PILGRIMS CORNER FOSTERING

Children & Young Persons Guide Over 11's



Reviewed Jan 2026

We at PCFS have been asked to find you somewhere to live, however 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.

If this is the first time you have lived with Foster Parents, 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 booklet 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.

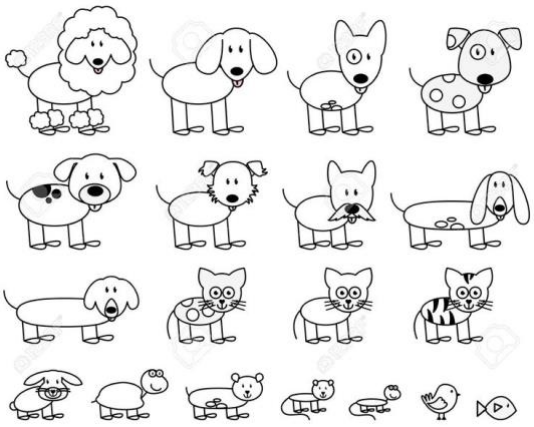
You might want to read this book on your own or you could ask an adult like your Foster Parent to go through it with you. If you do not understand anything, talk to your Foster Parent. They will help you and explain things to you.

<u>What is Foster Care?</u>

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".
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 Parents 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 Parents for all different reasons. It is ***not*** because you have done anything wrong.

Foster Parents are special people who have been carefully chosen to look after children and young people. All our Foster Parents 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.



Some Foster Parents 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 Parents also have pets.

<u>POCKET MONEY, CLOTHING AND OTHER THINGS!</u>

Pocket Money:

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



Your Foster Parents will give you your Pocket Money every week. You will be able to spend this on something of your choice.

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 Parents receive an allowance from which they can buy you clothes.

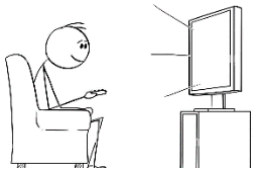
Like Pocket Money, the amount of Clothing Allowance depends on how old you are. The Clothing Allowance includes all sorts of things such as, underwear, every-day clothes, best clothes, shoes, school clothes and equipment etc.

Other Things:

Your Foster Parent also receives a weekly allowance to cover things such as toiletries, as well as sports and hobbies – for example: swimming, scouts, theatre workshops. Therefore, you won't have to give up doing the things you like to do.



The clubs and activities happening in your area will be discussed with you by your Foster Parents especially if you love something you have done before or really would like to try.



When you arrive, your Foster Parents 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 favorite games, hobbies – even what your favorite television programme is.

Your Foster Parent will explain how their family like to do things as often this may be a little different from your own family. But its important and helpful to find out what you like. To help you with this there are some pages at the back of this book for you to fill in with your Foster Parents. They are:

1. All about me (that's you!)

2. Things You Might Need To Know

3. Important Things to Know

<u>YOUR RIGHTS:</u>

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 Parent 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, and 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.***



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

- Talk with your Foster Parents if you are not happy about something.

- Always ask your Foster Parents 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

- Be kind to your Foster Parents 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.

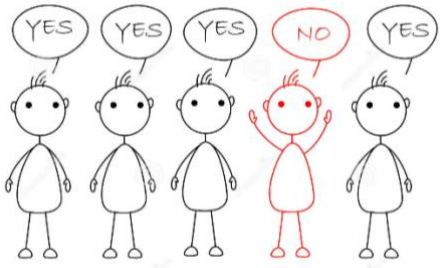
- Your Foster Family Safer Care plan will provide you with what is acceptable behaviours and consequences should these not be met.

Foster Parents 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 Parents 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 Parent 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 as 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 Parents. Sometimes they may take you out so you can have a longer talk with them.

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



If you want to see or speak with your Social Worker speak to your Foster Parent. Your Foster Parent 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 Parents have a worker from PCFS who visits them and makes sure you are being looked after well. This person is called a "Supervising Social Worker".



The name of your Foster Parent's Worker is: _____

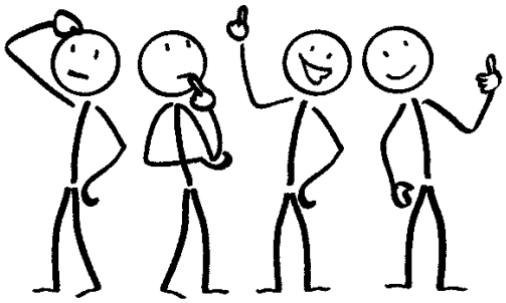
All Supervising Social Workers have had special training and they are also Social Workers. However, they don't replace your own Social Worker, but are there for you as well as your Social Worker.

The Supervising Social Worker will regularly see your Foster Parent. 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 Parent'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 Parent has done in the last year. This is called a "Foster Parents 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.

REVIEWS:

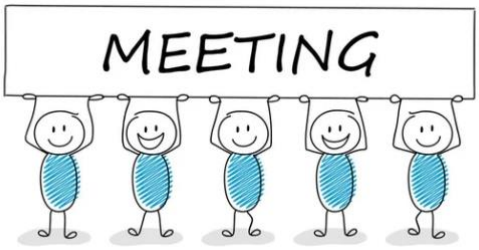
There will be regular meetings to check out how you are doing. These are called Review Meetings (or Child In Care review or Looked After Child review). Review Meetings are to find out:

- 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 Parents 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 Parent 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 Parent what you would like to say.



If you don't go to your Review, don't forget to ask your Foster Parent 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.

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".

HOW LONG WILL I 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 Parents 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 Parents 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 Parent. 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 18 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 Parent will help you with this.

Whilst you are being looked after, your Foster Parents 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 Parent will buy all the things you need such as; school uniform, books, pens and pencils. Your Foster Parent 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 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 Parents 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" for short. A 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.

YOUR 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, Optician, 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.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM OR A COMPLAINT?



If you have a problem or are in any way unhappy with the care or services you are receiving you must tell someone. You have the right to be listened to and taken seriously. This person could be your Social Worker, your Foster Parents' Supervising Social Worker, the Complaints Manager Sue Bartholomew at PCFS or maybe a teacher.

You can also speak to your reviewing officer or Annie, PCFS Children's Advocate and there are contact details of other people that might help you near the end of this booklet.

"An advocate is like a helper or a friend who speaks up for you if you need support or help. This can be any problem, something at school or at home or something in your life that you are worried about but you might be too shy to talk about it. An advocate would be the person who helps you to talk to the right person about your problem and makes sure they listen to you. They make sure your voice is heard and that you get the help you need."

PCFS can help you to speak to an advocate; we have Annie who works with children and young people and is independent from PCFS so just there to help you. Let us know if you need to talk to Annie or use the space on the leaflet **Cheer and Oh Dear's**. If you don't have one, then just ask for one (you will be offered one every time we ask you on how things are going)

Rest assured that if you complain about anything, we will take your complaint seriously. Any complaint should be brought to the attention of PCFS however, if it is of the more serious nature, such as assault or abuse, then tells us **AT ONCE.** In this way we can assure the safety of all involved. If you are in any doubts regarding the level of your complaint then tell us anyway and we can help you with this.

No person involved with the complaint will be involved in any investigation.

PCFS STATEMENT OF PURPOSE - For Children and Young People in Care

Introduction :
This **Statement of Purpose** is written to help you understand what being a child in care is and how we will support you at **Pilgrims Corner Fostering Service (PCFS)**.
We want you to feel safe, happy, and cared for while you are with us.

Who We Are?:
We are **Pilgrims Corner Fostering Service (PCFS)**. Our job is to find kind and loving families to take care of children when they cannot live with their birth families. We will make sure you are safe, comfortable, and happy in your foster home.

How We Will Help You:
At **PCFS**, we will make sure that you:
Live in a **safe and loving home**.
Have a **foster family who cares about you**.
Go to **school and learn new things**.
Have someone to **talk to if you feel sad or worried**.
Get to **play, have fun, and make friends**.
Stay **healthy and happy**.



Your Foster Parents:
Your foster parents are special people who have been chosen to take care of you. They will:
Look after you and make sure you feel at home.
Listen to you and help you when you need it.
Make sure you feel welcome and valued no matter who you are
Help you with **school, hobbies, and activities**.
Work with other adults to make sure you get the best care.



Your Rights:
Everyone is unique, which means we all have qualities that make us different. You have the right to:
Be **treated kindly and with respect**.
Have **your own space and privacy**.
Speak up if something feels wrong.
Keep in touch with people who are important to you (if it is safe).
Be **part of decisions** about your life.



School and Learning:
We want you to do well in school and enjoy learning. You will:
Go to **school every day** and learn exciting things.
Get help with **homework and studying**.
Have the chance to **learn new skills and explore what you love**.

Staying Healthy:

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Your foster parents will make sure you:
Eat **yummy and healthy food**.
See a **doctor or dentist** when you need to.
Play and do **fun activities to stay active**.

Keeping You Safe:
Your safety is the most important thing to us. We will:
Make sure your foster parents **know how to look after you properly**.
Check in with you to see how you are feeling.
Make sure you know **who to talk to** if you ever feel unsafe.

Who You Can Talk To:
If you ever need help or just want to talk, you can speak to:
Your **foster parents**.
Your **social worker**.
Someone from **PCFS** who visits to check how you are doing.
A trusted **teacher, family member, or friend**.
There are also other people who we have written about below on the **contact page**

Having Fun and Being You:
Living with a foster family is not just about being safe—it's also about having fun! We want you to:
Do things you love, like **drawing, playing sports, or reading**.
Make **new friends** and have fun adventures.
Feel **happy and proud of who you are**.

Final Words:
Moving to a new home can feel like a big change, but we will be here to **support you every step of the way**. You are not alone, and we want to make sure you feel **loved, listened to, and happy** in your foster home.

CONTACT PAGE

If you are unhappy with your care or the services you are receiving you can contact any of the following:

Your Social Worker:

Name:_____

Tel: _____

Your Independent Reviewing Officer:

Name:_____

Telephone number:_____

Email address: _____

Ofsted: 0300 123 1231
www.ofsted.gov.uk
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Chief Inspector:

Clive House
70 Petty France
London
SW1H 9EX

Telephone Contact
0300 123 1231

Email Address for the Chief Inspector
hmci@ofsted.gov.uk

You can contact anyone in the Fostering Team at:
Pilgrims Corner Fostering
The Gathering Space,
Highland Court Farm
Bridge
CT4 5HW
Tel: 01227 370808

PCFS's Children Advocate (someone independent who will listen to you) – Annie Sharpe
Please ask your foster parents or anyone at PCFS for her details.

Other Contacts:
Voice: Free Phone:08088005737, 02078335792
Email: info@voiceyp.org
Website: www.voiceyp.org / www.childcerntred.org

Child Line: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

Children's Commissioner:
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/contact/

Children's Commissioner for England
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London
SW1P 3BT

Telephone: 020 7783 8330

Freephone for children: 0800 528 0731
Email: info.request@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Coram Voice
Freephone 0808 800 5792 to find out about your rights or to get support, or to be listened to
WhatsApp +44 (0)7758 670369 contact us using WhatsApp (add us to your contacts and send us a message free with WiFi)
Text 07758 670369 (you can send a text to this number and ask for someone to call you back, texts to this number are at your standard rate for sending texts, calls to this number cannot be answered)
Email send us an email message at help@coramvoice.org.uk.

Online you can fill in our online form to send a message to the Always Heard team

- Freephone helpline: **0808 800 5792**
- Email: **help@coramvoice.org.uk**
- Text: **07758 670369**
- WhatsApp (over 16's): **07758 670369**
- Online: **Always Heard**

All about me
I like to be called:
I like to eat:
I don’t like to eat:
I like to wear:
My favourite TV programme is:
In my spare time I like to: (Attend clubs etc.)

Things you might need to know

Important things you need to know	
Name of my Foster Parents	
Other people in the house	
When will I see my family?	

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The name of my new school is	
The date I will start school is	
The name of my Doctor	
The name of my Dentist	

Food Word Search

Name _____ Date _____

Z S P H F D Z U D V Y Q L G L R N P

A P A R A L O W E R Z W U V L P L B

U W U E M N L G R P F G N B C X W A

H I R N O E E E R E G R U B M A H N

T B R C T T B T E P O T A T O A A A

S O A T A W I D O S O E O H Y P Z N

C B U B A A O J U R E T G P O P Z A

J C L R S O U P E M R E A N Y L I K

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I S H D Y Y C I K L F H C C O R Z N

U H N W M K C J K C F E M L Q T O V

Y A V G Y E D D Z Y R H E I P Q V N

C B M D M A H U O X N U Y A S R Y C

APPLE
BACON
BANANA
BREAD
CANDY
CARROT
CHEESE
CORN
FRUIT
HAMBURGER
LETTUCE
ORANGE
PIE
PIZZA
POTATO
RICE
SOUP
STRAWBERRY
TOMATO
VEGETABLE

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