

Children & Young People's Guide to Foster Care



Brighton & Hove
City Council

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Why am I here?

You are probably in foster care because you cannot live with your birth family at the moment. There are many reasons why children and young people need to come into foster care and your social worker and foster carer are there to help you understand the reasons why.

Although you might be feeling worried or scared it is important to remember there are lots of people who will help you understand your feelings and hopefully make you feel better. This guide is here to help you understand what it means to be in foster care and what might happen next.

Who will look after me?

It might feel a bit strange to be looked after by adults who are not in your birth family, but this is what happens when you are in foster care. Foster carers are

adults who want to look after children and young people who need a place to stay.

They have their own social worker - just like you - and need to prove that they can look after children and young people safely. In some cases you may be cared for by a family member or friend. They will also have their own social worker.



What about me?

You are not alone

Some young people think they are in care because they have done something wrong. This is not true. You may have different feelings about being in care: sad, angry, lonely or happy. These thoughts and feelings are perfectly normal, and there are many other young people going through similar experiences right now. At least 40,000 young people are in foster care at any one time*. You may recognise some of the famous people who have been in care too:

DJ Goldie, TV presenter **Oprah Winfrey**, Actor **Pierce Brosnan**, Actress **Kathy Burke**, Singer **Faith Hill**, Actor **Eddie Murphy**, Actress **Marilyn Monroe**.

Who will look after me?

It's important to know that you are not alone and there is always someone you can talk to and who will listen to your opinions. Your foster carers are there to listen and care for you whenever you need them. Your social worker is there to talk to, to help you understand what's going on and to make decisions with you. A teacher at school will want to help you if they can. There is also other support available in Brighton & Hove. You can find details at the back of this guide.

Seeing your family

For most children and young people it will be important to continue to see family and friends. This is called contact. Your social worker will talk with you and tell your foster carer about the arrangements for you to have contact with people in your family so that they can support you with this.



Your new home

Every effort will be made to find you a home close to your school. This means you should still be able to see your friends, and go to any local clubs you are a member of. Some things will change though and it may take time to get used to it. There might be other children in your new foster home. It can be hard getting to know new people but it can also be fun. Your foster carers will understand that a new home will feel strange, but they will want to make things better where they can.

Who Makes Sure I'm OK?

Here are some questions you might want to ask

Can I keep up my hobbies and interests?

Every effort will be made to support your interests and to develop new ones.

Will I have to eat different food?

Your social worker can help you talk to your foster carer about the food you like.

How late can I stay out?

Foster carers may have different rules so things you are used to may be a little different. However, foster carers will always try to make decisions fairly and with the advice of your social worker. It will be important to keep you safe.

Will my friends be allowed to visit?

Your foster carers will want you to feel comfortable in their house, and once you feel confident in

bringing friends home you can talk to them about this.

How much pocket money do I get?

This will depend on your age and circumstances. Your social worker and foster carer will talk to you about this.



What does my social worker do?

Social workers try to make sure that all children and young people who live in their area are being looked after properly and are safe. When social workers hear of children and young people who may not be safe, or whose birth families are not able to look after them properly, they may arrange for foster carers to look after them instead. A care plan is made which shows everybody how you will be looked after. Social workers also try to help children and young people understand why they are in foster care.

At the beginning of each foster care placement there will be a Placement Agreement Meeting. A record will then be made, which tells you what you can expect in your foster home. Your health is very important so you will meet with a Specialist Nurse who will make a plan to make sure you are healthy and well.

You will see the Nurse at least once a year, so they can carry on checking you are ok.

Meetings that are called Children in Care Reviews (CIC) take place at least twice a year. This is when you, your social worker, foster carer, teacher and other people who are important to you come together to make sure you are healthy, getting on ok at school, and talk about things like seeing your birth family and what is going to happen next.

This meeting is about you so it is important you have your say, either by going to the review or filling out a booklet where you write down your thoughts and feelings. You might want some help to do this, from your social worker, foster carer, teacher or somebody from Youth Advocacy Services.

What changes at school?

What will my foster carer do?

Your foster carer will be looking after you every day, so it is a good idea to let them know how you are feeling. Because they look after you every day you will get to know each other well so they will probably know if you are finding things difficult or may be feeling confused about things.

Can I say if I'm not ok?

You have every right to do this. It is important to let people know if you are ok or not and there are many ways this can be done. You can talk to your foster carer, teacher, social worker, or an adult you trust and know well. You can talk to the Youth Advocacy Project who listen to children and young people and can speak up on your behalf or can help you to do this yourself. There is also a drop in at the Young People's Centre in Brighton.



Who will know at school?

You might not want people to know you are in foster care but some teachers will need to know. One thing that will change at school is that you will have a meeting called a P.E.P. (Personal Education Plan). This is when you, your carer, social worker and teacher come together to talk about your education and make sure you are getting the right support. It is a bit like a CIC Review Meeting, but just about your education.

Will I change school?

Hopefully you will not have to change school. But, if your new home is far away from your old school you might have to. This might feel hard at first, changing both school and home at the same time, but there will be people to support and help you.

What about college or university?

Living in foster care does not mean your plans about college and university need to change. In fact, you will get lots of support to help make a success of them.



Have you heard of IPT?

IPT stands for...

The Intensive Placement Team (IPT) works in lots of different ways to help support your foster placement. You may have your own IPT worker, or you may meet us on the activities we offer. IPT work with children and young people aged between 7 and 16 years of age who are cared for in Brighton & Hove foster placements.

253 Activities

During school holidays IPT offer a range of fun things to do. These can include trips to Thorpe Park, Chessington and Diggerland, and activities such as horse riding, banger racing, cinema and bowling. You could come on these trips too. Just ask your foster carer or social worker to get in touch. As well as all the fun you will have, it's a great chance to make friends with other people who are fostered.

What about college or university?

IPT Support Workers sometimes work individually with children and young people. They may meet with you weekly to help and support you. This may take place during activities such as art, cooking or sports. IPT Support Workers also offer groups such as the popular Music Group where you can learn to play different musical instruments and be in a band if you want to.

Have you heard of these services?

YAP

Brighton & Hove YAP (Youth Advocacy Project) helps children and young people to speak out and to be heard. There are different ways YAP can get involved to help you if you are living with a Brighton & Hove foster carer. Some of these are explained below.

Advocates can help you work out what it is you want to say. They can speak for you and with you in lots of different ways. They can also help you find out your legal rights and entitlements.

Children in Care Council

There will soon be a Children in Care Council in Brighton & Hove. This will give you a chance to speak with people in charge of Children's Services. It will also give you the chance to meet other young people in care and to learn new skills in speaking up for yourself.



Brighton & Hove pledge

Independent Visiting Service

Independent Visitors (IVs) are carefully trained adults who are not part of social services. They have been carefully selected to make sure they are trustworthy. They can visit, spend time with you enjoy an activity and give advice if you need it.

You can find out how to contact all the above services at the back of this guide.

Complaints

If you are concerned that...

- you have been told that something would be done, and it hasn't been done or is taking too long
- you are not happy with the care you are receiving
- you think you need more help than you are getting
- you think your views are not being listened to

You can get in touch with Brighton & Hove's Children's Complaints Officer directly using the details provided at the back of this guide.

You can also speak to someone who works for OFSTED. OFSTED inspects foster care services for children and young people. You can get in touch with them by using the details on the back of this guide.



This is the Brighton & Hove pledge to children and young people in care and to care leavers.

Everyone has talent:

We will recognise your strengths and interests.

Everyone needs encouragement

We will encourage you to aim high

Everyone needs help...

sometimes We will support you to succeed, by helping you

Every needs to feel good:

We will recognise your achievements

Everyone can give their views

We will make sure you can say what you want to say

It's your life... its your review

We will make sure you are able to take part in meetings about you

Making a complaint should sort it out!

We will make sure you have help if you have a suggestion or want to make a complaint

Help the bosses understand

We will make sure you can tell those people in charge what you think about the services you receive

Everyone needs to feel secure

We will try to keep you safe

Everyone can feel healthy

We will support you to be fit and well

Everyone needs support at times

We will support you emotional health and well being

Useful Contacts

Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove Children's Complaints Officer

Tel 0500 291229

[www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/
complaints](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/complaints)

Email [complaints@brighton-hove.
gov.uk](mailto:complaints@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Brighton & Hove Fostering and Adoption Service

253 Preston Road, Brighton,
BN1 6SE

Tel 01273 295444

[www.fosteringinbrightonandhove.
org.uk](http://www.fosteringinbrightonandhove.org.uk)

Morley Street CASH Service

Contraception and sexual
health advice

Tel 01273 242091

www.swish.org.uk

MIND Mental Health Support Service

Tel 01273 66 69 50

www.mindcharity.co.uk

Youth Advocacy Project (YAP)

Tel 01273 295510

www.bhyap.org.uk

Email info@bhyap.org.uk

Youth Allsorts Gay, Lesbian, Transsexual and Gender Identity Support/Advice

Tel 01273 721211

www.allsortsyouth.org.uk

Email info@allsortsyouth.org.uk

Youth Advice Centre (YAC)

YMCA general and specialist
housing advice

Tel 01273 889292

www.hoveymca.org.uk

Email [yacservices@
sussexcentralymca.org.uk](mailto:yacservices@sussexcentralymca.org.uk)

Young People's Centre (YPC):

Information, Advice & Guidance

Sexual Health, Art & Media

Workshops

Tel 01273 230130

Helpline 01273 887886

Counselling Line 01273 711633

www.ypc-impact.50webs.org

Email ypc@impact-initiatives.org.uk

National

A National Voice

Run for young people, by young
people who have been in care

Tel 0161 2375577

www.anationalvoice.org

Rights4me!

Office of the Children's Rights
Director Ofsted, Aviation House,
125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE
<https://www.rights4me.org>

Childline Confidential Helpline

Tel 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

OFSTED

Tel 0845 404045

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

* References BAAF: British
Association for Adoption
& Fostering Guide, 2003



This guide has been produced by:

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Fostering & Adoption Service
Intensive Placement Team**

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Tel 01273 295444

www.fosteringinbrightonandhove.org.uk

Translation? Tick this box and take to any council office.

ترجمة؟ ضع علامة في المربع وخذها إلى مكتب البلدية. Arabic

অনুবাদ? বক্সে টিক চিহ্ন দিয়ে কাউন্সিল অফিসে নিয়ে যান। Bengali

需要翻譯? 請在這方格內加別, 並送回任何市議會的辦事處。Cantonese

ترجمه؟ لطفاً این مربع را علامتگذاری نموده و آن را به هر یک از دفاتر شهرداری ارائه نمایید. Farsi

Traduction? Veuillez cocher la case et apporter au council. French

需要翻译? 请在这方格内划勾, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。Mandarin

Źłumaczenie? Zaznacz to okienko i zwróć do któregokolwiek biura samorządu lokalnego (council office). Polish

Tradução? Coloque um visto na quadrícula e leve a uma qualquer repartição de poder local (council office). Portuguese

Tercümesi için kareyi işaretleyiniz ve bir semt belediye bürosuna veriniz Turkish

other (please state)

**This can also be made available in
large print, Braille or on audio tape**

