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 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?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Phillips Idowu</th>
<th>Steve Jobs</th>
<th>BEENIE MAN</th>
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<tr>
<td>(World &amp; European Triple Jump Champion)</td>
<td>(Founder of Apple)</td>
<td>(Reggae/Ragga Artist)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loraine Pascal (TV Chef)</td>
<td>Rhona Cameron (Comedian)</td>
<td>BILL CLINTON (Former US President)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nelson Mandela (Former President of South Africa)</td>
<td>Marilyn Monroe (American actress and model)</td>
<td>EDDIE MURPHY (American actor- Daddy Day Care)</td>
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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:

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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:

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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

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
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.
Care Plans and Reviews

The care plan will be put together by your social worker. The care plan details the decisions that have been made about your care for the duration of your stay with your foster carer. 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 children and young people in care. It is in these reviews that you will be able to have your say about 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.
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 foster 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 Marcella Denis. Marcella 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  
The Quadrangle  
86 Romford Road  
E15 4EH

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

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

If after contacting Marcella, you still think your problem has not been dealt with then you can contact Marcella 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?**

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 speak your mind and give you support if required. 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

Send an email to: help@nyas.net
They have a website: www.nyas.net
Facebook: www.facebook.com/NYAS.YP

You can always ask your local authority social worker or your foster carer’s social worker for more information about what an advocate does and how you can get one.
**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 be 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.

Contact Number: 0800 1111 - 24hrs

This is a particular number for children in care - Contact Number: 0800 884444

Website: www.childline.org.uk
1) Don’t post any personal information online – like your address, email address or mobile number.

2) Think carefully before posting pictures or videos of yourself. Once you’ve put a picture of yourself online most people can see it and may be able to download it, it’s not just yours anymore.

3) Keep your privacy settings as high as possible

4) Never give out your passwords

5) Don’t befriend people you don’t know

6) Don’t meet up with people you’ve met online. Speak to your parent or carer about people suggesting you do

7) Remember that not everyone online is who they say they are

8) Think carefully about what you say before you post something online

9) Respect other people’s views, even if you don’t agree with someone else’s views doesn’t mean you need to be rude

10) If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried: leave the website, turn off your computer if you want to and tell a trusted adult immediately.
Useful Phone numbers and websites

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:

**ChildLine:**
You can call ChildLine for free any time. ChildLine also has email or you can chat to someone 1-2-1 online. It also has a ‘Face to Face Support Service’ for children in care who want to talk to someone, available in East London and Croydon.
Website: www.childline.org.uk
Contact Number: 0800 1111 - 24hrs
This is a particular number for children in care - Contact Number: 0800 884444

**Samaritans:**
Around the clock, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you need a response immediately, it's best to call them on the phone. This number is FREE to call. You don't have to be suicidal to call them.
Website: www.samaritans.org
Contact Number: Whatever you're going through, call us free any time, from any phone on 116 123

**Kidscape:**
This website has information and helpful advice.
Website: www.kidscape.org.uk
Contact Number: 020 7730 3300

**Get Connected:**
This is a helpline to help you to get the best help you need. It is open from 1-11pm
Website: www.getconnected.org.uk
Contact Number: 0808 808 4994 – 11am – 11pm

**Bullying UK:**
This website has information for young people.
Website: www.bullying.co.uk
Contact Number: 0208 8000 2222

**Stonewall, the lesbian, gay and bisexual equality charity:**
Website: www.stonewall.org.uk
Contact Number: 020 7593 1850
Gendered Intelligence for transgender young people:
Website: www.genderedintelligence.co.uk
Contact Number: 0207 832 5848

Talk to Frank – a charity which provides advice and help around drugs:
Website: www.talktofrank.com
Contact Number: 0300 123 6600

FPA a sexual health charity providing information, advice and support on sexual health:
Website: www.fpa.org.uk
Contact Number: 0808 808 4994

National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS):
An advocate will give you support if you do not feel you can talk to people around you. They will give you information and advice and speak up on your behalf.
Email for help: help@nyas.net
Contact Number: 0800 808 1001

Children’s Commissioner:
Advice and help for children in care or living away from home
Website: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/get-in-touch/
Contact Number: Freephone 0800 528 0731
Email for help: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/childrenscommissionersoffice

Your Independent Reviewing Officer:
If you wish to speak to your independent reviewing officer, the best way to contact them is to ask for their contact details from your foster carer, your local authority social worker, or the GLF social worker who works with your foster carer.

You can also contact GLF:
Telephone Number: 020 8347 8741
Email: info@greaterlondonfostering.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/greaterlondonfostering
Website: www.greaterlondonfostering.org
The GLF Team

Directors

Linda

Richard

Operations Manager & Responsible Individual

Melanie

Designated Registered Manager

Marcella
Social Workers

Your foster family has a supervisor. They support foster carers and also will get to know you and help you with any problems you may have. Put a circle around the one that works with your foster family.

Senior Practitioners

Sue

Dionne

Imani

Supervising Social Workers

Cassie

Maria

Angela

Rhoda

Marcene
Recruitment and Development Officers

Louise

James

What are my rights?

- Health care
- Education
- Social services
- Protection from harm
- To be treated fairly and with respect, regardless of your background
- To see what is written about you
- Be able to complain

What should my foster carers do?

There are lots of things that foster carers do for you. This includes:

- Treat you with respect
- Support your education
- Encourage you to say how you feel about what happens and help you get your voice heard
- Support you to follow your religion or belief and celebrate religious holidays and festivals
- Support you in developing as an individual
- Treat you as part of their family

What will my foster carers expect me to do?

- Show respect to everybody
- Go to school or nursery
- Join in with family meals
- Stick to your curfews
- Value difference and not discriminate
- Follow the house rules.
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: 0300 123 1231
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

**Standards of 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 DBS 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 March 2018 we currently have 113 foster families and 114 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 a foster carer 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.

**General Data Protection Regulation**

GLF are provided with and collate information about you in order to find you a foster family and to support your wellbeing and progress whilst in our care.

Once you leave our care copies of this information are returned to your Local Authority.

However, GLF will retain copies of your file to allow you access to your records up until your 25th birthday, whereupon they will be deleted.

Should you prefer these records to be deleted before this date, you may contact us at any point after your 18th birthday.