



Lewisham Fostering Service

Guide

for

**Children Under 11 years
old.**

CONTENTS

➤ **Lewisham Fostering Service**

- **Welcome.**
- **What being fostered means?**
- **Has my social worker and Lewisham Fostering Service found the right family for me?**
- **What happens if you are not happy with your foster family?**
- **Leaving care and after care.**

➤ **Your foster family**

- **Going to live with a foster family.**
- **Who and where your foster family are.**
- **What you can expect on arrival.**
- **What you can expect from your foster carer.**
- **What your foster family expects of you.**
- **Money you get.**
- **Confidentiality.**
- **School**
- **Family and Friends.**
- **Health and Safety.**
- **Meetings.**
- **Faiths.**
- **What to do if you are unhappy.**

➤ **Who checks that Lewisham Fostering Service and your Social Worker do their jobs?**

➤ **Finally,**

➤ **Some other free phone numbers, which may help you.**

LEWISHAM FOSTERING SERVICE



A big welcome to Lewisham Fostering Service. We are pleased to have found a foster family for you. Together with your foster family we promise to do everything we can to give you a safe and happy home.

- We will always make sure you are safe and look after you. We will make sure that your foster carers listen to you and help you, so that enjoy being in foster care.
- You can expect plenty of help from your foster carer to think over your past and plan for your future. Your foster carer is there to help you do and learn new things. We will all take the time to listen to what you want for the future.

What being fostered means?



Being fostered means going to live with another family because you can not live with your own family.



Has my social worker and Lewisham Fostering Service found the right family for me?

- We want to find a safe foster home for you where the foster carers try very hard to give you the best care.
- The foster carers will try to get to know you, and your wishes and what you need.
- We will treat every child with respect.
- We expect you to treat your foster family, foster home and your social worker with respect.

YOUR FOSTER FAMILY

Going to live with a foster family.

A social worker will take you to your foster carer's home, where you can meet everybody who lives there. If possible, your social worker will help you to pack a bag to take with you. Apart from the things that you need, you can take your best toys and books as well as photos and anything else that you feel is special to you.

Who and where your foster family are.

Your foster family is made up of

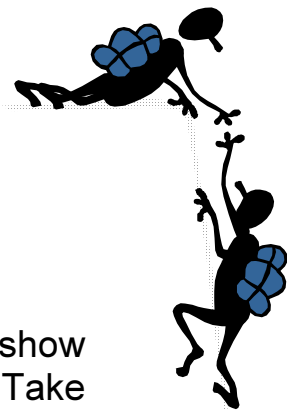
Your new address and contact telephone number is

Your foster carer will help you move in and talk with you about how you feel and anything you might worry about. We will try to help you if you are sad about what has happened to you.

Your foster carers will tell you the truth if you are wrong about some things, as we all need to be told when we get things wrong.

What will happen when you get there.

When you move, in your foster carer will show you around the house, show you where you will sleep and you will meet everyone who lives there. Take some time to unpack and make your room your own. The house may seem a little strange but everyone will help you settle in. Your foster carer will need to make a list of the things you have brought with you, so that we can we can make sure you have all you need.



What Your Foster Carer will do



Your foster carer will treat you as part of the family and will look after you, make sure you have enough food to eat, make sure you are clean, safe and warm. They will get your breakfast and help you get ready for school. They will wash and iron your clothes or if you are old enough to do this. They will make sure you have your lunch or lunch money on school days. They will make sure there is someone there to meet you from school or an adult waiting for you when you get home from school. When you are home they will be there to talk to you, watch TV, and play with you.

What You need to do in your new Foster Home.

Every family has rules and your foster carer will talk to you about these. The rules might be about, watching TV, playing computer games, doing schoolwork, what time is dinner and many other things. They will tell you what these rules are and you will need to learn them as you are part of the family.



Money you get.



Your foster carer will get some money for you each week, so that you have pocket money, clothes and things you need in the home, for school or clubs.

You may be able to get more pocket money for doing jobs or for something that you have done well.

Your foster carer will also help you to save some money each week.

You will be told how much money you will get, and on what day you will get this, in the first week in your foster home.

Confidentiality

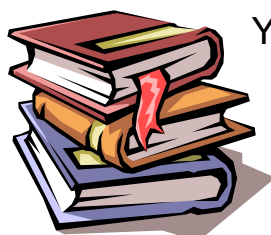


Confidentiality means that we will not talk about you, and why you are in care, to people who do not need to know.

Your foster carer must write down in their diary what happens in your life in the time you stay with them. This diary will only be seen by you, our foster carers, your social worker, ourselves and a few others involved in your care. You will be able to read what has been written about you by your foster carer and social worker, but you will need to let us know before, so this can be ready for you.

Foster carers are **not allowed** to keep any secrets that you may tell them. Such secrets need to be shared with other people who are helping you.

School



Your foster carer and teachers will help you with your school work. Meetings will be held at your school to make sure that you have all that you need to do well in school.

Family and Friends



When you are ready, your social worker will talk to you about seeing or writing to your family. If it is agreed that you can see your family, your social worker will plan this visit with you.

If it is not possible to see your family, or if you do not want to, your foster carer will listen to you about your feelings and help you decide who you want to see.

If there are some special people, say friends, teachers and other family that you want to see or phone, you can talk to your foster carer about this. Also, if there are some people that you feel frightened of seeing and don't want to see, again tell your foster carer.

Healthy and Safe



Eating good food, keeping our bodies, clothes and home clean; getting some exercise are part of being healthy.

When you move in, your foster carer will go with you to see a doctor to check that you are healthy. If you have to take any medicines, or have any special injections, your foster carer will make sure that this happens. You will have a visit to the doctor every year, if you stay in care.

Your foster carer and social worker will also need to make sure that the house is safe for all who live in it.

Meetings



Placement Plan Meeting.

When you move into foster care, there will be a meeting to look at how you will be looked after.

Everything will be talked about: the food you like, any medicine you take, your school, how and when you see your family. Everyone will want to hear from you about the things you like and dislike. In fact, the more you tell everyone the better, so that a care plan can be made about how you should be cared for and to plan for your future.

Review meeting



Meetings will happen from time to time to look at the plan for you, to be sure it is right for you. Please make sure you speak up for yourself. The first meeting will be when you have been in foster care for four weeks. The next meeting will be three months from that date. After that, review meetings will take place every six months.

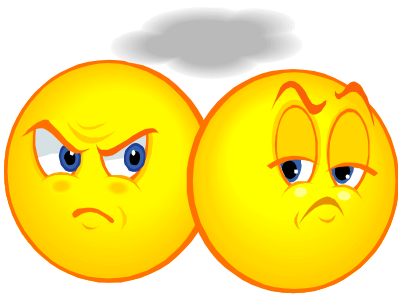
Faiths



Your foster carer will help you to follow whatever faith or religion you wish and will help you to find places to worship.

Your foster carer will also celebrate any special days with you, arrange special food and try to get whatever you need to follow your religion.





What happens if you are not happy with your foster family?

If, after living with your new foster carer for a while, you feel you are not happy to live with them, you should tell your social worker, or Lewisham Fostering Service or someone else you trust. Both your social worker and Lewisham Fostering Service will listen to your feelings and work with you to make new plans.

You can also contact your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), who you will have met at your first LAC Review and he or she should have given you their phone number when they met you for the first time. But if you do not know who your IRO is please **Telephone 0208 314 6647. (Quality Assurance - Business Support in Lewisham Children's Social Care, 1st Floor Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, Catford, London. SE6 4RU.)**

Someone will tell you the name of your IRO and pass on any message you leave for the IRO.

If you have a problem or want to complain



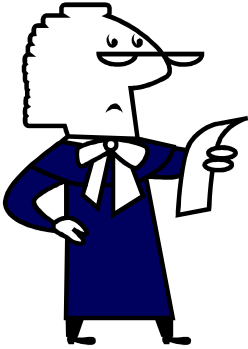
If you have any problems talk to your foster carer, your social worker, your family or supervising social worker at Lewisham Fostering Service. These problems might be in the home or at school, about being bullied, or being scared about something.

If you are unhappy about where you are living or with about someone who is not helping you with your care, you can complain. We will then look into what you are unhappy about.

We have a leaflet about how to make a complaint, which you will be given when you go to live with your foster family.

Someone from Lewisham Fostering Service or your foster carer will write down what you are unhappy about. You will then need to sign this. We will then go away, look into this and see if there is anything that can be done to make things better.

Independent Person/Advocate



An *independent person or advocate* is someone who does not work with your social worker, Lewisham Fostering Service or your foster family. They are there just for you, to make sure that you are being treated well.

An Advocate will speak up for you if you need to complain and do not feel your foster carer or your social worker can help you.

They are also there if you just want someone- not from Lewisham Fostering Service or your foster family, to talk to.

If you feel you need to talk to an advocate or independent person please call one of these phone numbers, free of charge:

- Croham Services for Children: 0800 093 2012
- Children's Legal Centre: 08088 020 008
- National Youth Advocacy Service 0300 330 3131

Who checks that Lewisham Fostering Service and your social workers are doing their job properly?

Ofsted checks that all foster care homes and social workers are doing their jobs properly.

You can also take your complaint to Ofsted whose address is below.

Ofsted's details are:

Ofsted,
Piccadilly Gate, Store Street
Manchester. M1 2WD
Telephone: 0300 123 1231

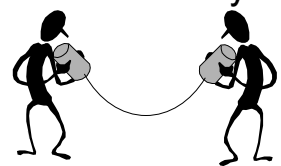
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk



Some other free phone numbers, which may be useful.

Childline: 0800 1111. or www.childline.co.uk

Children & Young People who are deaf or find using a phone difficult can try the new text service on 0800 400 222.



NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0800 800 5000 (Free phone).
www.nspcc.org.uk

Finally

Well that's pretty much what we do and what you can expect from us. We hope you enjoy your new family life.

We also thank you for taking the time to read this Children's Guide. If you have any questions, please ask your foster carer or social worker.

