

WELCOME TO FOSTER CARE



Welcome to foster care

If you have this children's guide you must be moving to a foster carers or already living with one.

We hope this leaflet helps you understand a bit more about foster care.

What is foster care?

Sometimes children can't live with their own families because of illness or other problems. When this happens a Social Worker will make plans for someone else to take care of you.

Who are foster carers?

Foster Carers are ordinary people who live in ordinary houses or flats. They live in Tameside or nearby.

All foster carers are different. Your foster carer is carefully chosen to look after you.

What do Foster Carers do?

- They will make sure you are safe.
- They will listen to you about any worries or problems you have.
- They will help you find out what the plans are for you and your family.
- They will help you to tell people what you want.
- They will make sure you eat properly.
- They will make sure you have decent clothes to wear.
- They will help look after your health—like taking you to the doctors when you are ill.
- They will help you with your education—like helping you with your homework or helping you to sort out any problems at school.
- They will let you be yourself and not force their own beliefs on you.
- They will give you pocket money.
- They will help you to take part in hobbies and other leisure activities.

What will it be like there?

Some things will be different to home other things will be the same. All foster homes are different. In some homes there will be other children, or adults or pets. Maybe you could write a list of all the things you want to know so that you can ask your social worker and foster carers.

Will I be able to see my family if I want to?

If it is safe for you to see your family, and good for you, then we will make sure you can talk to or see your family as much as possible. If there is anyone in your family who you would like to see (or anyone who you would not like to see) then it is important that you tell your Social Worker. Your Social Worker will be able to tell you more about the plans for when and how you see or talk to your family. Some children can't see their family for different reasons—if this is true for you then it is important you know this isn't your fault.

Will I still go to the same school and clubs?

Your Social Worker will try to keep important things (like school, hobbies and friends) the same. Some things may change if you and your Social Worker decide this will be better for you. It is important that you tell your Social Worker and Foster Carers what are the things that are important to you.

How long will I be in foster care?

This depends on what is happening for you and your family. Some young people are only in foster care for a little while, others stay for longer. How long you stay in foster care will be decided by your Social Worker, your parents, yourself and possibly a judge.

Are there any rules for Foster Carers and Social Workers?

Foster Carers and Social Workers have to follow a set of rules made up by the government:

- These are called 'The national minimum standards for foster care'
- They make sure all children and young people in foster care are cared for properly.
- The people who make sure these rules are followed are called Ofsted.

There are also another set of rules which say how foster care should work in Tameside. This is called 'The Statement of Purpose'.

If you want to know more about these rules then talk to either your Social Worker or the Children's Rights Officer.

For me?

There will be rules about things like how late you stay out and other rules to keep you safe and well. Talk with your foster carer about the rules. If you are worried about forgetting them ask them to write them down for you. If any rules seem unfair then talk to your Foster Carer or Social Worker about this.

Different types of foster care My placement is "task centred" - what does that mean?

If you are in task centred placement then you will stay with that carer until a certain task (or job) has been completed. This may mean that you will stay with that carer until things change at home and you are able to go back and live at home. At other times you will stay with that carer until the right long term carer is found for you. A task centred placement could last between one night and two years.

My placement is “long term”—what does that mean?

This means that you will stay with that carer for a long time—usually until you are old enough to be more independent.

I am in “respite foster care” - what does that mean?

Respite care is often used so that the person who normally looks after you can have a rest. You will probably stay with the respite carer for a short time. Sometimes you will spend time with a carer regularly (like one weekend a month)

My placement is “out of borough” what does that mean?

An 'out of borough' placement is one which is not in Tameside. Wherever possible we try to keep children living in, or near to Tameside. If you are being placed 'out of borough' you may want to talk to your Social Worker about what plans they have made for you to see your family and friends, and where you will be going to school.

What if I am unhappy?

If you are unhappy it is important that you talk to someone. You could speak to your Foster Carer, Social Worker, The Children's Rights Officer, someone from the Emotional Health of Looked After Children Team, or someone else whom you trust. There is a list of people you could contact, and how to get hold of them, at the end of leaflet.

What if I am not happy about the way I have been treated?

If you are unhappy about the way you have been treated then it is important that you tell someone so that we can try to sort it out. If you are still not happy you may want to make a complaint. There are a few different ways you can make a complaint. The Children's Rights Officer can help you with this. If you prefer you could complain directly to Tameside Council's complaints Team, they can be phoned on 0161 370 1179 or texted on 07866 599 035.

You can also contact OFSTED. You can phone them on 0300 123 1231, or write them at:

OFSTED, Picadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester, M1 2WD.

They also have a website where you can find out more and tell them what you think www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Who do I tell if I am happy about the way I have been treated?

We would also like to know if a carer or worker has done a good job. If you have anything nice to say about a carer or anyone who works with you then your Social Worker or the Children's Rights Officer would love to hear about this.

Who is here to help me?

Your Social Worker

Your Social Worker is here to help you and your family sort out your problems. Your Social Worker will try to do what is best for you.

They will make decisions about lots of things so it is important that you tell them how you feel and what you want.

Name of Social Worker

Telephone

Your Independent Reviewing Officer

Your Independent Reviewing Officer is

You can contact your Independent Reviewing Officer on 0161 342 4343
or you can email them at Conference&Review@tameside.gov.uk

Emotional Health of Looked After Children

In Tameside we have a team of specialist workers who are here to help you if you are feeling unhappy or angry or struggling with your feelings.
Telephone: 0161 604 3600

The information shop

The information shop gives advice to young people aged 13–25 on everything from health to education to housing to relationships. You can phone them on 0161 308 3388 or pop in to see them at 14 Market Avenue, Ashton.

Child Line

This is a free, confidential advice line especially for children who are looked after—
0800 11 11

Children's Rights Officer

The Children's Rights Officer—Rodger Morgan is an independent worker whose job it is to help you. The Children's Rights Officer could help you if you have a problem, if you need help to get people to listen to what you think, if you want to make a complaint, or just if you want someone to chat to.
Freephone: 0800 195 2978

Any questions

Write them down here and ask your Social Worker or Foster Carer.