

Your guide to foster care



HILLINGDON
LONDON

www.hillingdon.gov.uk

This is a guide for you

It will help you to understand what foster care is all about and what living with another family will be like.

There are many children like you who can't stay with their parents.

When this happens, it is our job to make sure you have the right foster carer to look after you.

This can be an upsetting and confusing time for you, please do ask about anything you are not sure about and remember there are no silly questions!



Picture by
Victoria

Your foster carer(s)

You will be living with foster carers.

They are people who are able to care for children who are not able to stay with their mum or dad.

My foster carer's name is

We can't tell you how long you will stay with your carer(s). For some children, this might be a little while; for others, it will be longer



About my foster family

Every foster family is different. Carers might be a couple or just one person. They could have children themselves or might even have a pet.

Are there any pets? What are their names?

What hobbies do my foster family have?

Are there any other children living in the home?

What are the important rules I need to know?

What will my foster family do for me?

Be friendly

Keep you safe

Look after you

Cook you nice food you like to eat

Help you see and speak with your family and friends

Be there if you are having any worries

**Take
you to
school and help
you with your
homework**

**Let
you keep the
light on in your
bedroom if you
are scared of
the dark**

**Make
sure you
have toys to
play with**

**Spend
time with you
having fun**



What about
money and my
stuff like my
toys, clothes
and things?



You can bring your own toys, clothes and other things with you to your new home. Your carers will make sure you have a safe place to put them or will look after anything special for you.

Your carers are given money from the fostering service to make sure you are well looked after. They will buy you new clothes and things when you need them and give you regular pocket money. They will also help you save up.



Social worker

Every child in foster care must have a social worker.

Your social worker makes sure you are safe and happy. You can talk with your social worker about anything you want.

My social worker's name is

My social worker's phone number is



Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)

There is another important person whose job is to check we are getting things right for you. They are the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

My IRO's name is



Will I see
my family?



Picture by
Joleen

We know that you may miss being with your family when you move into care. If you have brothers and sisters, they may come into care with you. Most children will continue to be in regular contact with their families if it is safe, unless there is a good reason this cannot happen.

You may be able to see your family, phone or write to them. Your social worker will talk to you about what is the best way for you to be in contact with different members of your family.



Picture by
Anthony

Fun things and holidays

You can keep doing the things you enjoy, like dancing, football, swimming and drawing, and you might find new hobbies too!

Your foster family will make sure you don't miss out on fun times, like going on holiday or day trips, either with them, your school, your family or friends!



What about my friends?

We know that your friends may be very special to you, so your carers will do all they can to help you to stay in touch with your friends and help you make new friends.



Do I get a say
in things?



Picture by
Tiffany

When you are in foster care, there are a lot of meetings to make sure we are getting it right for you.

You will be a part of these meetings and will be asked to share your views and feelings. If you don't want to go to a meeting, you can talk to your social worker.

Your social worker can then share what you want to say with the people at the meeting.



Placement Agreement Meeting

This happens at the start of each new foster placement to agree who is doing what whilst you are staying with your carer(s).



Looked After Child (LAC) Review Meeting

This meeting is where all the adults involved and you get together to check out how things are going and to make plans for the future.



Will I go to the
same school?



Most children will continue to go to the same school. Your teacher will know you are in care and will meet with your social worker and you to make a plan to help you do well at school.

There will be a regular meeting with you, your carer, your social worker and your school to discuss your education and how everyone can work together so you can do well. This is called a Personal Education Plan (PEP).



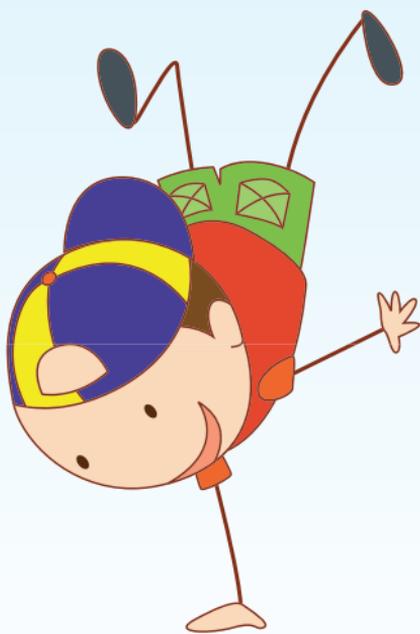
What about
my health?



Your health is really important. When you first come into care, you will see a doctor for a health check up.

Your carer(s) will help you to stay well and take you to the doctor, dentist and optician for regular checkups.

If you are worried about your health in any way, please talk to your carer(s), social worker, school nurse or teacher.



Care

The Write Kids group

If Care was a dance move
she would be swift and soft,

An aeroplane that will never land,

Or a police car that will chase all the
other cars out of the way.

If Care was a drink it would be sour apple
juice from Sainsbury's,

A Marvel superhero costume,
And a car that would go over the speed limit.

In her spare time Care likes to cook dinner
but also to worry and get worked up.

She will come on a horse ride with me.

Care likes to dress up.

Care is a blanket –
a charcoal blanket covering the sky.

If you were blindfold,
Care would feel strong like a table.

Care is like a koala bear –
always carrying her children.

Care smells of fish and chips.
And fear. But also of flowers.

If Care was weather
it would be a hurricane or a tornado.

Care is spaghetti bolognese...
delicious but messy.

Care is like rain
because it is cloudy and refreshing.

Care is helping people.

Care called me on the phone and said,
'Where are you?'

Care is a family.

'Let's go shopping,' she said.

Care is Dora the Explorer,
Going to new places you never expected to go.

What if I am unhappy?

If you have any concerns or worries, then we want to know. We hope you can tell your carer(s), social worker or another trusted adult like your teacher. If you are still worried or want to talk to someone else, you can contact the following people.

Children's Rights Service

The workers in this service work with looked after children like yourself – either in groups or individually – supporting you to get your voices heard in decisions that affect you.

 01895 277182

 childrensrights@hillington.gov.uk

NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service)

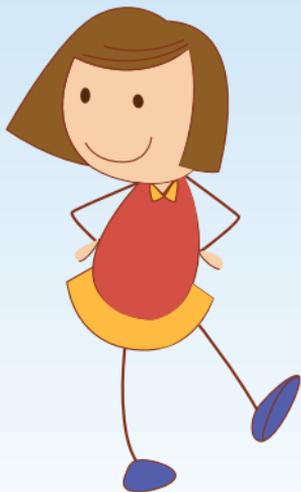
These workers are independent from Hillingdon and their role is to support you when you are unhappy about the way you are being treated and to make sure adults hear your concerns and act upon them.

 0808 808 1001

 help@nyas.net

 www.nyas.net

They won't tell anyone else what you say unless you agree or they are worried about you being at risk.

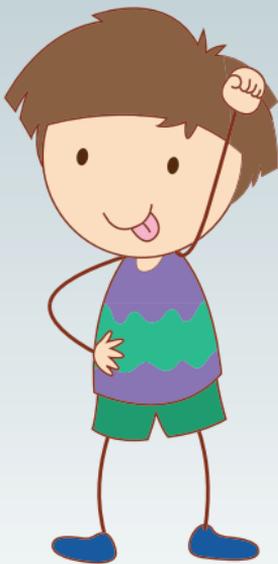


Making a complaint

If you are unhappy about something and feel it is not being sorted out, you can make a complaint by getting in touch with Hillingdon's Complaints Officer.

 01895 277800

 complaintsmailbox@hillingdon.gov.uk



Other useful contacts

Childline

If you want to talk to someone at any time about something that is frightening or worrying you.

 0800 1111 (free)

Children's Rights Commissioner

Contact us for advice or help.

 0800 528 0731 (free)

 [advice.team@childrens
commissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Voice

A national charity that speaks up for you and other children and supports you in improving your life.

 0808 800 5792

 info@voiceyp.org

 www.voiceyp.org/young-peoples-zone

Ofsted

Ofsted's main job is to inspect and to make sure social workers, their managers and the fostering service are all working together to make sure we are getting it right for children and young people and keeping you safe.

 0300 123 1231

 www.ofsted.gov.uk

This welcome pack was brought to you by Talkers

Talkers is our children in care council. It's a place for 7-13 year olds to meet other young people in care, share experiences, get advice and make new friends.

If you want to join Talkers, please contact Hillingdon's Children's Rights Service.

 childrensrights@hillingdon.gov.uk

 01895 277182

