

# Young People's Survival Guide to Fostering



## Who are Eastern Fostering Services?

Eastern Fostering Services or EFS work with children and young people who can't live with their own families for lots of different reasons. We approve people to be Fostering Families-these are people who want to help children and young people like you. They will support you in whatever is best for you for your future. Meet the Team:



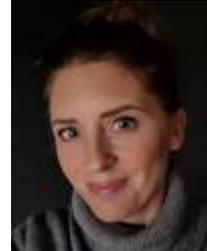
**El – Registered Manager**



**Sandra – Senior Supervising Social Worker/16+ coordinator**



**Jo – Practice Manager**



**Emma – Senior Supervising Social Worker**



**Sam – Supervising Social Worker**



**Sian – Supervising Social Worker**



**Lizzy – Supervising Social Worker**



**Alex – Supervising Social Worker**



**Emily – Placements Officer**



**Sarah – Operations and Administrative Manager**



**Rachel – Fostering Administrator**



**Yvette – Fostering Administrator**



**Angela – Fostering Administrator**



**Paul – Childrens and Young Person's**



Participation  
Worker

Lucy – Marketing  
Manager



Chris Dingley, Agency  
Decision Maker

Here are some pictures of some of them when they were little; can you guess who is who? (Answers at top of next page)



A



B



C

Even they were young once! You may not meet the team, but they are there working with your foster carers to ensure that you are looked after and are happy and safe.

*Answers... A: Sarah B: Elle C: Rachel*

## **Why do I have to be looked after by a fostering family?**

There are loads of reasons why you might not be able to live with your own family-it might be that they didn't look after you as they should have, things might have happened in their lives that meant they couldn't put you first, or that they may have hurt you, or you might have been separated from them.

Children and young people need homes to grow up in where they will be properly looked after. Sometimes living with a fostering family doesn't last for long, and any problems at home can be sorted out, sometimes children and young people live with fostering families until they are ready to leave home.

Whatever the reason, your fostering family should treat you as part of their family, including any children that they already have.

They know that this could be difficult for you, and they don't expect to replace your own family.

**Living in a fostering family doesn't mean that your own family doesn't love you, or that you can't love them.**

## **What happens now?**

When you move in to live with your fostering family, they will show you around the house and make sure you know where everything is. They will also make sure you know the names of everyone who lives in the home.

You might feel quite wobbly at first, this is totally normal, it is a big change. Don't worry if you make mistakes or don't get everything right-none of us are perfect and we keep on learning through our lives!

When you live with a fostering family, you will have a social worker who will be talking to you and your family about what is best for the future. A social worker is someone who tries to help children and families who have serious problems.

Your fostering family will write up a diary each week, telling your social worker all about what you've been doing, how school has been, whether you have any troubles, what has gone well for you, and whether you've seen any of the important people in your life. If you are over 13, you can ask to see some of the records and reports that are about you-just ask your EFS social worker or your own social worker and they will help you with this.

Eastern Fostering Services has a duty to make sure you are as safe and happy as possible whilst you are with us, and we will work with your fostering family and your local authority social worker to sort things out for you.

Whilst you are with us, your foster carers will have their own EFS social worker who they will see regularly and make sure you are ok.

## How will I know what to do?



It is pretty likely that your fostering family won't have exactly the same rules or interests as your own family, so below here is a checklist of questions you might like to ask so you get to know them a bit better.

If you have any more that this list doesn't cover, do ask, they won't mind.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Can I still see my own family whilst I live here?	
Can I bring my own things with me?	
Can I watch the TV programmes I like?	
What time do you expect me to go to bed?	
Can I go out on my own?	
What time is dinner?	
Can I help myself to food if I am hungry?	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>

Can my friends come round?	
Do you have a computer? Can I use it?	
Will I still go to the same school?	
What should I do if I need something?	
What happens if I do something wrong?	
Do you allow mobile phones?	
Will I get pocket money? How much?	
Are there any major house rules that I should know?	

It can feel like you have no say in what is happening to you, but **your views are very important**, and what you tell your social worker will help them make the best plans for you.

You can also talk to your fostering family, your teacher, or any adult that you can trust.

It is totally normal to feel confused, angry and sad, as well as relieved sometimes-you have been through a lot of change. The best thing to do is to try to let any feelings out and let the people you trust know what is going on for you-otherwise they won't always know how best to help you.

When you live with a fostering family, it can seem that suddenly there are loads of different people in your life.

Often a court with a judge might be involved in decisions about your life and where you live. The judge and a special court social worker will talk to the important people in your life and agree what they think is best to keep you safe. A care order gives social services parental responsibility. This means that social services, rather than your parents have the job of looking after you and you'll have your own social worker. Although they will make decisions about where you live and who you see, they should still talk to your parents about important things, and they should always talk to you to find out how you feel. A care order will last until you are 18 unless somebody asks the courts to change their decision. If you aren't able to stay in touch with your family because of a serious reason you can ask for someone called an 'Independent Visitor'-they will see you and take you out, with no other reason than just making sure you are OK, and they are completely separate to the people who are making the decisions.

### **The Asylum process**

When you enter the United Kingdom and wish to stay here, you must claim asylum. Claiming Asylum means you are asking the UK government to offer you protection if you cannot return to your own country. Your asylum claim is made with the Home Office which is

part of the government. Your Social Worker and your foster carer will support you with your claim for asylum and will explain to you what you need to do and when. If you have any worries you can speak to your foster carer, your social worker or contact Eleanor Newman from EFS at [eleanor.newman@easternfosteringervices.com](mailto:eleanor.newman@easternfosteringervices.com)

## What can I do if I'm not happy?

If you are not happy in your fostering family, you must say so.

Sometimes it can be difficult to settle with a new group of people, and your social worker is there to help you as much as possible to do so. They will not mind at all, whatever you tell them, because they are there for you.

Sometimes things can get sorted out much easier than you think-just ask! There are people who can help you find your voice when you need some extra help-they are called 'Advocates' and they are there to listen to what you want and help you say it in the best way, or sometimes speak up on your behalf. You have a right to ask for an Advocate-please ask your EFS or Local Authority Social Worker to get in touch with your local person and they will.

If you are not happy about the plans that have been made for you or your own family, you can talk to any adult you trust first, and if they still can't help, you can talk to **Eleanor Newman** at EFS. She will listen to everything you say and decide what the best thing to do is. You can phone her on 01206 299775 or 07730 535748, or you can tell your social worker that you want to speak to her.

At the end of this guide, there are some other ideas of people to contact if you are still not happy.

## How many other children and young people are fostered?

You really are not alone!

Lots of children and young people live in fostering families because there are so many different reasons why their own families can't look after them.

Did you know that in March 2022 over 82,000 children young people were living in fostering families?! Even if there aren't any others in your school, they are out there!

It is not something you should feel embarrassed about but if you need help in what to tell your friends or to say to people at school, ask your fostering family or your social worker.

There are also a lot of famous people who lived with fostering families or have been adopted, for example:



Nelson Mandela

In South Africa white people had more rights than black people. Nelson Mandela believed that everybody should be treated the same. He fought for change, but he was put into prison for 27 years. When he left prison, Nelson Mandela wasn't angry. He wanted peace. He won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1993 and in 1994, aged 77, Nelson Mandela became the first black President of South Africa.



Cassidy Mack

Cassidy is an American actress who starred in Zoe to the max when she was aged 16. She was fostered until the age of 6 and was then adopted. She started an organisation called Love Gives Chances in support of fostered children like herself.



Simone Biles

Olympic gold medalist proves that incredible parents can help a child achieve anything whether they are related by blood or not. Simone's birth mother suffered from drug addiction and when Simone was 3, she and her siblings were removed from her mother's care. Simone encourages greater investment in foster care so children can have better opportunities to thrive. She has won a combined total of 30 Olympic and World Championship medals in gymnastics.



Steve Jobs

Steve Jobs is an inspirational figure who as the co-founder and CEO of Apples Computers revolutionised technology. Where would we be without our iPhones?! Thanks to his innovations, Steve became a multi-millionaire by the age of 30.

### **Useful Information**

Below is a list of different places that you can get more information about being fostered, or where you can talk to someone else.

#### **Bullying UK Helpline**

This website and helpline gives all kind of advice including cyber bullying and bullying at school.

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

Tel 0808 800 2222

It is never acceptable to be bullied. Sometimes young people might be bullied because they are seen as 'different'-it might be because they look different or speak differently-this is never OK and you should always be supported to deal with this if it happens.

#### **Become, the charity for children and young care leavers:**

Become offers lots of services, including coaching and training to help you move on in your life. They also have a friendly helpline. Check them out on:

[www.becomecharity.org.uk](http://www.becomecharity.org.uk)

Tel 0800 023 2033

### **Childline**

This is a helpline and a website that gives you advice on all sorts of things that might be troubling you. Contact them on:

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Tel 0800 1111

### **Refugee Council**

They offer support to all unaccompanied refugee children in the UK.

[Our work - Refugee Council](#)

### **Coram Voice:**

Contact these people if you feel you need someone to speak up for you. They provide help to young people who are living in care or who have recently left. Contact them on:

[www.coramvoice.org.uk](http://www.coramvoice.org.uk)

Tel 0808 800 5792

**Eastern Fostering Services: Eleanor Newman or Jo Elliott are there to make sure all our young people are safe and happy.**

Unit 3B, The Gattinetts  
Hadleigh Road  
East Bergholt  
Suffolk  
CO7 6QT

Email: [eleanor.newman@easternfostering-services.com](mailto:eleanor.newman@easternfostering-services.com)

[Jo.elliott@easternfostering-services.com](mailto:Jo.elliott@easternfostering-services.com)

Website-<https://eastern-fostering-services.com/>

There is a special section on our website where you can send us an urgent message if you need to. [For the Children and Young people - Eastern Fostering Services \(eastern-fostering-services.com\)](#)

Tel: 01206 299775

**Ofsted:** Ofsted checks all of the work that EFS and its fostering families do.

Their website is [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) or you can contact them on:

Tel: 0300 123 1231

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

Post: Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

## More Useful Information!

<b>Name</b>	<b>Telephone number/email address</b>
<b>Social worker</b>	
<b>EFS Social worker</b>	
<b>Foster Family</b>	
<b>Other important people to you</b>	