

A Fair Deal for Children



The Child and Young Persons Guide to Foster Care

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What is Foster Care Connect?

Foster Care Connect is a small, personal Fostering Agency which aims to provide high quality child care to Scottish children. We have carers who have been assessed and trained to care for and help children and young people who can not stay at home.

You will have your own bedroom and live with a family.

We will help and support you to live with foster carers who have been chosen because they can best meet your needs, and give you an alternative to living with your family, previous carer or residential unit.

We will help you keep in contact with your birth family, friends and community (where appropriate). We will also keep in touch with your social worker, attend meetings with them and help you contact them when you want to talk.

We will encourage you to take part in decision-making, and help you to say how you feel and what you would like to happen in your future.

We will encourage you to attend school, help you do homework and make sure that you are given the education you need for your age and stage.

We will encourage you to get involved with activities, sports and leisure within the community you live and help you to still attend any clubs, sports or activities you have done in before moving to your new carers.

What does 'looked after' mean?

For whatever reason you can not live at home, it has been decided that it's best for you to be looked after away from home. This needs to be done in a planned way to ensure that you are matched with carers who can best meet your needs.

Planning for your care is very important, you, your parents, previous carer or residential unit will have tried very hard to improve things, but it hasn't worked out. When you come to a carer with Foster Care Connect, you will be given the chance to visit the carers home and meet the family before you move in. It is important that you feel comfortable in the family and that your views are taken into account before moving. Sometimes children and young people do have to move in quickly, but the reasons why will be explained to you if this is to happen.

Living with foster carers means that you live in with their family in their home, you will have your own bedroom and have lots of storage space to keep all your clothes and belongings. You will be helped to make your room yours and will be able to choose bedding and posters.

While staying with carers you should expect to be looked after well and receive a high standard of care.

- Your rights are the things you can expect to receive or to happen
- Your responsibilities are the things others can expect from you

LEGAL:

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Be consulted and have your views taken into account in any major decision by a parent, social work service, children's hearing and court.
- Only be subject to a court order or children's hearing requirement if it is in your best interest.
- To attend your children's hearing and have someone there with you to help you have your say, you can also speak to the people on the children's hearing panel without your parents being there while you talk.
- Have your children's hearing report shared with you by your social worker.
- Tell the children's panel if you disagree with why you are to attend. These are called the 'grounds of referral'. You can also appeal against a decision made at a hearing within 21 days, appeal against a warrant placed upon you. You can also request that any supervision requirements be suspended while you are appealing and request a review of your supervision requirement after 3 months to have your case looked at again.

INDIVIDUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT:

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- To be treated as an individual and treated with dignity and respect.
- Be looked after by carers with Foster Care Connect, in a planned and sensitive way.
- Be protected from discrimination against you for any reason, such as your sex, religion, race, sexuality because you are disabled or for any other reason.
- Have private time and space given to you, be able to store private things in a safe place and expect others to ask before coming into your room.

- Make and receive private phone calls, however some children and young
 people may not be able to do this with particular people, depending upon
 legal issues of contact and supervision. Your social worker and carers will
 explain what this means.
- Choose your friends, visit friends and have friends visit you, within the agreed limits with your carers.

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Treat others well, with respect and dignity.
- · Respect others peoples privacy and property.

FEELING SAFE:

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Feel safe where you live and be protected from all forms of physical and emotional abuse or violence, including bullying.
- To have a say in the sanctions used in the carers home.
- Not to have sanctions such as threats of, or physical punishment, have meals
 or food taken away from you as a punishment.
- Not to be deprived of contact with your birth family or social worker or health professional.
- Not to be made a fool of or be deliberately embarrassed by anyone looking after you.
- Request a change in placement if you do not feel safe.
- Speak out and complain if you feel you are being unfairly treated, or feel unsafe where you live.

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Accept fair sanctions when your behaviour is unacceptable.
- Keep to the expectations carers give to you and respect their house rules.



GOOD CARE AND HEALTH:

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Be looked after in a comfortable home.
- Have a choice in which activities, sport and leisure you would like to do.
- Have enough clothes, travelling expenses or lifts for contact with your family/friends. To have your birthday celebrated with gifts and Christmas presents too.
- Have a healthy diet and a choice in what you eat, any special diets will be catered for.
- · A place to live that is smoke free.
- · Learn how to look after your health properly.
- · Have information about health issues.
- See a doctor, dentist, optician, or any other health professional regularly and if you'd like in confidence.
- · Counselling and support services.

EDUCATION:

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- A suitable education for you needs.
- Any special services you require to fulfil your education.
- Be helped and encouraged with your educational and homework
- Attend your current school if it is in reasonable travelling distance.
- Help to claim financial help such as bursaries and clothing grants.

YOU HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO:

Attend school

WORKING TOGETHER:

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Have your parents involved in your care wherever possible.
- · Keep contact with family if appropriate.
- Keep your own name, identity, nationality and family relationships.
- Remain with brothers and sisters wherever possible.
- Expect your carers and other adults who work with you to all work together and help you to consider what the best is for you and your future.
- Have agreed private time with your carer so as you can talk in confidence and with peace and quiet.
- Agree with the choice of the carers you live with and ask to change placement if there are very good reasons to do this.

INCLUSION AND TAKING PART:

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Attend meetings which affect your care and have your say in decisions
- Know about your rights and responsibilities in a way you understand.
- Have your rights respected.
- · Have your best interests looked after at all times.
- Have a say in the choice of placement which is best for you.
- Have a say in things where you are living.
- Talk about any worries, concerns or complaints you have and to be helped to make things better again.
- Get the help you need to make a complaint and have the correct information to make a complaint or suggestion and know who to talk to where to send your forms.

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO:

- Respect the rights of others, adults and children.
- Take responsibility for your own actions and behaviour.
- To be honest when making complaints.



Access to personal information and reports

You have the right to see information on things which affect you and you have the right to be kept informed about all things that affect you.

- If you are over 16 you have the legal right to ask to see your file and your social worker will help you to do this.
- If you are under 16 you can still see your file, and any information written about you. It is best if someone goes through this with you, and is there to explain anything you do not understand.
- You will not be able to see any information that is about other people or
 has been given by other people unless they agree to have the information
 available to you.
- Your file may contain a restricted access section which you would not be able to see because of its contents.
- You have the right to have all the information you can see in your file, presented in a way in which you can understand.
- You have the right to have any points you disagree with noted in your file.
- If you are under 16 your parents can also see your file, but with the same restrictions that apply to you. If you are over 16 you have the right to agree or refuse that your parents look at your file. If anyone else requests to see your file, for example, other social workers or a Court, you will normally be asked for your view on this.

Expectations and sanctions

EXPECTATIONS

Just like your rights and responsibilities, there are things which you will be expected to do while you are living with your carers.

Each foster family have their own 'house rules' which everyone agrees to.

Sometimes these are not written down but are how the family choose to treat each other to be fair, polite and happy while living there. Your carer's will talk to about what they are and you will be asked for your opinion.

In general house rules will include rules about :

- Treating others with respect, this includes not hitting anyone or swearing/ using abusive language.
- Knocking on other's bedroom doors before going inside.
- A time for coming home at night or a time you are allowed to play outside until.
- Bedtimes.
- A time for getting up in the morning and going to school.
- You will not be allowed to have alcohol or drugs: they will be removed from you and your social worker informed.
- Foster Care Connect would wish you to be as healthy as possible and your carers will not allow you to smoke within their home. If you do smoke you can get help to stop.
- Respecting other people's property by not damaging property or furniture.
- You will be expected to do some household chores, including helping to keeping your bedroom clean and tidy and helping to tidy up after meal times.

Your carers will talk to you about what is expected of you, and if you think that any of them are unfair please talk to your carer, your social worker, your carer's link worker or anyone else who is independent, for example the Who Cares? worker, or your local children's rights worker.

Expectations and sanctions

SANCTIONS

You are expected to contribute to and follow the house rules. If you do something that you are not supposed to do then there are sanctions which carer's can put in place. You should accept a fair sanction and have an opportunity to discuss what you think would be fair in the circumstances. If you disagree with the sanction given, then you have a right to complain.

SANCTIONS WHICH ARE ALLOWED ARE:

- You can be grounded/not allowed out.
- You can be expected to go to bed earlier than usual.
- You might not be allowed to go on an outing or special treat.
- You may be given tasks or extra household chores to do.
- You could have some of your pocket money reduced to compensate for any damage done, if the sum is quite high them you can pay it off over time.
 You will always get two thirds of your pocket money.

SANCTIONS WHICH ARE NOT ALLOWED ARE:

- Carers are not allowed to hit or threaten you.
- You must not have all your pocket money withheld.
- You must not be locked in a room
- You must not have food or meals removed as a punishment.
- You must not be made a fool of by your carers or their children.
- You should not have contact with your family or your social worker as a punishment.
- Carers and their children should not ignore you as a punishment. This is different from not being spoken to until you have calmed down.
- You should not have your shoes taken away unless you are using them to hurt someone.
- You should not be punished by having to wear your night clothes in the day time.

Review meetings

Your carers will write down any sanctions given to you in their daily diary. All records are checked by their Foster Care Connect link worker to check that they are fair.

It is very important that children and young people who are 'looked after' have regular meetings to talk about how you are while you are living with carers. Important decisions are made at these meetings about how long you should be living away from home, why you can not live with your family at the moment, about your health and your education.

Child Care Reviews involve all the important people who care for you and are held to discuss your Care Plan and the progress made since the last review meeting. Child Care Reviews must be held six weeks after the start of your placement, three months after your first, initial review and then every six months there after. You or your social worker can call for an early review if you feel there are important things that need to be talked about.

When a child or young person has to live away from home it is important to plan your future and make sure the care you are getting is what you need, and that if you can return home that this is planned for and time scales given. Some children or young people can not return home as they need long term care and it is important that plans are made for the care they need.

You're Views:

Your views are taken seriously, and you will be given the chance to write or draw a report which will be used for the review. You can also invite someone to help you complete the form for you and if you are going to attend the review, you may take this person with you. This could be a relative, the Who cares? worker or the local children's rights worker.

Who attends?

The Child Care Review is organised by your social worker. The other people who are usually invited are: You; your parents; your social worker and their senior; your carer and their link worker. Other people who can be asked to attend are your teacher; your doctor; or any other professional you have contact with.

Complaints, comments and suggestions

Foster Care Connect would like to know what people think so as we can improve and develop the service given to you. We want to hear from you if you have a problem and want to complain about the way you are being looked after, or if you have any ideas about how to improve the care you are given. We'd also be really pleased to have any positive comments that you may want to share with us!

You have the right to feel safe and be well cared for, if you feel that this is not the case then please follow the guidance below.

Talk to someone you think might be able to help, and who is already responsible for your care. This would be your carer, your social worker, a parent or relative or your carer's link worker. They will talk to you about what is wrong and help you to sort the problem out quickly, or put you in touch with someone who can. You may want to ask someone independent to do this for you. This would be your Who Cares? worker, your local children's rights worker and you can also contact the Care Inspectorate who regulates our service.

YOUR CARER:

Speak to your carer about the problem if you can, they are likely to be able to sort it out quickly or help you get in touch with someone who can.

Complaints, comments and suggestions

YOUR SOCIAL WORKER:

Talk to your social worker, either by phoning their office or in person the next time you see them. You can also request that they visit you specially to look at your complaint. If you can't get in touch with your social worker, you can ask to talk to the duty social worker or the senior social worker in the office. Please explain to the receptionist that it is important you talk with someone. If you need to talk to someone urgently out of office hours, then you can phone the Emergency Duty Team. These are the social workers who cover for the local area in the evenings and weekends. You should be able to use the phone where you are living, and ask to use it privately if you need to.

YOUR SOCIAL WORKERS PHONE NUMBER IS:			
THE LOCAL EMERGENCY DUTY TEAM NUMBER IS:			
YOUR CARERS LINK WORKER If you want to contact your carer's link-worker you can call them on:			

MAKING A COMPLAINT, COMMENT OR SUGGESTION

- · Always remember that you have the right to make a complaint in confidence
- That it will be taken seriously
- That you will get a reply to your complaint and that the adults who look after you will do their best to help sort out the problem and make you feel better.

Complaints, comments and suggestions

If it's too difficult to talk to any of the people already suggested, then there is a complaint form which you can use, which you send to one of the directors of Foster Care Connect and they will answer you complaint quickly and give you a response. If you have used your forms, please ask your carer's for another one, or contact your carer's link worker who will send you more. Foster Care Connect also has an Independent Complaints Officer who will deal with your complaint if it can not be dealt with by the director, or if you are not happy with the outcome. You should always feel confident that we will investigate your complaint. If you tell us about something that could mean that you or other children or young people are at risk of harm, then this will be investigated differently. You will be spoken to first and you will be informed about how this will happen, either from your social worker or your carer's link-worker. The information you give to us will be kept as private as possible and you will be kept informed about what is happening about your complaint. If you would prefer to complain to someone outside of Foster Care Connect or the Social Work Department you can talk to the following independent people:

WHO CARES? (SCOTLAND):

CHILDLINE SCOTLAND:

Tel 0141 554 4452

Tel 0800 88 4444

THE SCOTTISH CHILD LAW CENTRE:

Tel 0800 317500

THE CARE INSPECTORATE:

Tel 01896 664400

(Galashiels office)

YOUR LOCAL CHILDREN'S RIGHTS OFFICERS NUMBER IS:

What will happen if I go missing?

It is really important that your carers know where you are at all times, this is because you need to be safe from harm. If you are discovered to be missing then your carers and perhaps the police will search for you.

'Missing' means that you go away from where you are meant to be without permission and don't tell people where you are going, or who you are with.

Your carers and other people responsible for you will ask your friends, contact relatives and may search your room for clues of your whereabouts. The police may be called when there is concern for your safety.

If you cannot be found after some time, then your name and description will be given to the police and they will notify other police forces to help with the search. A further search may be required if you disappear in worrying circumstances, and you may have your photo graph displayed in newspapers to help us contact you.

When you are found by your carer or social worker, you will be brought back to your carer's home. If the police find you, then they will have to arrange for you to be collected from the police station. In some cases the police will return you, particularly if you have a children's hearing recommendation that you should live at a certain address.

When you return, your carers or social worker will talk to you about why you went missing, it is important that the people caring for you know what is wrong so that they can help you. If you are injured or are unwell a doctor or nurse may be asked to visit you. Your social worker will want to talk to you about what happened, and if you ran away on purpose, then the people responsible for you will meet to meet to look at ways of preventing this from happening again, by looking at the reasons why you went missing.

My homepage - important numbers and addresses

Remember you should always be able to talk to someone in private. For further information and advice, you can contact any of the following people:

Who Cares? (Scotland)

5 Oswald Street

Glasgow

G1 4QB

Tel: 0141 226 4446

Childline 'the line'

Freepost 1111

Glasgow

G1 1BR

Tel: 0800 884444

Scottish Child Law Centre

1st Floor, Old College

South Bridge

Edinburgh

EH8 9YL

Tel: 0131 667 6333/ 0800 328 8970

Childline 'the bullying line'

Tel: 0800 44 1111 Standby Tel: 0800 811 505

Social Care and Social Work

The Care Inspectorate

3rd Floor, Maxwell House

Bridge Street

Galashiels TD1 1SW

Tel: 01986 664400

www.scswis.com

You can gain access to Foster Care Connect's latest Inspection Report from above web address.

My homepage - important numbers and addresses

You can contact the Duty Officer at The Care Inspectorate any time if there are serious or important things that you are not happy about to do with being in foster care or if there are serious or important things that you are not happy about to do with Foster Care Connect.

OTHER NAMES AND NUMBERS YOUR SOCIAL WORKER IS

THEIR TELEPHONE NUMBER IS

YOUR FOSTER CARER

THEIR TELEPHONE NUMBER IS

My homepage - important numbers and addresses

OTHER PEOPLE

THEIR TELEPHONE NUMBER IS







contact: 01896 824405 Melrose Office www.fcconnect.co.uk