



# Parent & child guide

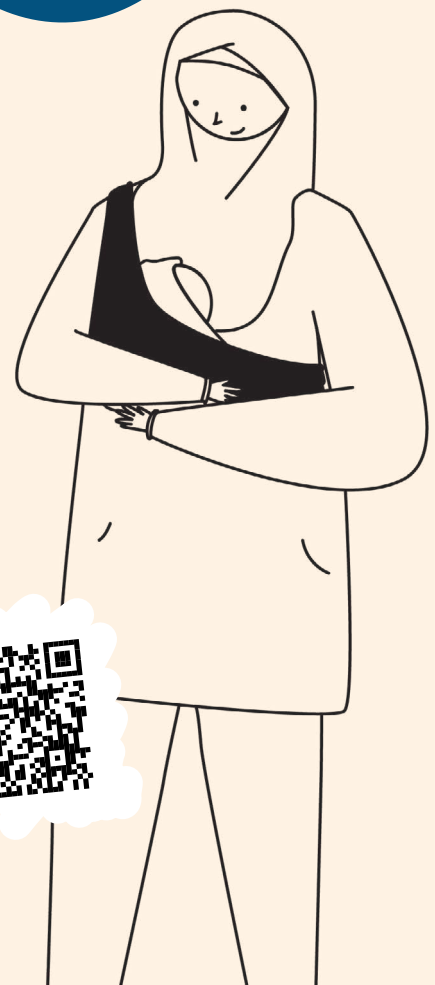


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**Note to the person supporting the parent to access this guide:** We have a full suite of guides to suit most ages and abilities. If you have a young person with communication challenges and you cannot see a guide that fits their needs, please contact your local manager and they will arrange specialist communications to help.

**Please note:** there is also a video version of this guide available [here](#)



# Welcoming you and your child

When parents like you come into foster care, they often have a lot of questions. This guide will help to answer some of these questions and let you know what to expect. Your Foster Carer can help you read this if you want them to.

## Our pledge

We know that being in foster care can be a bit scary, especially when you have a baby.

We want you to know that we are here to help you.

### We will...

- Get to know you and listen to your likes and dislikes.
- Create a supportive and safe place for you and your child.
- Help you care for your little one.
- Help you have fun and enjoy being you.
- Help you and your baby stay healthy.
- Help you stay in touch with people you care about.
- Help you with education, training or work.
- Listen to you if you have any worries or concerns about your care.
- Make sure you know your Children's Rights, [click here](#) or scan the QR code to find out more.
- Make sure you are prepared for the next stage in your life, and support you when that time comes.



**We are the Five Rivers Family,  
and we are here for you.**



# Friendly faces

These are the people you will see regularly. If you have any questions or worries, you can speak to any of them.

## Your Foster Carer

Being a parent isn't easy. Your Foster Carer will help you look after your child and teach you important parenting skills. They will keep you both safe and support you through difficult times.

**Your Foster Carer is**



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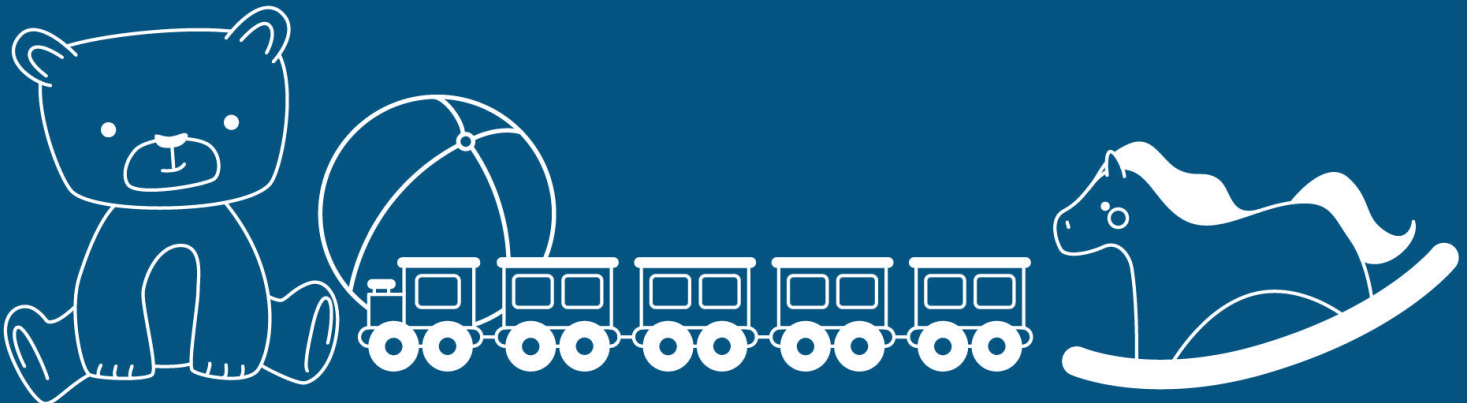
## Your Support Worker

This person will listen to your worries and concerns and make sure you are happy, healthy and supported. They will also make sure you know about any activities or events organised by the Five Rivers Family.

**Your Support Worker is**



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## Your child's Social Worker

Your child's Social Worker will be a very important person in your life. They will keep in regular contact and help make sure your little one is happy and healthy.

**Your child's Social Worker is**



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**Their phone number and email address are**

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## Your Independent Reviewing Officer

They are someone who will advocate for you (act in your best interest) and make sure you have the right level of support in place.

**Your Independent Reviewing Officer is**



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**Their phone number and email address are**

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## You may also have...

### A Local Authority Social Worker (if you are under 18)

The Local Authority is like a government but at a local level. Your Local Authority Social Worker will speak to your Foster Carer and fostering agency to make sure you are looked after.

**Your Local Authority Social Worker is**



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**Their phone and email address are**

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### A Local Authority Support Worker

This person will speak with you and your Foster Carer to make sure you are happy, healthy and supported.

**Your Local Authority Support Worker is**



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**Their phone and email address are**

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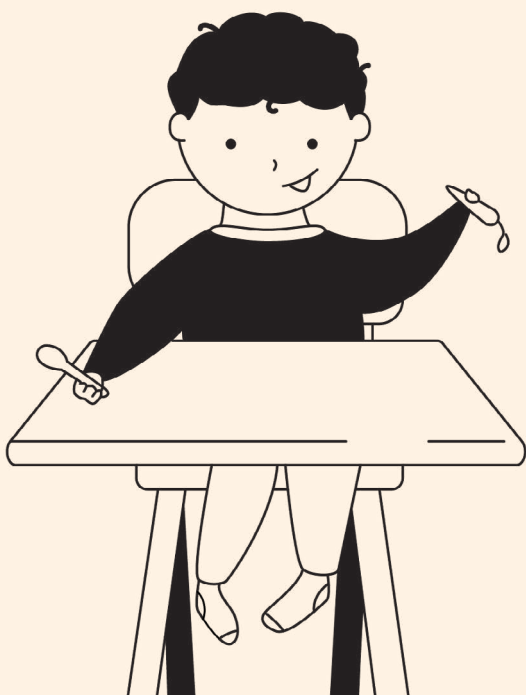
# What to expect

When a parent and child go to stay with a Foster Carer, we call this Parent and Child Fostering. Sometimes, two parents and multiple children will stay with the Foster Carer.

Your Foster Carer will offer support and gentle guidance to help you care for your child.

## This could include:

- Helping with everyday parenting tasks.
- Establishing routines.
- Developing good feeding habits.
- Making sure you can attend appointments.
- Supporting safe sleep.
- ... and more!



How long you stay in foster care will depend on your needs and the needs of your child. If you have any questions, please ask one of the people on pages 4- 6.

# All about you

We want to know all about you and your child. Your Foster Carer will talk to you about the following things:

- Things you enjoy doing with or without your child.
- Foods you and your child like or don't like.
- Any places you would like to visit, and places you want to avoid.
- Things you enjoy about parenting and things you find difficult.
- Your culture and identity (e.g. sex, gender, age, class, nationality).
- Your religious beliefs (if you would like to go to a church, mosque, synagogue, or any other place to practice your faith, let us know).

If you like, you can use the space below to make notes. This will help your Foster Carer remember everything you've talked about.

**Me and my child**





# Will I be able to do whatever I want?

All family homes have boundaries to make sure that everyone is kept safe and can live alongside each other. Sometimes these are known as house rules.

The boundaries or house rules in your Foster Carer's home may be different from those you are used to. Your Foster Carer will explain these to you and help you understand the reasons they are in place. As it is part of your Foster Carer's role to keep you and your child safe, they may not always let you do everything you would like.

**Some examples of boundaries or house rules you may be expected to follow are:**

- Show respect to everyone.
- Respect other people's property.
- Help clean shared areas, such as the living room or kitchen.

You can use the space below for notes to help make sure the boundaries or house rules are clear and understood from the start.

**House rules**



# Dealing with problems and worries

Everyone has worries about moving to a new place. If you tell us about your worries, we will try to help.

**Here are some of the things that other parents have asked about:**

- What if I don't like their rules?
- Will I have to move again?
- What if I don't like my Social Worker?

Your Foster Carer will welcome these sorts of questions. But if you would rather talk to someone else, you can speak to the other people involved in your care (see pages 4 - 6).

## If you are not happy about something

Most problems can be solved by simply talking to your Foster Carer. If this doesn't feel right or doesn't work for you, you can speak to any of the other people involved in your care. This could be your Social Worker, Support Worker (see pages 4 - 6) or Independent Reviewing Officer (details in your Care Plan).

If you have spoken to all these people and it hasn't helped, you can contact Ofsted or the Children's Commissioner for England (you can find their contact details on page 14).

[Click here](#) or scan the QR code for more details on submitting a complaint can be found in our Complaints Procedure.



# Independence skills

It is your Foster Carer's job to make sure you are prepared for the next stage in your life.

As well as teaching you parenting skills, your Foster Carer will help you learn about

- Managing your money, setting up bank accounts and paying bills.
- Healthy eating, shopping for food and cooking.
- Personal health, first aid, avoiding illnesses, and food preparation.
- Housing options and DIY.
- Education, training or work.

## Five Rivers Futures

If you are aged 18-25 when you leave our care, you can get help from Five Rivers Futures.

If you need any support and guidance, for example with housing, employment, or education, Five Rivers Futures can help. In certain circumstances, you can also apply for a grant (some money to help you pay for specific things like a kettle, toaster or maybe a washing machine).

Email: [futures@five-rivers.org](mailto:futures@five-rivers.org) Tel: **01722 516091**



# Making your voice heard

It is important that we listen to your thoughts, feelings and wishes when there are decisions being made about your care. The word we use to describe this is 'participation'. We value your participation because it helps us to provide the best possible care for you, and other people like you, who are living in care.

## Here are some ways we encourage you to share your thoughts about your care:

- Talking to the people involved in your care and contributing to your care plan.
- Attending Participation events, such as celebrations or days out with others who are in care.
- Getting involved with our Youth Council (a Council made up of young people who collect the thoughts of every person in our care).
- Giving you chances to tell us how well you think we take care of you.
- Letting you know who you can contact in case of any problems or worries (pages 4 - 6) and who to talk to if your children's rights are not being met (page 14).
- Helping you find an Independent Advocate. This is someone outside the Five Rivers family who you can trust. They will make sure you are treated well, your opinions are heard, and you get the support you need while you're in care. Speak to your Social Worker if you need an Independent Advocate.



- Helping you find an Independent Visitor. If you'd like someone to talk to, spend time with, or help you feel supported as you grow up, an Independent Visitor might be right for you. Read more at [childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](https://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)
- Helping you access a non-instructional advocacy service if you are a child with additional needs, [click here](#).

[Click here](#) or scan the QR code to refer to our Your Voice, Your Say booklet for more information.



## Participation events

We hold regular participation events and activities which you are welcome to attend if you would like. These events give you the chance to have fun, learn, and get to know other young people in care.

[Click here](#) or scan the QR code to find out more:





# Useful contacts



## Become

The Become Care Advice Line is a friendly helpline for children in care and care leavers. Call or email for help, support, advice, guidance – or just to get in touch with someone to listen to you.

**Tel: 0800 023 2033 (Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm).**

**Email: [advice@becomecharity.org.uk](mailto:advice@becomecharity.org.uk)**

## Childline

A free 24-hour helpline for children and young people in the UK. The helpline is confidential, which means that they won't share any information unless you want them to, or you are in danger.

**Tel: 08001111**

**Web: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**

## Ofsted

Ofsted are the people who inspect all fostering services to make sure that we are looking after children properly. If you think we are not doing our best for you, they will listen and try to help.

**Tel: 0300 123 1231**

**Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)**

## Children's Commissioner for England

The Children's Commissioner makes sure children in care are heard and looked after properly. They also make sure you know your rights, like the right to an Independent Visitor, and check that care systems work well for you.

**Web: [childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 0800 528 0731**

## Five Rivers Futures

If you are aged 18-25 when you leave our care and you need any advice, for example with housing, employment, or education, we can help. In certain circumstances, you can also apply for a grant (a small amount of money from £10 - £500).

**Email: [futures@five-rivers.org](mailto:futures@five-rivers.org)**

**Tel: 01722 516091**

## Your Independent Reviewing Officer

If you want to speak to your IRO about any aspect of the care you receive, you can make contact using the details in your Care Plan.



# Useful documents and links

Click the links below or scan the QR codes



[How we use your personal data](#)



[How to submit a complaint](#)



[Hear more stories about the care experience](#)

## Notes

