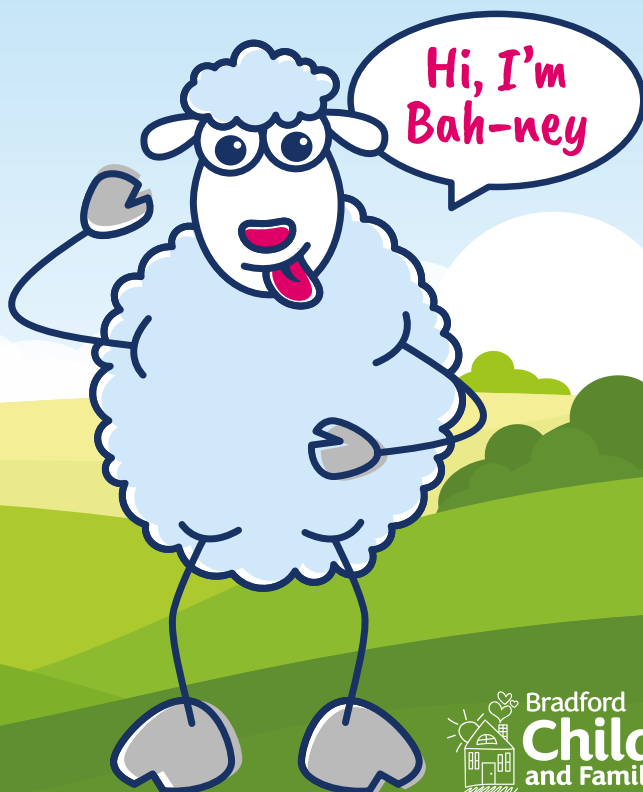




**Foster**  
for Bradford

# Your guide to being in foster care

Things you need to know about living  
with a foster family



# Why do I have to live with a foster carer?

**Every child has a different story and children live with foster carers for all sorts of reasons, but it's not because of anything you have done.**

## What is a foster carer?

Foster carers are people who have carefully chosen to look after children who cannot live with their own families.

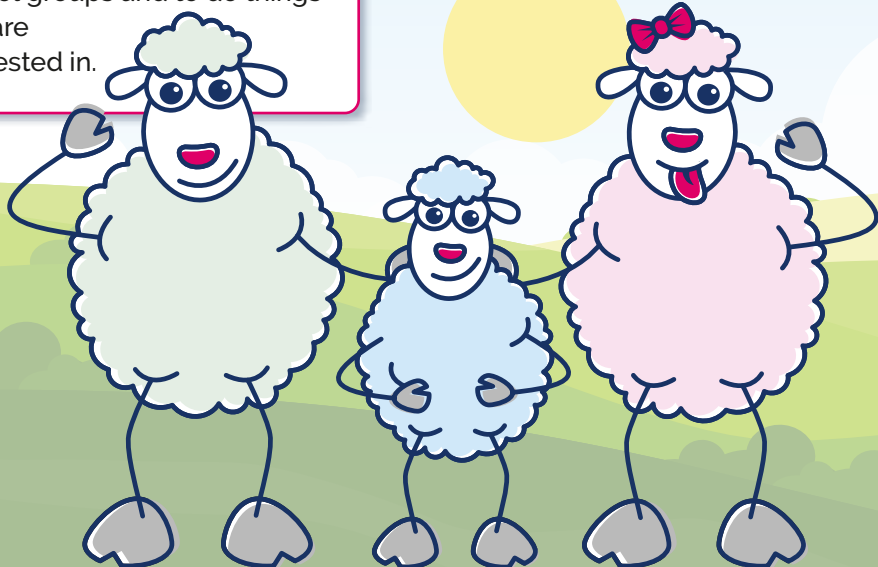
Your foster carer will:

- look after you
- make sure you are safe and healthy and have fun
- help you see and speak to your family if it is safe for you
- help you to go to clubs, after school groups and to do things you are interested in.

Sometimes children live with a foster carer for just one night, a few nights or a short while.

Sometimes, you might live with a foster carer until you grow up.

Your foster carer is there to help you and you should always feel safe, looked after and welcome while you live with them.



# When will I see my family?

**Your family is important to you. Just because you live with a foster carer doesn't mean that you have to lose touch with your family.**

Your social worker will arrange for you to see your family. You should tell them who you would like to see such as your mum and dad, grandparents, uncles, aunties, cousins and friends.

## What about what I want?

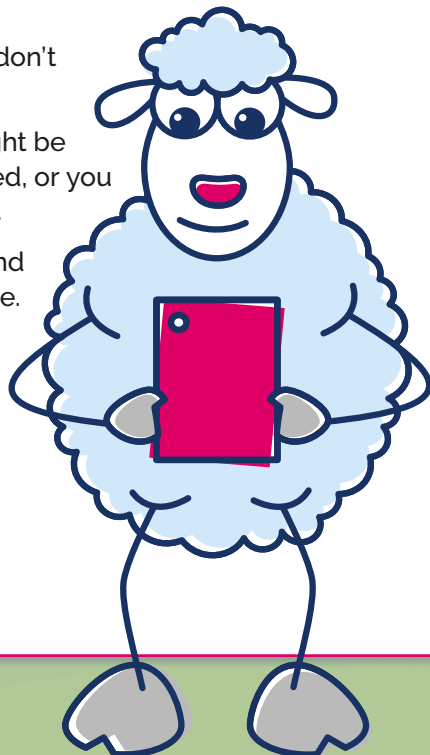
It is important that you tell us what you want to do, what you want to happen, what you want someone to do for you, what is important to you and how you are feeling.

Sometimes adults try to guess and they don't always get it right!

Whatever you are feeling, it's ok. You might be feeling sad or happy, worried or frightened, or you might not understand what is happening.

Your social worker should listen to you and find out what your wishes and feelings are.

One way you can tell us about what you want is through **Mind of My Own** – the One app or Express. Your social worker or your independent reviewing officer will help you.



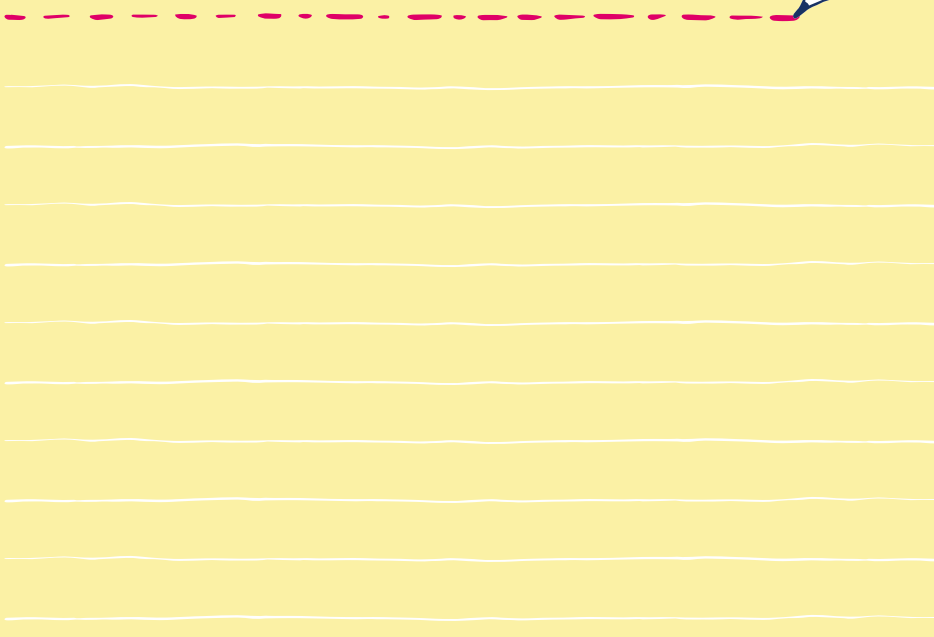
# What will it be like in my new foster family?

Every foster family is different:

- you may be the only child in the foster family, or
- your foster family might have their own children still living at home or maybe they've grown up and live in their own home, or
- your foster family might be looking after other foster children as well as you.

Your foster carer will have some house rules about what time you have to go to bed and get up, how you speak to them and anyone else, when and where you will eat, how you look after your things and their things.

**You can use this space to write down some of the important things your foster carer would like you to remember.**



Your carer will not mind if you ask or tell them about all sorts of things:

- like the food you like to eat and don't like to eat
- what things you can play with
- if you can meet your friends.

In your new foster home, you will have or be:

- a bedroom on your own or shared with your brothers or sisters
- protected and kept safe from harm
- a safe place to keep your things
- listened to
- treated well and fairly
- helped to keep in touch with people who are important to you, like your friends and family
- celebrate your birthday and festivals that are important to you and your carers
- help to follow your religion and any customs you like to do
- helped to feel healthy and happy
- supported with your school work
- helped to develop any interests you enjoy
- helped to complain if things go wrong and for someone to represent you.

Your social worker will help your foster carer to check these things happen for you by making sure that everything important is written down on a special form. You should be given a copy of the form and you can talk about it with your social worker.



# What is a social worker?

Someone whose job is to visit you to help you and make sure you are happy and safe. It is their job to make sure you are OK.

**Your social worker is called** (write their name here)

Your social worker will visit you every few weeks to check that you are okay and you can talk to them about anything you want, like your family, your teachers or your friends, what is happening and about your wishes and your feelings and where you live and ask you about things you like to do.

You can talk about living with your foster carers too.



# Who decides what will happen to me?

While you are in foster care, there are a lot of people who work together to make sure you are being looked after in the best possible way.

These people meet to make a **care plan** about your future. A **care plan** is about what needs to be done. It is also about what you want to happen and what needs to be done to make the plan work. They will listen to what you think as well. Your social worker will tell you what has been decided.

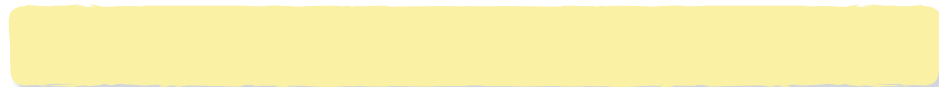
Your **independent reviewing officer** is responsible for holding regular meetings called **reviews** that make sure everyone is following your **care plan** properly and to make plans for the future. You will have regular reviews while you are in foster care.

You can go to your **review** if you want, but you don't have to. You can ask someone you trust to speak for you or you can tell the people at your **review** what you want to say by using the Mind Of My Own One app or Express.

Mind of My Own is a fun and easy way of letting everyone know what you think and what you want. You will get help from your social worker or your independent reviewing officer.

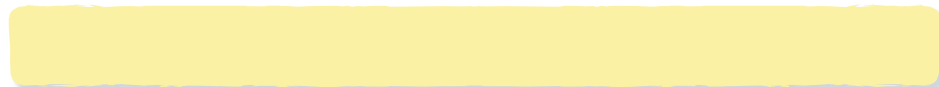
## Who is my independent reviewing officer?

Your independent reviewing officer is:



It is their job to make sure that you are listened to and that everyone is doing their best to help you.

You can phone them on:



# What if I'm unhappy or have a problem?

We want to know if you are worried, frightened or sad. There are lots of people you can tell.



If you don't want to talk about it yourself, you can ask someone else to give your views for you.

We want to work with you to fix any problems, but there may be times when this does not work and you are still unhappy.

All foster carers, children and young people have the right to complain and other adults can also make a complaint for you.

If you would like to make a complaint, you can ask your social worker or foster carer to help you. You can call our complaints and compliments department on 01274 436820 who can help you make your complaint.

# Independent visitors and advocates

You can contact someone called an **independent visitor** to talk to. They don't work for Bradford Children & Families Trust and they will get to know you by visiting you. If you would like an independent visitor or more information, please ask your social worker, or your independent reviewing officer.



You can also have an **advocate**. An **advocate** will help you to say what you feel and give you advice about what could happen in the future. Advocates are independent of Bradford Children & Families Trust and you can contact The Children's Society to ask for one.

Tel: **0300 303 7000**

Email: **bradford@childrenssociety.org.uk**

**The  
Children's  
Society**

## Ofsted

Ofsted is the government organisation that is responsible for making sure Bradford Children & Families Trust and Foster for Bradford are meeting the required standards in foster care and making sure we are providing the best possible care for our children.

### Ofsted

**Piccadilly Gate, Store Street,  
Manchester M1 2WD**

Tel: **0300 123 1231**

Email: **enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk**

  
raising standards  
improving lives

# Other useful organisations that can help

## Help at Hand – The Office of the Children's Commissioner

Help at Hand is the Children's Commissioner's advice and assistance service for children in care. Children, young people or their advocates can get in touch with Help at Hand for free by phone, website or email.

**The Office of the  
Children's Commissioner**  
Sanctuary Buildings,  
20 Great Smith Street,  
London SW1P 3BT

Tel: **0800 528 0731** (Freephone)

Email: **help.team@  
childrenscommissioner.gov.uk**

Website:  
**www.childrenscommissioner.  
gov.uk/help-at-hand**



## Coramvoice

Coramvoice will help you if you are in care, leaving care, have or need a social worker.

They will get your voice heard, tell you about your rights, give you the support you need through the Coramvoice advocates and work with you to improve the care system.

Advocacy Helpline:

**0808 800 5792**

Website:

**www.coramvoice.org.uk**

**coramVoice** )))  
getting young voices heard

## Childline

Childline is free to contact and counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They will always listen to, and support you, if you need to call them.

Tel: **0800 1111**

**childline**  
A life-changing NSPCC service

# My important phone numbers

Write down the names and phone numbers here of the people you can talk to – your foster carer will help you if you would like them to.

**My foster carer's name is:**

Phone:

**My social worker's name is:**

Phone:

**My social worker's manager's name is:**

Phone:

**My foster carer's social worker's name is:**

Phone:

**My independent reviewing officer's name is:**

Phone:



This guide has been produced by:

**Foster for Bradford, part of Bradford Children & Families Trust**

Sir Henry Mitchell House, 4 Manchester Road, Bradford BD5 0QL

Tel: 01274 437343

[fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk](mailto:fostering@bradfordcft.org.uk)



This booklet can be made available in other languages or in a non-written format on request. We can also help with a translation service.