



Welcome Booklet

A Children and Young Person's Guide to Foster Care

Quotes from children and young people in Foster Care....

"I don't mind being in care, they accept me for who I am."

"I like living here because my carer is a good cook."

"It's alright. You get your ups and downs, but who doesn't."

"Living in care is good; it doesn't feel any different from friends. I can do the same things as friends."

"I love my carers cus they're kind."

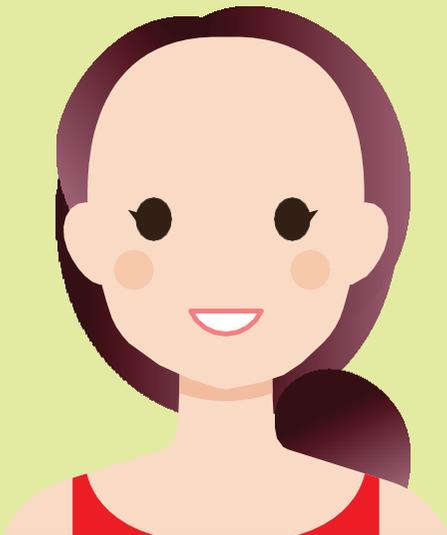
Hello & Welcome

The fact that you've been given this booklet means you are now living, or about to live, away from your family. You're bound to be feeling at least a bit confused about what's happening in your life.

You have probably got quite a few questions. This booklet will give you the answers to at least some of them and there is lots of other information about who can help you.

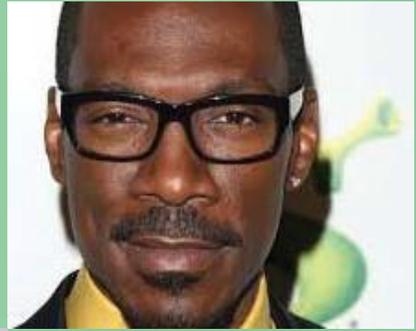
Fostering is much more common than you think.

Many famous people have been fostered, including:



Eddie Murphy

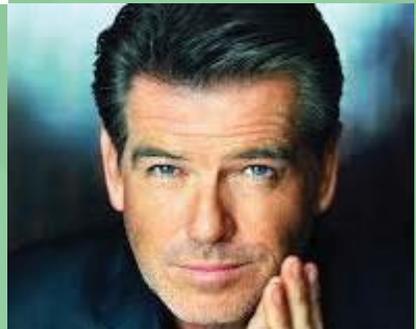
Actor. You probably know him for his voice as Donkey in Shrek.



Lorraine Pascale

Chef and TV Presenter.

Pierce Brosnan Famous actor, especially known for playing 007 James Bond.



Phillips Idowu

Olympic athlete and World Triple Jump Champion

There are about 40,000 children and young people in foster care in England today!

What is Foster Care?

Foster care is when you live with a different family to your own, arranged by a social worker. Sometimes this can be with a friend or relative, but most often it is with a family you do not know.



How do children and young people become fostered?

Every child and young person is unique and will have a different story about how and why they came into care...

Here are some of the reasons:

- There is not an adult to look after you
- You have asked for help
- The Court has asked for you to be looked after
- Your family needs time to sort things out for you to return home

Whatever your story, while you are living in care, your foster carers will be there to help and support you. You will have your own social worker who will arrange for you to meet your foster carers. Your social worker will visit you regularly to make sure that everything is working out and you are settled in the foster family.

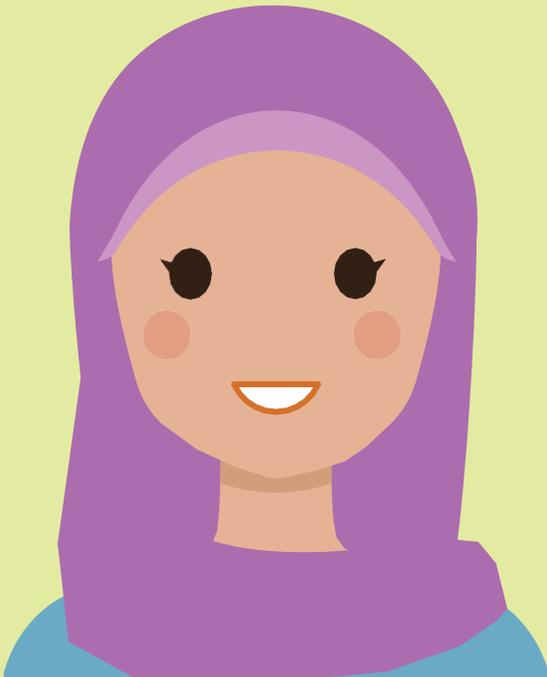
Who are Foster Carers?

They may be:

- Single, married or in a partnership
- Have other foster children or children of their own
- From different backgrounds

Foster carers are approved by the Family Placement Service Guernsey.

Before moving to your placement, your social worker will give you information about your carers so you know a little bit about them before you meet.



Every foster family is different and unique too.

Key facts about Foster Carers:

- They will have been checked to make sure they can provide good care and help you make the most out of your life.
- They have to be trained and have their own social workers to support them
- Some foster carers look after children and young people for a short time whilst things are sorted out at home
- Some foster carers have children and young people living with them until they're old enough to leave home.
- All foster carers are supported to look after you properly and provide you with the things you need

Foster carers are there to:

- Listen to your story and try to understand and support your needs whatever they might be, like your hobbies, activities, likes and dislikes
- They will work with your social worker to help you keep in touch with people who are important to you
- They are people who will do their very best to encourage and support you to achieve at school or in other activities that are important to you
- They will be involved with the day to day decisions about your care like having friends around or arranging sleep overs.



What happens when you move in?

The Family Placement Service will work very hard to find you a foster carer who would be best able to care for you. Of course, whoever this is, you will feel strange at first, so do give yourself some time to settle in.

Your foster carer knows that when you arrive you may be feeling nervous or excited or even a bit sad or angry. They will try to help you feel at home as quickly as possible. They will show you around the house, introduce you to their family, explain about family routines and meals and ask you what sorts of things you are used to.

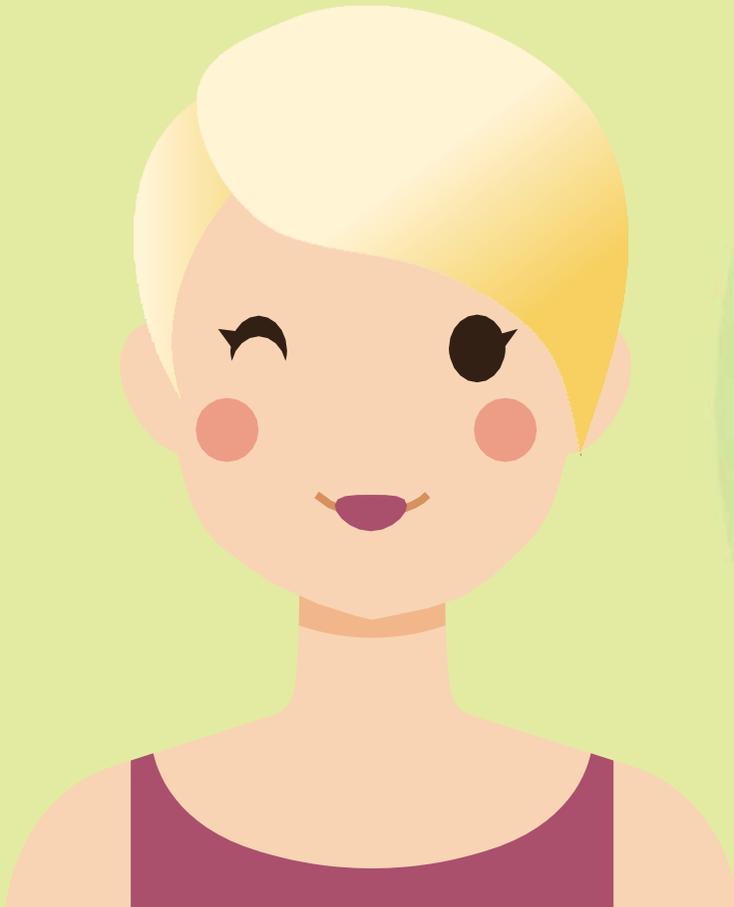
You will want to take your own clothes and any belongings which are special to you. You may have your own room or may share with a sibling, but you will always have a space that is yours alone, where you can keep safe your personal belongings. While you are living in a foster family, you will be treated the same as the other children and young people living in the family.

Will I have to change schools?

Our aim is to keep everything in your life as normal as possible, we will therefore do all we can to try to support you to stay at your current school.

Will I have contact with my family and friends?

Your foster carer and social worker will do their best to ensure that where possible you keep in contact with your family and friends.



When will I see my social worker?

There will be regular visits from your social worker to get to know you and help with any problems. You can also call them and ask them to visit you or ask your foster carer to contact them and arrange a visit.

Your Health

You will be offered a Health Assessment when you are first looked after. This is your chance to talk to a doctor about your health.

While you are looked after you have the right to good health care and all children and young people should have a medical examination on becoming looked after (and every year after that). This includes dental and eye care. We will respect your wishes if you do not want to have a medical assessment, but we think it is important to make sure all your needs are met.



Thanks to the children and young people in foster care who have kindly contributed this artwork for the leaflet.





What is going to happen to me next?

Within 4 weeks of being fostered there will be a meeting called a Review to look at how you are and to make sure things are happening as planned, for example contact with your family. This meeting will be chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer – often called an IRO. You will be told who your IRO is and how you can contact them. Your social worker will talk to you about who needs to come to your review and help with your care plan. This might include your parents and your teacher.



You should always feel safe and well cared for whilst you are with your foster family. Your views will be important in the review and the IRO will want to know what you think about being in foster care.

If you feel unable to come to the review, your social worker or a trusted adult will let people know what you think and feel. You could also write or send an e-mail message to the Chair to make sure they know what you think and feel. (Email address: HReviewingOfficer@health.gov.gg)



You're Rights

The views of children and young people are very important to Children's Services in Guernsey. They have listened to what children and young people have said about being in care and want you to know that you can expect the following:

Expect us to:

- only share your information with people who need it in order to look after you properly
- provide a named social worker whom you know how to contact and who will keep in touch with you
- involve you in all the decisions that affect your life
- provide a care plan that is up to date and will meet your needs

- find you a home that will meet your needs
- help you where possible to stay in touch with your family, friends and any other people who are important to you
- help you to do the best you possibly can at school and in your education
- care about your health and encourage you to be healthy
- work with you to give you all the help and support you need to make a success of moving on from care to adult life
- Work hard to sort out any problems or worries you have. If you don't feel happy speak to someone who can help.

If you do not feel happy with the care you are receiving from your foster carers and do not feel able to talk to them about it, then you should speak to your social worker or with the IRO.

Important Names and Contact Details:



My Social Worker is: _____

Telephone/Mobile number: _____

Email address: _____

My Independent Reviewing Officer is: _____

Telephone/Mobile number: _____

Email address: _____

More Useful Contacts!

The Hub

Free help and advice for young people Tel:
724421

Or you can message them on their Facebook page

The Who Cares? Trust

(national charity for children in care)

Tel: 02072513117

Email: mailbox@thewhocarestrust.org.uk

The Fostering Network

Email: www.fostering.net



Voice

Offering help to young people who are living in care or have recently left care

Tel: 0808 800 5792

Website: www.voiceyp.org

Action For Children

Supporting young people with accommodation, employment, substance misuse and much more.

Tel: 700218

Or you can message them on their Facebook page

Looked After Children Nurse

This is a school nurse who works specifically with children who are looked after. She is able to offer advice and support.

Tel: 725241 and ask for the LAC Nurse

ChildLine

Tel: 0800 1111

Email: www.childline.org.uk

Get Connected

(Confidential website that helps young people find sources of help).

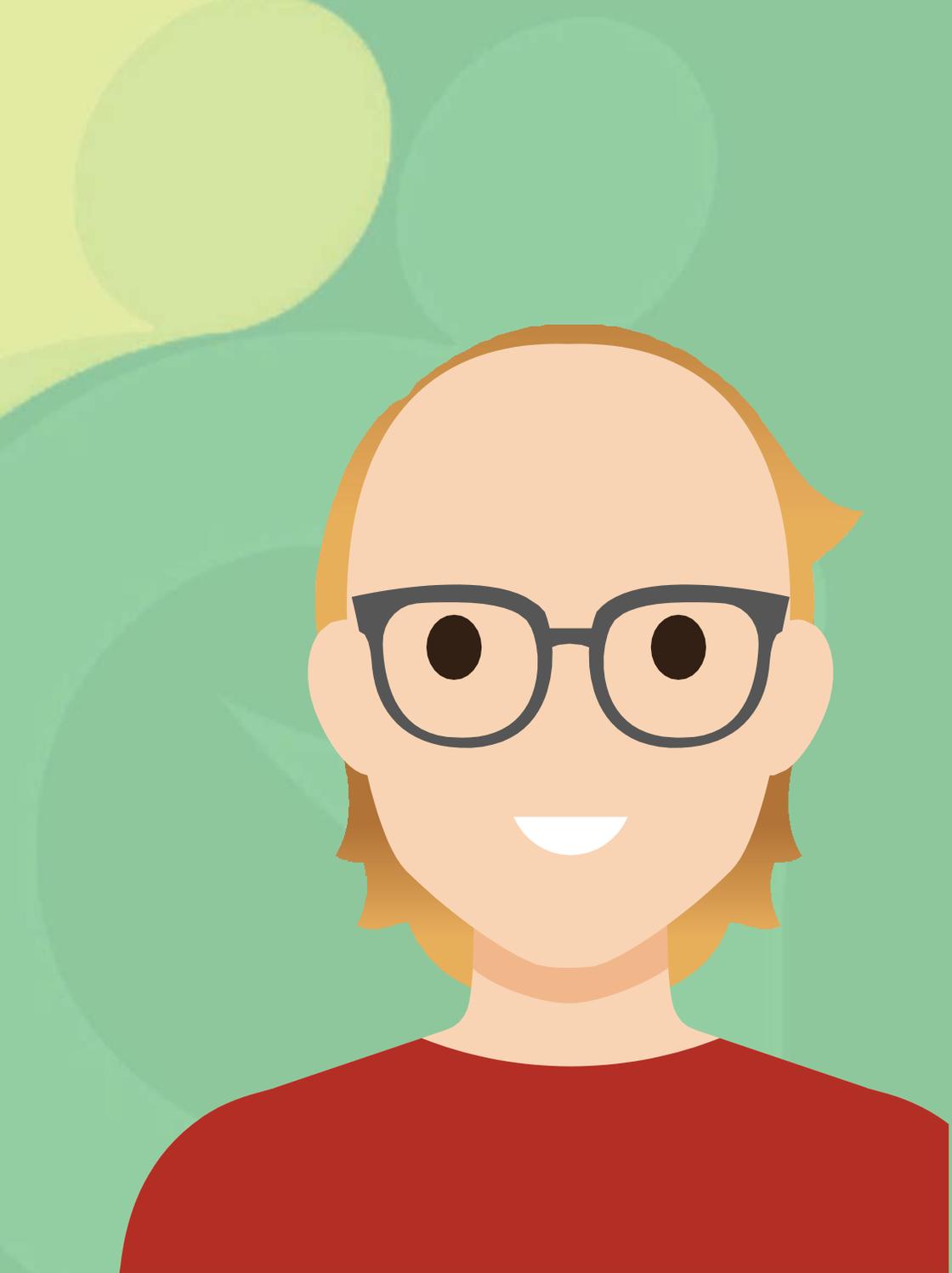
Tel: 0800 808 4994

Email: help@getconnected.org.uk

Young Minds

(The voice of young people's mental health and wellbeing)

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk



Quotes from children and young people in Foster Care....

"It never feels like I am fostered, just with my family."

"I like living with my foster carers because they are nice, they have a nice house and treat me properly."

"Its fine living in care, when you get used to being there it's not as hard as when you move in."

"Is there anything you would like to change about living with foster carers? No."

"To be honest I kinda like it better in care because as a family when we see mum in contact we all get on better that we did when we were together, and our foster family is kind and I like them."