



SHINING STARS FOSTERING AGENCY

GUIDE TO FOSTERING

A guide for children who live in a family who are applying to foster or are already fostering

For over 12's



My family are fostering – what do I need to know?

You have been given this booklet to offer information about fostering because your family is in the process of applying to foster or is fostering already. Read through it and keep it as you might want to read it again later and there are some contacts that you might want to use.

Your family is working with Shining Stars Fostering and we need to give you information about fostering to make sure you are happy to foster as well as your parent/s. A professional assessor will be working with your family and they will also talk to you about fostering. We've also included some tips to make sharing your home easier.

What is fostering?

Fostering is a way of looking after children and young people, when they cannot live at home. Children and young people stay with people called 'foster carers' whilst problems at home are being sorted out. Every year a large number of children and young people are fostered.

Some children and young people go to live with foster families with their siblings, or sometimes they'll come on their own. They can need a foster family at any age from a new born baby up to a teenager.

Fostering involves everyone who lives in your house, even the pets. It is important that you are involved as much as your parent/s are. If you have any worries, thoughts or questions please ask or write them down and pass them to your parent/s or the assessing social worker. It is important that you are happy with the process and that we support you and other young people in the same circumstances.

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Who are foster carers?

Foster carers are people like you and me, who care about children and young people and want to offer them a safe place to live. They have to attend specific training to look after children/young people who are unable to live with their own family. Not all foster carers are the same, some are single people, and others are married or live with another person. Some foster carers have children of their own, some have never had children.

A good foster family is one that has time, patience, tolerance, energy and a good sense of humour.

Why do children and young people need fostering?

Children and young people come into care for many reasons. All families go through stressful times and some families need some time and extra help to get sorted out. Whatever the case, it's important to remember that it is not the child or young person's fault that they are in foster care.

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What is fostering like?

Fostering is looking after a child or young person in your home. There will be a number of other professionals and people involved in the care of the child or young person visiting your house and meetings about their care plan are often organised at the foster carers address.

Children who are fostered are likely to find big changes difficult and this can affect their behaviour in lots of ways. They may be upset, angry, worried, confused and scared. Your family will be supported by us in supporting them with this.

Helping a child or young person at such a difficult time is extremely rewarding. They may be staying with you until they go home or move somewhere more permanent.

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What happens next?

How your parent/s become foster carers


1. Your parent/s will be visited by a professional social worker. This is called the initial visit.
2. After this visit, your parent/s will be asked to attend a foster carers training course. This will give them lots of information about fostering and the children/young people they will be looking after. In this training they will need to think about what fostering will be like for their own children. That's you, off course!
3. Your parent/s will then be given their own assessing social worker who will visit your house around six to eight times. They will write a report about the information your parents and you have shared. The assessing social worker will also spend time with you to find out how you feel about your parents becoming foster carers as this is just as important.
4. Once the assessment is completed your parent/s will be given a date to go to the fostering panel. The panel is a group of people such as doctors, solicitors, teachers, counsellors and foster carers and others, who meet with people who want to become foster carers and decide what your parent/s would be good at. You are also invited to attend.

Once the assessment is completed your parent/s will be given a date to go to the fostering panel. You are also invited to attend.



Once the panel has approved your parent/s as foster cares, your family are ready to foster. It all takes quite a long time as we need to make sure everyone is happy and ready to help another child or young person. If you are over 18 years of age, you will be asked to have a DBS check, as part of what is required in the fostering regulations.

Children and young people who have come into foster care may also be apprehensive, worried and/or excited - just like you! Further on in this booklet there are some ideas and things you could do together, this will help you get to know each other better.



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What to expect children and young people who have been placed in foster care may behave and feel.

You might see the child behave in many different ways. This may be because they had different rules to what you have grown up with. They will also have their own feelings about living with a foster family.

Behaviours could be:

- Being very quiet
- Being very noisy
- Not knowing how to share or take turns
- Getting upset over small things
- Arguing
- Being very friendly
- Being angry

Feelings could be:

- Feeling lonely
- Feeling sad
- Feeling upset
- Feeling angry
- Feeling confused
- Feeling like they have to try really hard to make their foster family happy
- Worried about their family and future

Foster carers are offered support and training to deal with the behaviours they may present. With your help they will allow the child or young person time to settle in with your family.

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Sharing

Having another child/young person in your home will mean a change in dynamics, which can be very positive, but it also means a lot of consideration will be necessary to accommodate their needs and it means sharing your space, your family and family friends and other more practical things such as television times, games and other belongings.

It is important that we acknowledge that it will be a change for everybody in the households and there will be a time of adjustment and some difficulties. This is why we advise you to talk to your parent/s or your family's supervising social worker, from Shining Stars, so any difficulties can be addressed as the relationship and placement of the young person progresses. WE are here to support you as much as your parents and your family.

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Tips for making relationships easier

- Smile!
- Be friendly and helpful.
- Talk to each other.
- Show an interest in what the other person likes.
- Be kind.
- Practice listening to them – this maybe require patience and focus as they may not speak English, try not to interrupt, to make them feel welcomed.
- Ask questions to show you're interested in what they are saying and to show that you are listening.
- Try to see things from their point of view as well as your own. Imagine how you would feel if you were in their shoes.
- When arguments happen, try to find a good way to reach an agreement that you're both happy with. This means there will be compromises from you both.
- Be honest and this will help build trust.
- They may be very angry, upset and scared and may take a long time to be friendly back.

When arguments happen, try to find a good way to reach an agreement that you're both happy with.



Doing things together

You can help the child or young person that comes to stay with you feel comfortable by getting to know what they like and what they're interested in.

They might be feeling scared or defensive at first and want a bit of time to settle in, but once they're ready, you can start thinking of things you can do together. It could be going to the cinema, bowling, cooking or gardening, going to the local park or doing a sport together.

Support for you

You will receive support from your family's supervising social worker. It is important to us that you share your views and concerns.

Shining Stars Fostering agency offer a get together group for foster carer's children and it would be great if you to take part.

This group allows you to discuss how fostering feels and share that and ideas with others that have similar experiences. It's good to talk about the good things, the bad things and let you express your feelings in a safe, friendly environment.

You could do things together such as going to cinema, bowling, cooking or gardening, or doing a sport together.



If you would like to attend the get together groups, please ask your family's supervising social worker for more information.

Write the details of you family's supervising social worker below.

Name

Phone number

Email

Shining Stars Fostering Agency offer a get together group for foster carer's children and it would be great if you to take part.

It is also important to have people around you that you can talk to. It could be a friend at school or your parent/s.

Remember, being a foster carer's son or daughter is an important role and you will do this better if you are happy about what is happening.

Tell us about what you think about the process that you and your family went through to foster and what you feel about this booklet and anything else that will help us to do better for children and young people who foster.

You can call, write to us or pop in to the office anytime, here are the details:

Supervising Social Worker
Shining Stars Fostering Agency
The Lansdowne Building
2 Lansdowne Road
Croydon, CR9 2ER

*YOU ALSO HAVE THE RIGHT TO TALK DIRECTLY TO AN ORGANISATION
CALLED OFSTED IF YOU LIVE IN ENGLAND.*

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This Guide has been produced in consultation with Foster Carers' Children