

# Welcome to Apex Fostering



APEX FOSTERING

**Young Persons Guide  
(11+)**



# What is Apex Fostering?

We are an independent agency who provide foster families for children who cannot live with their birth parents. We are passionate about making sure you have the very best care, provided by foster families who support your interests, listen to you and help you achieve your full potential. It is important that when you join Apex Fostering, you feel part of our community, where you are understood, accepted and able to have your voice heard.

# What can I expect from my Foster Carer?

Every child has a right to be cared for within a loving home, where they are accepted for who they are regardless of their race, religion, or sexual orientation. We expect all our foster carers to treat you with respect, ensuring they take the time to listen to you when you are anxious, upset or frustrated.

Your foster family should support you to pursue your interests both inside and outside of school.

They will guide you through your education, encouraging you to have high ambitions for the future, helping you to overcome any hurdles along the way.

We understand that leaving your own family, and being looked after by children's services, can be very upsetting for you, and for your family. Your foster carer will try to answer any questions you may have, and allow time for you to become more familiar with your foster family and the home.





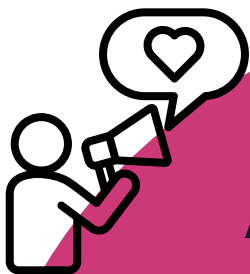
# Family and Friends

When you arrive with your foster family a placement planning meeting should be arranged within 5 working days. This will usually be attended by your Social Worker, your foster carers Social Worker and your foster carer. Everyone will understand how important your friends and family are to you, therefore if it is safe to do so, contact will be arranged.

It's really important that your wishes and feelings are considered. It's also ok to change your mind about who you want to see, including how often. If you are confused about contact with your family, you can ask your Social Worker for a contact schedule, something which some young people find helpful.

Your foster carers will support you to make friends, ensuring you can invite them round and visit them if it is safe to do so.

If you are unhappy with the arrangements for contact, or want something changed, speak to your Social Worker. You can ask your carer to request a visit, or even to speak on your behalf. You can also contact your independent reviewing officer (we will explain who this is later) if you are still unhappy.



# Advocacy

All children have a right to feel safe, a right to be heard and a right to get support when they need it. We are here to make sure you have everything you need to reach your full potential, including support to overcome any challenges you face.

Some young people may want help from an advocate to get their views across. An advocate is someone who is trained to listen to the views of young people and make sure these are shared with professionals. They can attend meetings with you, send e-mails on your behalf or simply offer a listening ear.

If you would like an advocate, let us know and we can support you with this!

Below is a link to Coram Voice-visit their website for lots more information about support and advice available to children in foster care.

<https://coramvoice.org.uk>

Advocacy helpline: 0808 800 5792



# Your Review Meeting



Every child in care will have regular review meetings, sometimes called 'Child in Care Review'. The first one should be within 20 days of you coming into care, then 3 months later, with the following reviews taking place every 6 months. This is your meeting, to look at how things are going, what extra support you need and what the long term plan will be. This meeting is chaired by someone called an IRO (independent reviewing officer).

They are independent from the Local Authority and can make specific recommendations if they think more needs to be done to help you. You will always be invited to attend this meeting to share your views, or you can ask someone to speak on your behalf if you prefer (this could be your foster carer or an advocate). Your Social Worker will be at the meeting, as well as someone from Apex Fostering. Usually, your parents will be invited too, but you can discuss this with your Social Worker.

Sometimes it can be helpful to write down anything you want to ask before your review, or list things you would like raised. Your review should be carried out at a time and place which is convenient for you, making sure you do not have to miss school or an activity you enjoy. The IRO will usually speak to you before the meeting, to get a sense of how you are feeling about being in care and anything you want to change. They have a duty to take your views into account and make sure these are recorded.

# Your Right to Complain



It's important you understand that you have a right to complain if you are unhappy about the services we provide, or any aspect of your care. Please let us know if there is anything you are not satisfied with, so we can try and put things right. If we cannot help, we will point you in the right direction and make sure you understand who to complain to.

**Below are some useful contact details, with information about who each person is:**

**Apex Fostering- Louise Ridley (Registered Manager)**

**Email: [louise.ridley@apexfostering.uk](mailto:louise.ridley@apexfostering.uk)**

**Telephone: 074763 45716**

Louise is the manager for Apex Fostering, you can contact her if you have any concerns about the care you are receiving.

**Ofsted - They inspect Apex Fostering. Tel: 0300 123 1231**

**Address: Ofsted, Piccadilly Gate, Store St, Manchester, M1 2WD**

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

It is Ofsted's job to make sure both Apex Fostering and the Local Authority are providing you with good support. If you do not feel we have dealt with your concern fully, you can contact them.

If you are unhappy with the service provided by your Social Worker you can contact your Independent Reviewing Officer. There is space on the next page to write down their contact details.

If you remain unhappy, your Independent Review Officer can support you to make an official complaint to the Local Authority.

**Remember - help is always available if you want support to make a complaint.**

You can ask for help from an advocate, from your foster carer or from Apex Fostering. If there is anything you don't understand-just ask!

# Other Contacts

## **Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza**

Tel: 0800 528 0731 Email:

[help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

Website: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk>

Her job is to protect the rights of children and young people and make sure your views are heard.

## **Help At Hand**

is a national advice service for teenagers in care and care leavers. Search IMO for the website and there is advice on apprenticeships, education, mental health and recipes.

It's an opportunity to find out about specific issues.

Their contact details are below:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/>

Telephone: 0800 528 0731

## **Other helplines for children and young people:**

### **Childline:**

Telephone number: 0800 1111 – 24 hour free phone line

### **NSPCC:**

Telephone number : 0808 800 5000 – 24 hour free phone line

**NSPCC**



# Useful Contacts

Use the space below to write down contact details for those you may want to contact:

**01**

**My Social Worker:**

**02**

**My Independent  
Reviewing Officer:**

**03**

**Apex Fostering Social  
Worker:**

**04**

**Other contact details:**

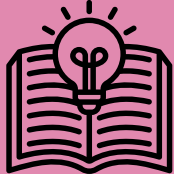
**05**

**Other contact details:**

**06**

**Other contact details:**





# Glossary

**We hope this helps, but if not, just ask.....we don't mind!**

## **LA–**

This is short for 'Local Authority'. It is their job to make good decisions about your future, taking on board your wishes and feelings. Your Local Authority Social Worker should visit you every 6 weeks.

## **SSW–**

This is short for 'Supervising Social Worker' this is the Social Worker from Apex Fostering who supports your foster family and makes sure you have all the support you need.

## **PEP–**

This is short for 'Personal Education Plan' and is the name of the meeting your school will hold, usually once a term. This will be to talk about your education, what is going well and anything that needs to change to support you.

## **Court Guardian–**

Some children in foster care will have a court guardian. This is usually if there is an ongoing court case to decide what the long term plan should be. The court guardian is an experienced professional who is totally independent from the Local Authority and will form their own views. They will do this by speaking to everyone involved—including you! If they think the Local Authority have missed anything important, they will let them know. Court Guardians are also sometimes referred to as CAFCASS officers.

## **Virtual School–**

This really is a 'virtual school' because it's not actually a school with a building, rather a collection of teachers who work specifically to support children in care. This may be to give advice to the Local Authority regarding additional support, a school move or support plans. Every school gets additional money for children in care, which they will use to support you. This could be with extra tuition, music lessons or something else to help you grow and learn

## **ICO–**

This stands for Interim Care Order. This order is granted by a court and gives the Local Authority parental responsibility for a child, which they share with the child's parents. This is a temporary order which means final decisions still need to be made about the long term plan. It is likely that lots of assessments will be taking place if you have an Interim Care Order.

## **FCO–**

This stands for Full Care Order. It is an order granted by the court when it is decided a child should remain in foster care long term.

## **Section 20–**

Some children come into foster care under a Section 20 arrangement. This means that someone with parental responsibility (usually your parent) has signed a document agreeing for you to be cared for as part of a foster family.





Thankyou for reading this booklet.  
Please let us know if there is anything  
else you think should be included, we are  
happy to receive feedback!

You can e-mail any comments to  
[louise.ridley@apexfostering.uk](mailto:louise.ridley@apexfostering.uk) or ask  
your foster carer to pass them on.