



# CHILDREN'S & YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE

Ages 11 - 18 years

**Sunbeam Fostering  
(Northwest)**





# OUTLINE



We are so happy to welcome you.

This guide is to help explain who's who, what to expect in foster care and about your rights. We would like you to feel very well cared for, by Sunbeam Fostering Northwest, as you are a very important person to us.

## WHAT WE WANT FOR YOU

- 🌸 To receive full support
- 🌸 Feel happy
- 🌸 We are meeting your needs
- 🌸 Experiences are better than you thought
- 🌸 Feel positive & hopeful for the future
- 🌸 Achieve & thrive
- 🌸 Great steps to independence
- 🌸 Able to be yourself





# Contents



- ✿ What is fostering
- ✿ Your social worker
- ✿ Your Independent Reviewing Officer
- ✿ Your family and friends
- ✿ Your Foster Carer
- ✿ Supervising Social Worker Role
- ✿ Your Rights
- ✿ School
- ✿ Health
- ✿ Complaints
- ✿ Useful contacts
- ✿ Reading confirmation





# WHAT IS FOSTERING?

You may be feeling a bit unsure, a little confused or not sure of what is going on. Lots of children and young people feel this way when things change.

Fostering is a way of providing a safe and supportive family home for children and young people who are unable to live with their own family or relatives.

Sunbeam Northwest Fostering has found a safe and loving foster home for you. The family you are staying with has done everything needed to become foster carers – that means they've been checked, attended, approved, training and ready to look after you.



## The different types of foster carer:

1

### EMERGENCY

Children and young people arrive in an emergency and can stay for a short period before returning home. This is for a very short time, maybe a few days or weeks before they return home. If they stay longer than a few weeks or the Local Authority Social Worker knows that it is going to be longer than the foster care type changes to short term

2

### SHORT TERM

There is no set time frame of how long this will be for as this can vary between a number of months to two or three years.

3

### LONG TERM / PERMANENCY

This is where the plan is to stay in foster care until becoming an adult and possibly staying beyond this time while completing their studies.

4

### SHORT BREAKS

This is similar to emergency as it is for a short time frame but it is planned with everything decided in advance.







All children and young people will have their own social worker, who work for the Local Authority. It is the Local Authority who are responsible for helping and protecting children and young people in your area where you live with your family. You may already know them well or this may also be a change for you.

**Add the name of your Social Worker and the contact details below:**

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## WHAT DOES YOUR SOCIAL WORKER DO?

- ❁ To make sure you're safe and well
- ❁ Listen to you to make sure your thoughts and feeling are heard.
- ❁ Help create and follow a care plan
- ❁ Support you with school, health, friends and your family.
- ❁ Visit you regularly to check in and see how things are going?





## Who is an Independent Reviewing Officer?

An Independent Reviewing Officer (also known as an IRO) takes a lead role in making sure your care plan meets your needs.

They will do this by chairing your review, encouraging, letting and helping you to have your say at your review; and by following up on actions to make sure that people are actually do what they agreed to do.

## What is a Care Plan?

A care plan is all about you, your needs, wishes and what's best for your future. It includes:

- Where you are living and why
- Whose looking after you (life with your foster carer)
- School, health and anything you need support with
- Your goals – short and long term
- You plans for the future

Your social worker writes and updates your care plan, you should always be involved and talk it through.

## What is a Review?

A Review meeting happens regularly to see how you are and what has been happening for you. It is a chance to talk about home, school and anything important to you. To see whether the care plan is working or needs to be changed and to make sure that everyone is doing what they say they will do.

These are your reviews, and it is very important that you make sure the IRO knows how you feel and what you would want to happen. Try and be open and honest as you can as this will help everyone to know exactly what you want.

It is really important that you attend your Review Meetings. They may feel a bit daunting at first but they will get easier. You can even ask to Chair the meeting if you would like!





## Ten important things to know about IROs

1. If you are in care (or “looked after”) the local authority must appoint an IRO for you.
2. Your IRO chairs your Looked After Care Reviews.
3. If you have brothers and/or sisters in foster care they too will have the same IRO as you do.
4. You should know who your IRO is and how to make contact with him/her.
5. You should keep the same IRO for the whole time that you are in care.
6. If you are a parent yourself of a child who is also in care, you both will have the same IRO but in some situations you may have a different IRO.
7. You should be given written information explaining the role of the IRO, and telling you what you can do if things decided at your review are not carried out.
8. If your IRO leaves (perhaps to go to another job or retire) they must introduce you to your new IRO.
9. Apart from your first week in care, you should never be without an IRO.
10. Your IRO should meet with you in person before your first review.

**Add the name of the IRO and the contact details below:**

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### Your Family

- Your social worker will let your family or anyone important to you know how you are getting on.
- Your Social Worker will arrange family time with your family. It is important to remember to tell your social worker how you feel about meeting your family and how the time went with meeting your family.
- Your Foster Carer will support you to attend family time, you should discuss your feelings and emotions with them so they can support you and they can also share this with your social worker.
- You may be able to choose who and when you can have contact. Discuss this with your Foster Carers and Social Worker so everyone is aware of your wishes so that it can be agreed.



## Your Friends

### Can I see my friends?

- Yes – it is important to still have contact with your friends. You may find that your friends are a good support to you.

### Can my friends stay over and can I stay over at their houses?

- This depends on who this is with, when and where, you should discuss this with your foster carer and social worker to have this agreed. Over time it maybe that the foster carer can make this decision on their own but initially we always check it out with your social worker.

### Am I allowed out?

- Yes of course. At the beginning we always ask your social worker what is safe and best for you but over time yourself and your foster carer can usually make these decisions. It is really important that your foster carer gives you permission, you let them where you are, what you are doing and who you are with. It is the foster carer's role to keep you safe so it is important to let them know and sometimes they may feel it is better for you to stay at home.



## YOUR FOSTER CARERS

### ● Moving In

Your foster carer will welcome you into your new home and help you to feel safe and settled. They will understand that you may need some space or time on your own to settle in and they will be supportive of this. Remember that it is important for them to know how you are feeling and that they are providing you with the things that you need and like.

It may take time to get used to living somewhere else and everyone will have to change a small part of their own routine, it is about working together and talking things through.

### ● Your bedroom

- Your bedroom should be warm and welcoming, it should have space for you to store your clothes and other personal belongings.

Although this is your space we hope that you will take care of it. Keep it clean and tidy and take pride in having a nice place to relax.

### ● House Rules

- We encourage our Foster Carers to have some house rules for everyone in the home. This will be like, what time you return home, knocking on bedroom doors, speaking to one another respectfully. Your foster carers will discuss these with you and you can express your views and feelings on this.

### ● What if I am not happy with something?

- If there is something which you are unhappy about and you do not feel comfortable discussing it with your carer, please speak to your social worker or the foster carer Supervising Social Worker. We will ask you to complete feedback forms from time to time – please be honest, we will keep them confidential and we will read them and take action where needed.





## SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER ROLE

Sunbeam is 'Driven by Children's Needs'. This means that all our staff work hard to ensure that the children placed with our foster carers are happy and well cared for.

Your Foster Carers will have a supervising social worker (SSW) who is available to offer them advice, support and to ensure that the care they are providing you is of a very high standard. The supervising social worker will want to speak with you from time to time on their visits to find out how you are and check out what has been happening. We hope you get to know them well and feel comfortable with them.

If there are any worries or difficulties for yourself living with the foster carer or perhaps the foster carer is having some difficulties the Supervising Social Worker will bring everyone together including your social worker to discuss this. The supervising social worker and local authority social worker may visit the foster carer and yourself at the same time.

The supervising social worker also shares a lot of information of what the foster carer tells them, so your social worker keeps up to date with how you are doing

**We value your views and feelings as our priority.**





The below is from the Foster Carers Charter from the Fostering Network.

- ✿ You have the right to be listened to.
- ✿ You have the right to voice your opinions - attend your reviews this is the best place to make sure you get heard.
- ✿ You have the right to be kept safe
- ✿ You have the right to receive pocket money and a clothing allowance.
- ✿ You have the right to know why you are in care.
- ✿ Given the support to develop your identity and aspirations
- ✿ Fulfil your potential

*Source: Foster Carers Chapter, The Fostering Network*

Check out the Children's Commissioner's website for more information about your rights:

[www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)





## SCHOOL

All children and young people must have a school/college place. If you do not have one then your social worker and foster carers will be working hard to find a place in a school for you.

Education is important and moving into foster care may be disruptive for you so try to maintain a strong attitude towards your learning.

Each child or young person will have a delegated teacher who you can talk to now that you are in foster care. The same teacher will also organise and chair regular meetings with your social worker, foster carer, supervising social worker and yourself to discuss your Personal Education Plan. This plan sets out what additional help you may need and sets educational goals to achieve.

You should get as much help as possible to achieve your long term plans, this may be to study at college or university or an apprenticeship, whatever your plans are if you do not feel supported then make sure you raise your concerns. Aim high and stay motivated!





You may be asked to see a doctor or nurse when you are first placed with your foster family, this is to make sure that you are healthy. This is called a Looked After Care Medical and you will be asked to have this once a year.

Your foster carers will register you with a GP, Optician and Dentist. Initially you may have lots of appointments to attend to ensure that you are healthy and if any health treatment is needed it is not delayed.

## ➔ EAT WELL

Your Foster carers will provide you with a healthy and balanced diet. There may be some foods you have not eaten before – try them, you may like them. There are lots of benefits of eating healthy, you stay in shape, sleep better and have more energy

## ➔ EXERCISE

Exercise is very important and your foster carers will encourage you to exercise. This could be by joining a club, gym or group (like football, swimming or karate), or by walking to school, having a kick around in the park or riding your bike.

Try to find an activity you can do after school – playing computer games does not count!





## COMPLAINTS

If you are upset or feel that something is not right for you, you can talk to Sunbeam (Northwest). It is important for us to hear your concerns so we can address them and ensure that you are happy and supported in your foster family. You will not be blamed for making a complaint, you should always feel supported by the people caring for you and your feedback will help us to ensure that the care you receive is the care you need and that we can improve our service for yourself and other children and young people.

If you have a complaint or have any concerns, you can contact our **Complaints Officer Shams Zaidi - Complaints Officer / Designated Safeguarding Officer** by phone on **012 5431 1322** or in writing to:



### **Sunbeam Fostering Agency**

Suite 6b, ground floor, The Beehive centre,  
Shadworth Business park, Blackburn.  
BB1 2QS

Any complaint or concern you make will be taken seriously, you will be listened to and the complaint or concern will be investigated appropriately

There are other people who can help or who can help you to make a complaint if you need to.

- ✿ Your Local Authority Social Worker
- ✿ Your teacher
- ✿ Your foster carer
- ✿ The Sunbeam Social Worker
- ✿ Ofsted




Please see the next page for contact details






## USEFUL CONTACTS





### Sunbeam Fostering Agency Complaints Officer

 Shams Zaidi  
 012 5431 1322  
 [ShamsZ@sunbeamfosteringnorthwest.com](mailto:ShamsZ@sunbeamfosteringnorthwest.com)

### The Office of the Children's Commissioner

 Sanctuary Buildings  
20 Great Smith Street  
London, SW1P 3BT  
 0800 528 0731  
 [advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:advice.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

### OFSTED

 PICCADILY GATE, STORE STREET  
MANCHESTER, M1 2WD  
 0300 123 1231  
 [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

-  **NSPCC HELPLINE** : 0808 800 5000
-  **CHILDLINE** : 0800 1111
-  **VOICE FOR THE CHILD IN CARE** : 0808 800 5792
-  **Advice & Advocacy Service For Children (NYAS)** : 0808 808 1001

### Useful websites

[www.thewhocarestrust.org](http://www.thewhocarestrust.org)   [www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)   [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)



# Children's guide 11+

## Confirmation of Receipt

● Your Name : \_\_\_\_\_

● I have read my Children's guide 11+,

☐ YES ☐ NO

● Did you find the Children's guide 11+, useful?

☐ YES ☐ NO

● Do you understand your rights and allowances?

☐ YES ☐ NO

● Do you understand how to make a complaint if needed

☐ YES ☐ NO

● Do you have any questions?

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Please return this page to the Sunbeam Supervising Social Worker