



# Following Whispers Children's Guide to Living with Foster Carers Fostering

This belongs to:



This booklet will give you more information about what to expect when you live with a foster family.

## What are Foster Carers?

Following Whispers provides foster families to care for children who for many different reasons are not able to live with their own parents.

Going to live with a foster family can sometimes be called "going into care" or "being looked after".

All foster families are different. Some have one adult looking after you and some have two. They may have their own children or be looking after other children who are also fostered, just like you. You will all live together as one foster family.



## About My Foster Carers

**My Foster Carer's name(s) are:**

A foster carer's job is to make sure you feel happy, safe and cared for.

When you first start to live together this will feel a bit strange but once you get to know each other and get used to it will feel like your home too.

Your foster carer will let you know what the house rules are. This means they will tell you things like what time you will be going to bed, they will also find out what food you like and do not like to eat and what games you like playing. It is important you ask many questions about things you don't understand or

might have forgotten as it can be difficult to remember everything at once.



You will have:



Your own cosy bed



Food you like eating



Games to play.

Someone to help with your schoolwork



Someone to talk to and listen to you



- We are an independent fostering agency who are asked by your Local Authority to find you a foster family.
- We provide foster families who allow you to be stable, secure and continue with your life
- We carefully find foster families who are able to look after children within our agency.
- We support your foster carer to keep you safe, protected and nurtured
- We encourage you to have contact with your family
- We will listen to you and value your opinion
- We provide quality support and training to foster carers

so they can look after you really well.

- Staff at Following Whispers offer advice and support to foster carers 24 hours a day every day of the year so they can look after you

More details are available in our "Statement of Purpose". If you would like to see this, please ask anyone at Following Whispers or find it at...

[www.following-whispers.co.uk](http://www.following-whispers.co.uk)

### In your foster home you will have

- A bedroom either on your own or with your own brothers or sisters
- Your own cosy bed
- Space to put your things
- Toiletries such as shampoo, creams, soap, body lotion and wash kit
- Space to be able to meet your Social Worker or other important people in your life

## Rules

All families have certain rules to make sure you are kept safe, cared for and everyone in the family is happy. When you join the family, the foster carer will let you know what these basic rules are.

### **Foster carers will expect you to:**

- Show respect to everyone
- Attend school regularly
- Respect the property of others
- Share your views
- Stick to the rules the family live by

## Social Workers

### Your Social Worker

You will have your own Social Worker who will be from where you used to live.

Your Social Worker's name is.....

Your Social Worker's telephone number is.....

If you need to talk to your Social Worker, you can phone them by yourself, ask an adult to phone for you or you can ask an adult to help you make the phone call yourself.

### Your Foster Family's Supervising Social Worker

Your Supervising Social Worker is a person who works for Following Whispers and helps your foster family look after you by giving advice and support. They are also here to make sure that you are safe and happy.

You can talk to your Supervising Social Worker at any time during the day Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm.

Your Foster Family's Supervising Social Workers name is: .....

Your Foster Family's Supervising Social Worker's phone number is:.....

Your foster family's supervising social worker will meet with you every month to make sure you are ok and find out if there is anything we can do to help you.

They will attend all meetings about your placement and school. You can call the office to speak to them anytime you need to.

You can also call Paula Henderson (Managing Director) at any time if you need an adult to talk to.

Her number is **07966 005 731**



We also have an out of hours service (open Monday to Friday 5pm to 9am and 24 hours over the weekend) which you can call us on.

This service operates when the office is closed. The Out of Hours number is **01843 263461**.

# Meetings

There will be some meetings about your time as a looked after child. The main meetings are:

## Placement Planning Meeting

This is a meeting held within five working days of you moving into your foster home if it is an emergency move. If the move is planned, it may happen before you move. It will discuss how you will be cared for every day. You can be involved in this meeting and will have your chance to have your say either at the meeting or by telling your social worker what you would like to happen.

## Statutory reviews

These are meetings to agree a plan for your future. There will be plans to see if you can return home or if you need to stay with your foster family. If you are going to be looked after for a longer time, the meeting will be about how you are doing in your foster placement and what you would like to happen.

## Monthly Home Supervision

Your supervising social worker will meet with your foster carer every month. We talk about how you are getting on with your foster family and how they can become better foster carers for you.

## Your Feedback

We like to see you on your own every month. This is so we can talk to you and find out how you are getting on in your placement and if anything can be done to improve things for you.

## PEP

As a Child living with a foster family, you are entitled to a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP is to help you get the best possible education. Your PEP will show what you are doing well at school, and if you need extra help. Your PEP is also the chance for you to say what clubs and activities you would like to be involved in.

## Carers' annual review

All foster carers have an annual review; this is when Following Whispers looks at how well they have done their job looking after children over the past year. This gives us the chance to make sure they are doing a really good job of looking after children. Your supervising social worker will ask what you think, as it is really important to find out how well you think they have been doing looking after you.

## My Family

### Will I see my family again?

Living with a foster family does not usually mean that you won't see your family. As long as you will be safe, you will have 'family time' or 'contact' with your family. You may have family time with your parents and also with grandparents and your extended family and friends.

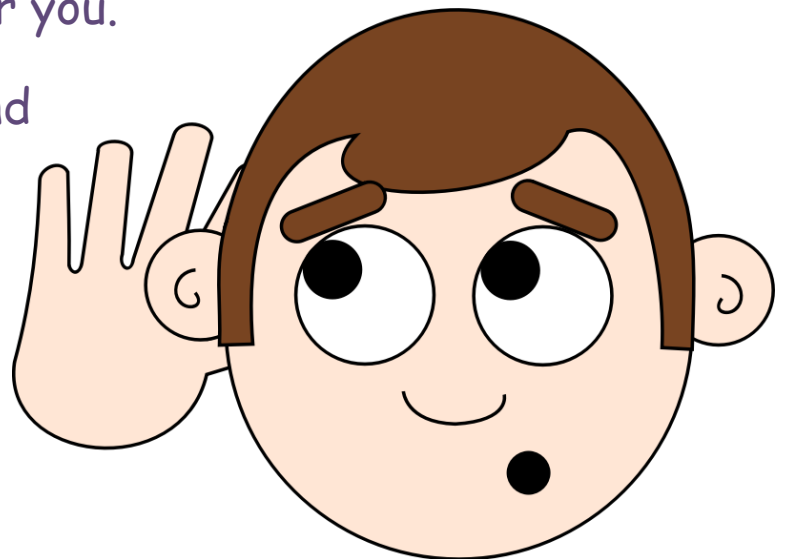
Phone calls, emails and letters are all different ways you may be able to keep in touch, and your foster family and social worker will help you do this.

It may not always be the best thing for you to visit your family or some people in your family, or you may not want to see certain people at all. Your social worker will talk with you about what is happening and will always listen to your wishes and feelings.

## Your Views

Following Whispers is here for you.

We listen to what you want and try our best to help you. **It is very important that you say what you think**, and we will listen to you.



Talk to your foster carer, social worker or supervising social worker about what you like, what you don't like and whether there is anything else that could be done to make things better for you.

It is important that you let us know what you're thinking because sometimes adults try to guess what young people want and we don't always guess right.

## Complaints and Representations



Sometimes we make mistakes or things go wrong. Our aim is to work with you to put things right and fix any problems.

There may be times when this does not work, and you are still unhappy. All children have the right to complain (tell someone you are unhappy) about our service.

If you make a complaint (tell someone you are unhappy), it will be investigated by people who work at Following Whispers. If your complaint is about a person who works for Following Whispers they will not be involved in the investigation.

# You will never be in trouble for making a complaint.

We will tell you what is happening and with permission you can be involved in sorting things out to make things better for you.

## How to Make a Complaint

- Speak to your Supervising Social Worker
  - ✓ Phone us - 01843 263 461
  - ✓ Email us - [admin@foster-care.org](mailto:admin@foster-care.org)
  - ✓ See us - Either at your Monthly Progress Meeting, attend a team meeting, drop in at the office or we can come to talk to you.
- The Supervising Social Worker will tell someone senior about your complaint, and we will tell you what is happening within 2 days.

- Your Supervising Social Worker will let you know how to access independent advocacy (someone to speak for you)
- If you do not want to speak to your supervising social worker, or the complaint is about them, you can contact Paula Henderson (Managing Director) your social worker, IRO, any of the numbers at the end of the section, or any of the numbers on your Contact Card who will do something to help you
- See the list of Useful Number at the End of This Section for Other People to Contact (not related to Following Whispers) if you Have a Concern or Complaint

**Your foster carer is not allowed to hurt you in any way and nor is anyone else. If you are worried about anything at all, please don't be afraid to speak up as there are lots of people who care about you and want to help.**

# Statement of Purpose and Participation Pledge

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12 states.

"Any child or young person has a right to express their views and have them given due weight in decisions affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity."

This means Following Whispers makes a big promise to



do whatever we can to listen to and do what you want and include you in deciding how you are

looked after.

This Participation Pledge means that Following Whispers promises to....

- Tell you what your rights of participation are, and if

you need help to understand them, provide you with someone who can explain what they mean. You will be given a booklet and a credit size card that has information and telephone contact details of who you can phone if you do not feel that you have been listened to.

- Make sure that everyone who works at Following Whispers understands that they must be proactive in engaging you in participation.
  - ✓ You will be invited to (with consent of your social worker) be part of one of the Following Whispers Team Meetings.
  - ✓ You will meet with a Following Whispers Supervising Social Worker each month to talk about how you are feeling, if you are happy or sad with your family, school or contact arrangements.

- Listen to your views, respect them and take them seriously.
- Not discriminate against you in any way and to treat you as an individual.
- Make sure that you have the opportunity to give your honest views and give you help to do so if you need it.
- Provide you with a safe, child friendly environment to have your say without fear of getting into trouble.
- Provide you with a variety of ways to have your say, including (but not limited to) face to face meetings held individually or in a group, telephone calls, emails and letters.

- Let you know about things happening at Following Whispers that affect you, how you can be involved in making decisions about them and then what changes will be made based on what you have said.
- Provide you with opportunities to have your say on things outside Following Whispers, like the future of children's rights.
- Give you prompt and honest feedback and let you know how your contribution will be used.
- Be honest with you about what can and cannot happen and make sure you understand why.

- Continue to strive to build meaningful participation into our values, structures and procedures. We would



like you to tell us if you feel we can improve what we do.

- Promote and champion your right to have your say and your views taken

seriously.

- Make sure that our Participation Policy is available to all young people and their Social Workers, Following Whispers families and staff, and that if you need help to understand it, we will provide you with someone to explain what it means.
- Make sure that every child and young person who lives with a Following Whispers foster family has a copy of this Participation Pledge.

## Useful numbers

Here are some numbers that may be helpful for you to have.

### Child Line

This is the free 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. You can call the Helpline on Tel: 0800 1111 (O2 network 116 111) about any problem, at any time, day or night. Child Line's counsellors are there to help you 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. Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

### Become Charity

This is the National Charity for Children in Care.

Website: [www.becomecharity.org.uk](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk) if you want to find out more about what they do.

Tel: 0800 023 2033

Email: [advice@becomecharity.org.uk](mailto:advice@becomecharity.org.uk)

### Coram Voice

This has lots of advice for children in care and provides help and support. They can take up your complaints too.

Tel: 0808 800 5792 (free to call)

Email: [info@coramvoice.org.uk](mailto:info@coramvoice.org.uk)

Website: [www.coramvoice.org.uk](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk)

## NSPCC National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

If you need help or advice, or are concerned that another child is being hurt, or is in danger you can call the NSPCC.

Tel: 0808 800 5000 (10.00 a.m.- 8.00 p.m. Monday to Friday)

Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Email: [help@NSPCC.org.uk](mailto:help@NSPCC.org.uk)

## Ofsted

An organisation called Ofsted checks the work of fostering agencies in England and Wales. If you are unhappy with the care you receive, you can contact them at

Piccadilly Gate, Store St, Manchester, M1 2WD.

Tel: 0300 123 4666 (Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm).

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

[whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

Website: [www.ofsted.co.uk](http://www.ofsted.co.uk)

## The Children's Commissioner for England

Dame Rachel de Souza promotes and protects the rights of children in England by listening to what children and young people say about what matters to them and making sure adults in charge take their views and interests into account.

Look at: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk) to find out more

Phone her office on 0800 528 0731

Email: [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

# My useful numbers

**My Social Worker's name:**

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**My Social Worker's Telephone Number:**

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**My Foster Carer's Name:**

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**My Foster Carer's Telephone Number:**

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**My Supervising Social Worker's Name:**

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**Following Whispers' Telephone Number: 01843 263461**

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**Paula Henderson's Telephone Number: 07966 005731**

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**My IRO's Name:**

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**My IRO's Telephone Number:**

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