

Important names and numbers

My social worker's name and phone number:

My foster carers' names and phone number(s):

My Independent Reviewing Officer's (IRO) name and number:

Childline (information, support and someone to listen to you):



0800 11 11



www.childline.org.uk

NYAS (help and advice for young people):



0300 330 3131



www.nyas.net

OFSTED (the official body for inspecting children's social care):



0300 123 1231



enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Rights4Me (from the Office for the Children's Rights Director):



www.rights4me.org

About this booklet

We worked with our Children in Care Council to write this booklet. It gives some quick information about foster care in Hartlepool. We wrote this booklet in May 2012 and updated it in November 2014. We will check that it is up to date in November 2016. *Cover photograph courtesy of www.careimages.com.*

Quick guide to fostering

Information for young people



Hartlepool Borough Council
Child and Adult Services



What is fostering?

Fostering is a way of looking after a child or young person who is not able to live with their parents for any reason.

When you are fostered, you live with **foster parents** or a **foster family** in their home. Foster carers are people who have been specially chosen and trained to look after children who cannot live at home. Your foster carer(s) may be someone you already know, such as an aunt or uncle, or a family friend. All foster carers are different: your **social worker** will talk to you more about your own foster carers.

Being fostered is not the same as being adopted. Your birth parents will still have **legal responsibility** for you, but we (Hartlepool Borough Council) have legal responsibility for you, too. This means we have some say in where you live and how you are looked after.

Being fostered is sometimes called “being looked after” or “going into care”.

Seeing family and friends

When you are living with your foster carers you can still see your family and friends, but only if:

- you want to see them, and
- it is safe for you to see them.

Your social worker, parents and foster carers will help you to make plans about when and where you see your mum, dad, brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents: everyone you would usually see if you were living at home. This is called **contact**. Your social worker will write down these plans so that everyone knows what they are.

If you have brothers and sisters who are also being fostered, we will try our best to find a foster home where you can all live together.

Your brothers and sisters

Sometimes, no matter how much we want to keep you and your brothers and sisters together, we can not find a suitable foster home. If we cannot keep you and your brothers and sisters together in foster care, we will make sure that you can stay in touch with each other and see each other regularly. You can talk to your social worker or foster carers about this.

Things you need

Your social worker and foster carers will make sure you have everything you need when you are living in foster care, including toiletries, pocket money and things for school or