

Your guide to

11 - 14 Year Olds

being in care



DARLINGTON
Borough Council



What does foster care mean?

Foster Care means that you will live with a foster family. This family will take care of you when you are not able to live with members of your family.

This is known as “going into Care” or “being Looked After”

There are lots of reasons why children are sometimes not able to live with their family. You might have been hurt or maybe you need to be looked after in a better way.

It is important that you are properly looked after and the foster family people you live with will make you feel safe comfortable and cared for.

What does residential care mean?

Residential care means you will live in a children’s home. The staff in the children’s home will take care of you when you are not able to live with your family.

What is a carer?

A carer is someone that looks after children if they need to live away from home. Carers are trained to be able to look after children and young people and make sure they are safe and cared for.

They will understand the reasons why children may need to come into care without you needing to explain.

Your carer will:

Help you to be healthy and safe

Let you have fun

Help with school

Help you grow and do well

Keep you in touch with people you care about

Ask what you think and listen to you

Moving to live with your carers

A social worker will take you to your foster carer's house or residential house so that you can meet them and everyone who lives there.

You will be able to take your clothes, toys and books with you. You can also take photographs and any special things with you.

Your carers will look after you. They will make sure you have your breakfast and all your other meals. They will wash and iron your clothes and make sure you have everything you need and help you with homework.

Your carers will also take you out for trips and will take you on holiday. Foster carers will make sure if you are old enough that you have pocket money.

Seeing your family & friends

Your social worker will try to make sure that if you have brothers and sisters that you can all live together with the same foster family. If this can't happen, then your social worker will make sure that you are able to keep in touch with each other.

If there are people you want to see or keep in touch with, then you can talk to your carer or social worker about it. If you are frightened and don't want to see some people then tell your carer or social worker.

Sometimes it is good to see your family, but sometimes it might not be possible or it might upset you. Your social worker will talk to you about "contact or family time" and will make sure that your carers know the plans.

"Contact or family time is seeing people from your family while you live with carers"



School

Your carers will make sure that you get to and from school and that you have everything you need at school.

You will continue to go to your usual school unless there is a very good reason for change.

Your Health

When you go to live with a carer you will have a medical check with a doctor to make sure that you are keeping well and are healthy. If you need any treatment your carer will make sure that this happens. If you feel poorly your carer will make sure they take you to the doctor or if you feel sad they will find someone who can help you talk about how you feel.

Your Care Team

SOCIAL WORKER

While you live in care your social worker will visit you and spend time talking to you. Your social worker will help you to talk about your feelings.

CARERS

Your carer will look after you and make sure you are safe and happy.

SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER

Foster Carers will have their own supervising social worker. Their job is to make sure your carers are looking after you properly and have all the help they need.



Darlo Care Crew

They are a group of young people in care who take the views of young people in care forward to try to change things for the better.



Looked After Review (LAR)

During the time you live with your carers there will be meetings called Looked After Reviews. These meetings are to make sure that everything is going well for you. Your carer will support you during your Looked After Review. Others who may attend are: parents, extended family members, a teacher from school, a school nurse and anyone else that may be important to you.

A person called an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will chair these meetings and will talk to you about what it is like living with your carers and about anything that you need.

Your carer will go with you to these meetings to help you talk and say what you would like to happen.

Your social worker will give you a booklet that answers questions that you might have about your Looked After Review.



An Independent Person

There are people who do not work for Darlington Borough Council and who can help you if you have a problem.

NYAS National Youth Advocacy Service

Independent and confidential social and legal advice, information & advocates.

www.nyas.net

Tel: 0808 808 1001

Changing Futures Independent Visitors Service

A befriending and mentoring service for young people to build relationships based on trust and respect.

Tel: 01429 891444

ChildLine

24 hour helpline for children in distress .

www.childline.org.uk

Tel: 0800 1111

Children's Rights Director for England

The Director will listen to you about your thoughts on how you are looked after. Be heard and find out about your rights.

www.rights4me.org

Tel: 0800 528 0731

Ofsted

An official body that regulates schools & Children's Services.

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 1231

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership

We keep you safe while you're Looked After.

www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk

Tel: 01325 406452

HAVE YOUR SAY!

You are always more than welcome to speak to one of the Team's Participation Officers about ways we can improve things for children and young people in care.

Also we'd love to know what you think about this guide – what you like, which bits were boring, did it help you or how can we make it better?

One way to have your say and share your views is through Mind Of My Own. The One app is a communication tool created by Mind Of My Own which makes it easier for you to express your thoughts, experiences, good news and report any problems to your Care Team.

Ask your foster carer about downloading the app or when your Social Worker next visits ask if you can use Mind Of My Own with them to record what you are telling them.



To speak to a Participation Officer you can call 01325 405639 or email mindofmyown@darlington.gov.uk