are not happy about and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with your carer you can speak to your social worker or the Silver Lining Social Worker. Silver Lining will ask you to complete feedback forms from time to time – be honest, we will keep them confidential and we WILL read them and take action where needed.

## **YOUR RIGHTS**

The foster carer charter states that children in foster care deserve to experience as full a family life as possible as part of a loving foster family. It also states that children and young people should be given support to develop their own identities and aspirations, fulfill their potential, and be listened to.

- ❖ You have the right to be listened to.
- ❖ You have the right to voice your opinions - attend your reviews this is the best place to make sure you get heard.
- ❖ You have the right to be kept safe
- ❖ You have the right to receive pocket money and a clothing allowance.
- ❖ You have the right to know why you are in care.

**Check out the Children's Commissioner's website for more information:**  
[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

## **SCHOOL**

We must make sure that all children and young people have a school/college place. If you do not have one then your social worker and foster carers will be working hard to find a place in a school for you.

Education is important and moving into foster care can be disruptive for you but you must try to maintain a strong attitude towards your education.

Your teacher will know that you are looked after and you can speak to them also about any issues or things which are upsetting you. A teacher or a member of staff from your school may also attend your review.

You should get as much help as possible to help you achieve your long term plans, this may be to study at college or university or an apprenticeship, whatever your plans are if you do not feel supported then make sure you raise your concerns. Aim high and stay motivated!

## **HEALTH:**

You may be asked to see a doctor when you are placed with your foster family, this is to make sure that you are healthy. This is called a Health Assessment and you will be asked to have this once a year. Your foster carers have to register you with a GP, Optician and Dentist, you may have lots of appointments to attend when you move to your new foster home, it will benefit you to ensure that you are healthy and being well cared for.

## **EAT WELL:**

Your Foster carers will provide you with a healthy and balanced diet. There may be some foods you have not eaten before – TRY THEM, you may like them. There are lots of benefits of eating healthy, you stay in shape, sleep better and have more energy.

## **EXERCISE**

Exercise is very important and your foster carers will encourage you to exercise. This could be by joining a club, gym or group (like football, swimming or karate), or by walking to school, having a kick around in the park or riding your bike. Try to find an activity you can do after school – playing computer games does not count!

## **COMPLAINTS:**

If you are upset or feel that something is not right for you, you can talk to Silver Lining Fostering. It is important for us to hear your concerns so we can address them and ensure that you are happy and supported in your foster family. You will not be blamed for making a complaint, you should always feel supported by the people caring for you and your feedback will help us to ensure that you receive the care you need and that we can improve our service for other children and young people. If you have a complaint or have any concerns, you can contact our Complaints Officer; Sania Khan- Registered Manager & Complaints Officer / Designated Safeguarding Officer by phone or in writing to:

**Silver Lining Fostering Agency**  
**The Vista Centre, 50 Salisbury Road, TW4 6JQ**  
**Telephone – 07405234222**  
**Email – [info@silverliningfostering.co.uk](mailto:info@silverliningfostering.co.uk)**

Any complaint or concern you make will be taken seriously, you will be listened to and the complaint or concern will be investigated appropriately

**There are other people who can help or who can help you to make a complaint if you need to.**

- ❖ Your Local Authority Social Worker
- ❖ Your teacher
- ❖ Your foster carer
- ❖ The Silver Lining Social Worker
- ❖ Ofsted

**Please see the next page for contact details**

## **USEFUL CONTACTS**

### **SILVER LINING FOSTERING AGENCY**

**The Vista Centre, 50 Salisbury Road, TW4 6JQ**

**Telephone – 07405234222**

**Email – [info@silverliningfostering.co.uk](mailto:info@silverliningfostering.co.uk)**

**The Office of the Children's Commissioner Sanctuary Buildings 20 Great Smith Street London, SW1P 3BT**

**Phone: 0800 528 0731**

**Email: [advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)**

**OFSTED PICCADILY GATE, STORE STREET MANCHESTER, M1 2WD**

**Phone: 0300 123 1231**

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

**NSPCC HELPLINE : 0808 800 5000**

**CHILDLINE : 0800 1111**

**VOICE FOR THE CHILD IN CARE : 0808 800 5792**

**Advice & Advocacy Service For Children (NYAS) : 0808 808 1001**

### **Useful websites**

**[www.thewhocarestrust.org](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org)**

**[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)**

**[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)**

## Young Person's Handbook Confirmation of Receipt

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read my Handbook

YES NO

Did you find the Handbook useful?

YES NO

Do you understand your rights and allowances?

YES NO

Do you Understand how to make a complaint if needed YES NO

Do you have any questions?

Please return this page to the Silver Lining Supervising Social Worker