

greater london fostering.

A young person's guide to fostering



This guide will help you find out about GLF, your foster carers and all the people that are here to help you. Some of this guide is to provide you with information about fostering. There are also some sections for you to fill out. These sections can be used to tell your foster family a little bit about you and your family.

What is fostering?

Fostering means going to live with a ‘foster family’ when it’s not possible to live with your family. Fostering is sometimes referred to as “going into care” or “being looked after.”

Being in foster care does not mean that your family does not love you. There are many reasons that children and young people come into care, far too many to detail in this section. If you have absolutely any doubt about why you are in care then you should contact your social worker who will be happy to help. There is a section later on in the guide that will give you information on who you need to contact in different situations.

We think that it’s important that you can grow up in a family home with a parent or parents who will take care of you. Foster care provides children and young people with a safe, secure and nurturing family environment, and allows them to keep in contact with their own families if they wish.

You may be with your foster family for a very short time, possibly weeks or even a few days. Some children and younger people could be with their foster families for a number of years. No matter how long you’re with your foster family, they will treat you as if you are part of the family. If there are any other children in that family, they will become your foster brothers and sisters. Again, it is very important to remember that being in foster care, does not mean that your family does not love you.

Did you know...?

There are about 40,000 children and young people in care at any one time in the UK.

Did you also know that these famous people were fostered.....do you recognise any of them?

Phillips Idowu
(World & European TripleJump
Champion)



Lorraine Pascal
(TV Chef)



Nelson Mandela (Former President of
South Africa)



Steve Jobs
(Founder of Apple)



Rhona Cameron
(Openly lesbian comedian)



Marilyn Monroe



Beenie Man
(Reggae/Ragga Artist)



Bill Clinton
(Former US President)



Eddie Murphy
(American actor- Daddy DayCare)



About me:

The purpose of this section is to give you the chance to tell your new foster family about you and what you like and dislike. You could also ask other looked after children or birth children in your new foster home to fill out similar questions about themselves.

My name is:

My age:

My ethnicity:

My language(s):

My religion or belief: My favourite clothes:

My school:

My favourite subject:

My favourite book:

My favourite album/artist: My favourite TV show:

My favourite computer game:

My favourite website:

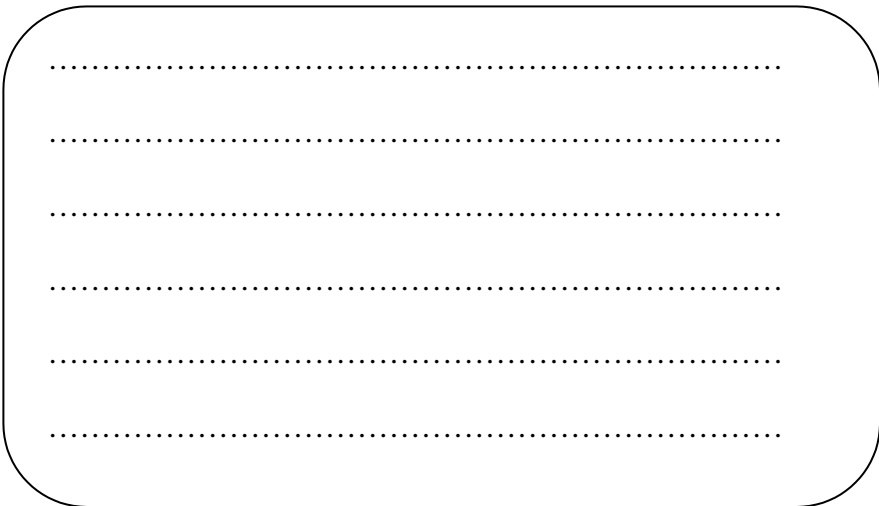


Foods I really like:



A large rounded rectangular box with a black border and rounded corners. Inside the box, there are seven horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly, providing a guide for handwriting.

Foods I really don't like:

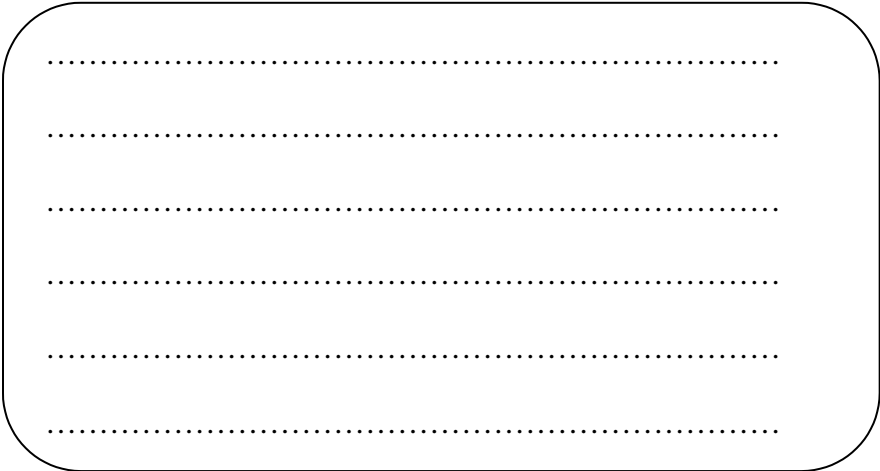


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About my family and friends

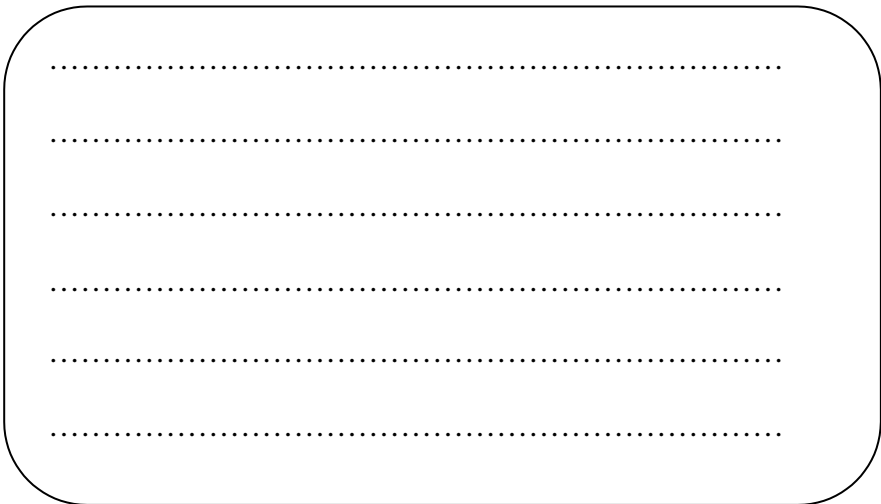
This section can be filled out if you want to communicate things about your family and friends:

Family:



A large rounded rectangular box with a black border, containing six horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Friends:



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My Foster Carers

Who are my new foster carers?

What are my foster carers' names?

Insert a picture of your foster carers here

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.....

.....

Where is my new foster home?



.....

.....

.....

Who else lives in my foster home?

Insert a picture of anyone else who lives in your foster home

.....

.....

.....



Rights



Every human has rights and this includes children and young people. In the UK there are laws such as the Children's Act (1989) which will ensure that you are treated fairly and justly wherever you are living. Your rights will include but are not restricted to the following:

- The right to healthcare and education
- The right to protection if you are being or have been harmed
- The right to be treated fairly and with respect, regardless of your background including your ethnicity, your religion or belief, a disability, whether you are straight or lesbian, gay, bisexual or whether you are male, female or transgender.
- The right to be helped by Social Services if you are in need of help and support
- The right to see what is written about you and to make your voice heard
- The right to complain
- The right not to be punished in certain ways when you staying away from home

What should my foster carers do?

There are many things that your foster carer will do for you. This may differ between placements but below are some of the things that you should expect:

- Provide support for your educational needs
- Value you for who you are
- Encourage you to participate in decisions and plans for your future
- Enable you to follow a religion and observe religious holidays and festivals
- Treat you as part of their family
- Help you develop as an individual
- Teach you life skills for independent living

What will my foster carers expect me to do?

- Show respect to people both inside and outside the home
- Attend school regularly
- Join in with family meals
- Stick to your curfews
- Value diversity and not discriminate on grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender
- And finally, stick to the house rules. All families and homes have some sort of rule structure in place and these will differ dependent on where you are staying. On the next page there is a section to fill your current foster families rules for the home.

House rules:

A large rounded rectangular box with a solid black border. Inside the box, there are 15 horizontal dotted lines spaced evenly, providing a template for writing house rules.

Care Plans and Reviews



This will be put together by you, your foster family and your social worker. A care plan details the decisions that

have been made about you and your foster family for the duration of your stay with them. It will make sure that everything goes well for you and also has a checklist to make sure that everything has happened as per the plan

that was set out for you. Remember, it is your right to ask your social worker for your care plan.

Reviews are meetings which Social Services must hold for all young people in care. It is in these reviews that you will be able to agree your care plan and make sure that everyone is keeping to the targets

You will have regular reviews whilst you are in foster care and these will be chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). Your Social Worker or someone in the Social Services team will inform you who your IRO is and how you can get hold of them. It is very important that you attend your review meetings so that you have an input into decisions about your life.

Your first review meeting will take place after you have been looked after by your foster family for four weeks. The next meeting will take place after three months and then they will take place every six months thereafter.

NOTE: You should always be able to take part in decisions about your care and your future.

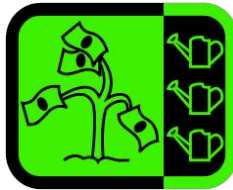


Allowances



Children and young people that are being looked after by foster families are entitled to pocket money and allowances. The amount that you receive will depend on your age. Your allowance will be agreed between you, your social worker and your new foster family.

You will also receive a clothing allowance, money for activities and transport. Again, if you have any questions about any of your allowances you should discuss with your foster carers and your social worker.



How do I complain? The procedure:

The most important thing to remember about the complaints procedure is that nothing bad will happen to you if you complain – IT IS YOUR RIGHT!

Sometimes it may be a bit daunting and complicated. If this is the case then ask your social worker or someone you trust to help you.

There might be many reasons that you would complain. Here are just a few examples:

- You are being treated badly or unfairly by a GLF worker or carer
- Your views are not being listened to or not taken seriously
- You aren't getting what you need – for example to do with your education, health, social life, or money
- You are being punished unfairly
- You are being discriminated against (for example because of your race, disability, sexual orientation or something else)

What if you are still not being listened to..?

After talking to your social worker or your foster carer's Supervisor you feel your complaint has not been dealt with, then you need to speak or write to Debbie George. Debbie works for Greater London Fostering, and her job is to make sure that all complaints are dealt with properly and quickly. You can write to her, or get someone to write to her for you at:

Greater London Fostering,
1 Stratford Office Village, Stratford,
E15 4EA

Or if you want you can phone her on: 020 8347 8741

Linda will get back to you as quickly as possible to tell you what she has done about your problem.

If after contacting **Debbie**, you still think your problem has not been dealt with then you can contact **Debbie** again. This time however you can ask Greater London Fostering to organise an independent investigation of your complaint. This is where a person who doesn't work for Greater London Fostering or with your social worker looks at your complaint, and the way it was dealt with to see if any mistakes were made.

When you hear the results of this investigation and you are still not happy, you can ask to meet a group of people called the Panel. Your foster carers' social worker will help explain this stage of the process to you.

Advocates – who are they?

If you don't feel like you can speak to your social worker, foster carers or anybody else you could try an advocate. An advocate is someone that will speak up on your behalf. They will also be able to provide you with information, advice and legal representation.

An advocate will let you say what you want to say and give you support if you need it. What you say to an advocate is strictly confidential and does not have to be passed on to your social worker. That is unless you want them to or in case that you or others are in danger.

If you want someone to talk to you could try the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS). NYAS is a charity working for children and young people in England and Wales.

The telephone number is:

FREEPHONE 0808 808 1001 or send an email to help@nyas.net

Bullying



Bullying consists of three basic types of abuse – emotional, verbal and physical. Bullying can include things such as threats, name calling, physical violence, hitting and punching. It can however also include bullying over the phone or the computer via social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter. It should be defined as any action or intimidating act which deliberately upsets you.

People bully others for a number of reasons. These reasons could include wanting to be Perceived as popular or tough. Sometimes people bullying others out of jealousy or even because they are being bullied themselves.

If you feel that you are being bullied at school, at home or in the community then you should definitely speak to someone. You could speak to your teacher, foster carer or social worker. If you don't feel like you can talk to any of these people then try your foster carers' social worker or someone that you trust.

Below are some numbers you can call for further help:

Childline is a free 24-hour telephone helpline. Children and young people can call about any problem, at any time – day or night.
Helpline **020 7825 2500**

<http://www.childline.org.uk/Pages/Home.aspx>

Other useful contacts:

If you need an advocate or someone to talk to about any problem then you might find it useful to use one of the numbers below:

Kidscape

<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

Get Connected:

020 7730 3300

<http://www.getconnected.org.uk/home>

Children's Commissioner for England:

020 7783 8330

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>

Samaritans:

020 8368 6789

<http://www.samaritans.org/>

Stonewall, the lesbian, gay and bisexual equality charity:

020 7593 1850

<http://www.stonewall.org.uk>

Gendered Intelligence for transgender young people

<http://genderedintelligence.co.uk/>

Bullying UK

Talk to Frank – a charity which provides advice and help around drugs:

0800 1111

FPA a sexual health charity providing information, advice and support on sexual

health:

0808 808 4994

The GLF Team

Director



Linda

Managers



Debbie



Melanie



Richard



Elspeth



Rahima

Supervisors

One of the Supervisors below will be assigned to support your foster carer/s. They will get to know you and are available to help with any problems you may have.



Sue



Janet



Dionne



Kiran



Chidi



Louise



Imani

OFSTED - (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)

Every year, an inspector from OFSTED writes to foster children asking them if they are being well looked after.

You don't have to write back to the Inspector if you don't want to, but it is a good idea for some children to tell the inspector what they think.

Contact number 0300 123 1231

The inspectors also write to foster carers and visit GLF's offices. If you wanted to you could ask to speak to an inspector at GLF's offices or they could come and visit you.

You can get in touch with GLF's inspector by ringing:

0208 347 8741

You should ring this number if you are unhappy about something and nobody is helping you to sort the problem out.

The Inspector's address is:

OFSTED Inspection
Piccadilly Gate,
Store Street,
Manchester
M1 2WD

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Summary of Statement of Purpose

What does Greater London Fostering agency do and how do we aim to do it?

We have a statement of purpose that details all about our fostering agency. Here is a summary of our statement.



We believe that:

- children's needs are best met in a caring family with an individual programme of support
- our foster carers will work with other people to plan for children's needs to support their education and health and provide a positive experience of their time in foster care
- our foster carers will meet cultural and individual care needs and promote contact between children and their families. Standards of care
- Our foster carers have a supervisor who they can contact at any time. The supervisor sees children regularly, gives them this Children's Guide and lets them know about their right to complain
- Foster homes must be clean and comfortable and children must have good food, clothes, toys, books and pocket money. Children must be kept safe inside and outside the home and whilst travelling.
- Children must be supported to develop a positive self-image with their cultural identity, their sexual orientation, religion, schooling, leisure activities and health needs all met. Where possible, they should be included in family holidays.
- Foster children should not be left alone. Any babysitters used must be CRB checked and vetted by the agency. Children should not be allowed to stay overnight at friends or do anything that has significant risk without social worker or review meeting agreement.
- Foster carers should use positive parenting and reward good behaviour. They cannot use any punishment that is physical, cruel or unreasonable. They should only use restraint as a last resort where a child's safety is at risk or property will be seriously damaged.

Greater London Fostering facts

- GLF was set up in 1999.
- In Jan 2016 we currently have 107 foster families and 123 foster children in placement.
- We offer lots of different kinds of placement; children can be with foster families on a short or long term basis. GLF will take a placement depending on whether they have suitable foster carers in the right area with enough space for a child and who are able to meet their individual needs.
- GLF record and investigate any complaints that are made and try to learn from any mistakes that arise.
- Recruiting new foster carers, People who want to become foster carers are visited at home. If they might be suitable they attend a 3 day training course.
- They have a very careful assessment process, involving a number of people, to make sure that they have the skills and characteristics needed.
- The social worker leading the assessment gets to know the family well, talks to

- people who know them and does a range of checks into their background.
- Finally the application to become a foster carer is considered by a panel, which includes some independent people, who decide whether the assessment has been done thoroughly enough and recommend whether or not they should be approved.

The staff

- **Director:**
Linda Norwood
- **Operations Manager & Responsible Individual:**
Melanie Yearwood
- **Acting Registered Manager:**
Debra Zschoch George
- **Business Development Manager:**
Richard Norwood
- **South Social Work Manager:**
Elspeth Devlin
- **North Social Work Manager:**
Rahima Kadir
- **Placements and Assessment Team Manager:**
David Bromberg
- **Placements Officer:**
Zara Rachid
- **Training Manager & Panel Advisor:**
Anne Moore
- **Educational Consultant:**
Sabeen Mirza
- **South Team Social Workers:**
Sue Gilbert, Janet Harvey, Louise Donohoe

- **North Team Social Workers:**
Dionne Francis, Imani Bartholomew, Kiran Bhatti
- **North Team Foster Carer Supervisor:**
Chidi Richardson
- **Operations & HR Co-ordinator:**
Lauren Fincher
- **South Senior Administrator:**
Sandy Lane
- **North Senior Administrator:**
Tammy DeSouza
- **Development & Recruitment Officer:**
James Cleary
- **IT Officer:**
Rory Macleod
- **Finance Manager:**
Ahmez Acharaz
- **Finance Assistant:**
Sandeep Kundi