



Children's Guide 11-18 years old



An information guide for children and
young people aged between 11 and 18

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About Impact Fostering

Impact Fostering has staff that have worked within the field of Fostering for several years to provide secure and nurturing homes for children and young people unable to live in their own homes. Based in Birmingham, West Midlands, Impact Fostering recognises the unique needs of each child and strives to find the perfect family through a process known as '**matching**.'

Impact Fostering experienced and qualified staff, known as Fostering Social Workers, offer crucial support to your Foster Carers. These professionals collaborate closely with your Social Worker to ensure comprehensive assistance. Feel free to ask questions of your Foster Carer, Fostering Social Worker, or Social Worker— they are all here to assist you.

The purpose of Impact Fostering is to deliver quality services for children and foster carers in England. Foster Carers have a significant impact on the lives of the children they care for. Impact Fostering has a commitment to providing fostering families with a high-level of support and guidance to ensure the best outcomes for children and to help foster carers be the difference.

Our values at Impact Fostering are being:

I INCLUSIVE
M MEANINGFUL
P PROFESSIONAL
A ASPIRATIONAL
C CHILD FOCUSED
T TOGETHER



Social Workers

Your **Social Worker** from the Local Authority that you live in is there to support you and work with you. They are responsible in ensuring your needs are being met the best they can be and that you are kept safe.

The **Fostering Social Worker** is from Impact Fostering and their role is to support Foster Carers by giving them guidance and support.

Combined efforts are made by everyone to attain the best outcomes for you, ensuring you receive the highest quality care possible.



Care Plan and Review Meetings

Your Social Worker and the Local Authority they work for are responsible for your well-being. They must record their actions to assist you. They outline how they'll support your health, education, hobbies, and help maintain connections with family and friends in a document known as a **Care Plan**. Periodically, your Care Plan undergoes a review, often termed a statutory review, or looked after child review. Both the care plan and the review revolve around your needs, making it crucial for you to express your perspective and pose any necessary questions.



Contact

Social workers often use the term **contact** which refers to staying connected with members of your family. The Children Act of 1989 underscores the significance of maintaining contact, encouraging all contact plans to eventually lead to a return home if it's deemed suitable and secure. It can be positive to interact with individuals who are familiar with you and hold importance in your life.

Contact extends beyond family members and may include important figures outside your family, such as teachers or school friends. It's crucial for you to sustain these connections within your community. Your Social Worker is responsible for planning contact; discuss with them and your Foster Carer the special people you want to see and talk to. Let them know if there are individuals you prefer not to see, providing reasons for your choices.

In some instances, a Local Authority may decide that contact isn't in the child's best interests due to potential risks to their well-being. To cease contact, the Local Authority must apply for a Contact Order or an Emergency Protection Order.

Various types of contact exist, including face-to-face visits, overnight stays, outings or events, telephone calls, and the exchange of photos, videos, emails, or letters. If circumstances make it challenging to have contact with family members, such as being an unaccompanied minor, consult with your Social Worker, who may collaborate with relevant support agencies to trace family members.



Being Involved

Your feedback is incredibly valuable to us! We genuinely want to hear about your thoughts, experiences, and suggestions. Your input helps shape the services and support we provide, ensuring that they meet your unique needs. Whether it's sharing your opinions during statutory meetings, engaging in discussions with your Social Worker or Fostering Social Workers, or participating in special forums and events designed for young individuals like yourself, **your voice matters**.

Your insights can contribute to positive changes and improvements, making a meaningful impact on the way we deliver care and support. We encourage you to seize every opportunity to share your perspective and remember that your feedback plays a crucial role in creating an environment where you can thrive and achieve your aspirations.

Let Your Voice Be Heard! Impact Fostering is eager to hear about your own dreams and aspirations! Whether you excel in cycling and aspire to represent your country in national competitions or possess awesome gaming skills, share with us the best ways we can support you in achieving your dreams and goals. Don't hesitate to email your dreams and aspirations to info@impactfostering.co.uk



Hobbies and Holidays



Foster carers from Impact Fostering are wholeheartedly dedicated to motivating and assisting you in exploring various recreational activities both at home and beyond. If you have specific interests or hobbies such as football, swimming, dancing, photography, socialising with friends, or enjoying cinema outings, rest assured that these pursuits will be actively encouraged. If you're eager to delve into new activities, just express your preferences to your Foster Carer, and they will make every effort to provide the support you need.

Opportunities for holidays, weekends, or day trips, whether with your family, friends, or carers, will be discussed jointly involving you, your family, carers, and Social Worker.



Sleepovers

Children and young individuals of various ages receive invitations for overnight stays at friends' homes, commonly known as 'sleepovers.' An overnight stay involves being away from your fostering home for 24 hours or more, and ensuring your safety during such occasions is a responsibility of children's services. If you wish to participate in a sleepover:

- Inform your Foster Carer, providing details about your friend, as they may need to communicate with the friend's parents which is a standard procedure to make sure you are safe.
- Your Social Worker should be aware of your whereabouts and assess the safety of the friend's family before any sleepover takes place.
- The decision regarding an overnight stay rests with your Social Worker, who will like to involve you and your Foster Carer in the discussion process.

If sleepovers are likely to occur, consider discussing the matter during your Placement Planning Meeting to support any necessary arrangements.



Bedrooms and Belongings

While living with your foster carer's, efforts will be made to provide you with your own bedroom, if we are able to. This space is designated for your use, offering a quiet retreat for relaxation or work. It serves as your personal area where you can store all your belongings. Should you possess valuable items like jewellery or other sentimental items, it's crucial to inform your foster carer so that appropriate measures can be taken to ensure their safety. Although your foster carers may occasionally need to access your room, they will consistently adhere to the practice of knocking first. It's essential to respect others' privacy and refrain from entering someone else's room without obtaining permission.



Household Rules and Consequences

Every family home comes with its own set of rules, which may differ from what you're accustomed to. The reason for this is that your Foster Carers have committed to ensuring your safety. These rules are in place to facilitate the smooth functioning of the family home, allowing you to stay secure while receiving the necessary rest and nourishment for your physical and healthy development.



The presence of rules doesn't indicate that your Foster Carers discourage fun; on the contrary, they want you to enjoy yourself while prioritising your safety. Should you happen to violate any of these rules, your Foster Carers may find it necessary to implement consequences such as grounding, verbal reprimands, the suspension of leisure activities, or additional household responsibilities.

Pocket Money

During your time in foster care, you have the right to receive weekly pocket money. The specific amount will be determined and agreed upon during your placement agreement meeting, involving discussions among you, your Foster Carer, and your Social Worker.

You also have the right to receive a clothing allowance. Feel free to talk to your Foster Carer, and together, you can decide on the best way to spend this.



Education and Health

Education:



Impact Fostering places a high value on education and believes in providing full support to children and young people in foster care to help them achieve their educational potential. Attending school regularly is important, and if you have concerns or reasons for not wanting to attend, you can discuss them with your Foster Carer and Social Worker. All children and young people between the ages of 5 and 16 must be in education.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are designed to outline educational targets, your interests, strengths, and areas for improvement. If you have special needs, a statement will be prepared to address your educational future. Your Foster Carers will actively support your education, ensuring you have the necessary resources and a quiet study space. They will also participate in school meetings and communicate with your teacher. Many schools have a home-school agreement, and carers and parents are familiar with and support it as needed.

Looking ahead, if you wish to continue your education, explore options such as staying on at school (year 12 and 13 or sixth form colleges) or applying to university or college. Your Foster Carer, Social Worker, and school can assist you in considering these options and guide you through the application process. It is crucial to receive a good education for future career opportunities you will enjoy and to make a positive contribution to society.

Health:

It's crucial for you to understand how to maintain your health, including practices like consuming nutritious food, engaging in physical activities, and pursuing hobbies you enjoy. Your Foster Carer will ensure that you are registered with a doctor and dentist. During the Placement Planning meeting, a health record will be created to address your health needs adequately. Your Foster Carers will support and encourage you to take any necessary medication or treatment, such as wearing glasses or contact lenses.

To promote overall well-being—physically, mentally, and sexually—it's beneficial to seek advice, as appropriate, on topics like drugs, alcohol, smoking, and sex. The Health for Teens website has advice and support which you can access on: <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/>. If you require specific information, feel free to ask your Foster Carer or Social Worker.



Bullying and Online Safety

Individuals may engage in bullying behaviour for various reasons, such as:

- Lack of awareness that it's wrong.
- Imitating older siblings or admired family members.
- Coping with personal challenges and expressing aggressive feelings.
- Experiencing feelings of jealousy.
- Limited knowledge of alternative ways to interact with school friends.
- Encouragement from their own friends.

Bullying can happen in different forms, including:

- Verbal abuse, name-calling.
- Damaging property.
- Using threats and intimidation.
- Fabricating stories to cause trouble.
- Physical aggression like hitting, pinching, biting, pushing, and shoving.
- Taking personal belongings.

If you experience bullying, it's essential to speak to someone you trust, such as a teacher, Foster Carer, or Social Worker. This is important so something can be done about it as bullying is **NEVER** okay.

Online Safety:

Cyberbullying can take place online and involves bullying and harassment using various platforms such as email, social media, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, websites, and mobile phones. It's also known as electronic bullying, SMS bullying, mobile bullying, and internet bullying. Cyberbullying is harmful and unacceptable. Here are some ways to protect yourself:

- If you receive a hurtful email, it's advisable not to respond. If the issue persists, inform your Foster Carer; they may be able to contact the service provider. For serious or repetitive incidents, save and print the emails as evidence.
- Avoid disclosing personal information in chatrooms or through instant messengers. Ignore or log off in response to abusive messages.

- Always be mindful of your language and tone when communicating online.
- Refrain from replying to rude or nasty text or video messages. Mobile service providers usually have a reporting number for abusive messaging; check their website for details. Be cautious about sharing your number and secure your mobile.
- While using the internet for chatrooms and forums, exercise caution about whom you interact with and the information you disclose.

Remember, online strangers are still strangers, just like in real life. Be cautious about sharing personal details. Once you've sent a message or image, you lose control over its distribution. Anybody can do anything with it.

Only share your mobile number with trusted individuals and seek permission before posting others' pictures on the internet. When registering on websites, ensure they are reliable, reputable, and have a privacy policy outlining how your information will be used. If in doubt, consult your Foster Carer or Social Worker for guidance on the credibility of a site.



Child Protection and Safeguarding

At times, individuals may cause physical or emotional harm to children, which is always wrong. Child abuse is a serious issue, and child protection aims to prevent and stop such mistreatment.

Types of Child Abuse:

- **Physical Injury:** Involves physically harming a child through actions like beating, punching, or kicking.
- **Emotional Abuse:** Occurs when a parent or caregiver behaves in ways that significantly impact a child's emotional development, ranging from constant rejection to severe criticism. Witnessing domestic violence is considered a form of emotional abuse as well.
- **Neglect:** Involves the persistent absence of appropriate care, encompassing love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and medical attention.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Involves pressuring, forcing, or tricking a child or young person into engaging in sexual activities with an adult or peer. This can include various acts, such as kissing, touching genitals or breasts, intercourse, oral sex, and encouraging exposure to inappropriate material.

Child Protection Enquiry:

When someone, such as a school staff member, health visitor, or Social Services, receives information expressing concern about a child, it may trigger a child protection enquiry and subsequent investigation. Social Services bear the responsibility of conducting investigations.

Child Protection Conference:

To ensure children's safety, social workers organise a child protection conference if there are concerns. This meeting shapes a child protection plan, involving contributions from parents, teachers, social workers, and others involved in the child's care. Depending on circumstances, the child may have the opportunity to participate in the conference, a matter they can discuss with their Social Worker.

Children's services are dedicated to safeguarding children and young people from harm. The law clearly declares child abuse as wrong, and the collective aim is to enforce measures that ensure the well-being and safety of every child.

Independent Skills

Embarking on the journey toward independence can be both thrilling and demanding. It's crucial to seek the advice and support you require from your Foster Carer and Social Worker during this significant phase. Decision-making about staying in school, applying for jobs, or enrolling in training courses may become crucial.

Your Foster Carer will work with you to nurture skills in various areas, including:

- Financial management, involving setting up bank accounts and handling bills.
- Developing healthy eating habits, navigating food shopping, and mastering cooking skills.
- Personal health awareness, encompassing first aid, illness prevention, and food preparation.
- Exploring housing options, engaging in do-it-yourself projects, and planning and preparation.
- Pursuing educational opportunities, training programs, and work prospects.

Feel free to discuss any specific needs you may have with your Foster Carer or Social Worker. Should questions arise, don't hesitate to seek guidance.

For further information and support visit the [Government's Website](#) about leaving care or [Coram Child Law Advice](#)



How to make a Complaint

All children under care have the right to say if something's not right. If you're not happy with something, you can tell Impact Fostering by calling, writing, or talking to them. Ask your Foster Carer or their Fostering Social Worker for more information about this. They will come out to visit your Foster Carer's every 4 to 6 weeks. However, you can ask to speak to them earlier by letting your Foster Carer know you want to contact them.

Councils have a way to handle complaints too. Check with your Social Worker about this and get the contact details. And don't forget to talk openly to the Independent Reviewing Officer.



Useful Contacts:

My Social Worker	My Foster Carers	Fostering Social Worker	Independent Reviewing Officer
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Contact Number:	Contact Number:	Contact Number:	Contact Number:

Commissioner for England:

There is a commissioner for children in England and her name is Rachel de Souza, and she works to 'promote awareness of the views and interests of children'. Details for her are below:



Address: 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT
Phone: 0207 783 8330
Web: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk
Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk

Child Line:

This is the free 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. Child Line's counsellors are there to help and find ways to sort things out. Child Line is confidential – which means they won't tell anyone about your call unless you want them to talk to somebody for you, or you are in danger.

Phone: 0800 1111
Web: www.childline.org.uk



Ofsted:

An organisation called Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England. The details for Ofsted are:

Address: Piccadilly Gate, Store Street Manchester, M1 2WD
Phone: 0300 123 1231
Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

CoramVoice:

Confidential advice and advocacy for children and young people in care of leaving care. Details are:

Address: 49 Mecklenburgh Square, WC1N 2QA
Phone: 0808 800 5792
Web: www.voiceyp.org
Email: info@voiceyp.org

NSPCC:

If you need help or advice, or are concerned that you or another child may be at risk. The helpline is open 24 hours a day.



Phone: 0808 800 5000
Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

If you need to Impact Fostering, then our details are:

**Address: Impact Fostering
St Paul's Centre
405B Belchers Lane
Birmingham, B9 5SA**

Phone: 0800 001 6166

