

CHILDREN'S GUIDE
12-18YRS

WELCOME PACK
&
INFORMATION



Welcome to Mosaic Foster Care

Why should I read this booklet?

This booklet is to help you understand what foster care is and what being looked after by Mosaic means. It helps to talk to people about what you read. Your social worker, foster carer(s), therapist or teacher are always there to help explain things and to answer questions.

The fostering team makes a commitment to you that while you are being looked after, they will make sure that all the things they are able to do and help you with, will happen.

What does foster care mean?

Foster care is when you go to live with another family, when your own family is unable to look after you. A young person in foster care is often referred to as a 'looked after child'. Looked after children each have their own social worker who is responsible for making sure that they are well cared for.



What is a foster carer?

Foster carers are specially trained people who look after children and young people in their own homes when they are unable to live with their family. Foster carers provide a safe, caring and stable environment in which to live in. All kinds of people become foster carers; young, old, single, married, gay or straight and come from many different ethnic origins, cultures and backgrounds.

All Mosaic foster carers, their families and their homes have been carefully checked to make sure that they can offer you a safe place to live. At Mosaic Foster Care, we do our best to match the right carer(s) with you.

Your foster carer(s) will ...

- .. provide you with a safe, caring family home to live in, including a warm, clean, comfortable bedroom.
- .. treat you as one of their family and take into account your wishes and feelings.
- .. encourage you to live a healthy life, and help you make decisions regarding your health.
- .. support you in celebrating any religion you may practice, in developing any talents you may have, & help you to take part in activities and hobbies you might enjoy.
- .. help you achieve your highest potential at school and support you if you wish to apply for college or university.
- .. support you in maintaining contact with your family and friends, depending upon your contact plans.
- .. have house rules that you must follow just like any other member of the family, like how much TV you can watch, making sure you do your homework, how much time you can spend on the computer, or what time you go to bed!
- .. help you with budgeting, cooking and life skills.
- .. work hard to build an open, honest and trusting relationship with you.



What is a social worker?

Every child or young person in foster care has a social worker. A social worker is someone who is there to help you and do what is best for you. Your social worker will visit you regularly to check that you are OK and discuss with you what is happening in your life.

Your social worker will ...

- .. be there for you and respond to your questions and requests for help.
- .. listen to your views and try to plan alongside you what is best for you.
- .. be available for advice and support.
- .. visit you in your foster home.
- .. continue to work with your family.
- .. arrange for you to keep in touch with people who are important to you.
- .. attend meetings and make sure that appropriate plans are made for you.

What does the Mosaic supervising social worker do?

Your foster carers will have their own Mosaic supervising social worker.

Their job is to make sure your carers are looking after you properly and have all the help they need. They will also talk to you to make sure you are happy.

The Mosaic supervising social worker will ...

- .. meet regularly with your foster carer(s) & support them in their fostering work.
- .. check that you are being looked after well.
- .. review your placement regularly ensuring it continues to be suitable for you.
- .. help when there are any difficulties by listening, advising and getting help.
- .. check your foster home is safe and comfortable.
- .. answer any queries or requests from your foster carers



What is therapy?

Therapy means to help and it can help you make sense of your muddled feelings. A therapist is a person specially trained to help young people with feelings and emotions that they may find difficult to express.

When will I see my therapist?

In Mosaic, you will see your therapist every week for therapy. Big changes, living away from family and hurts from the past can often leave you with big feelings that are difficult to understand. Your thoughts, feelings and what you do are all linked up and through these sessions the therapist will hope to help you make sense of some of these connections so that you can feel better and make good choices when things get tricky. Young people sometimes find play or drawing easier than words and it might be that you use toys, books, acting or drawing to explore your thoughts and feelings instead of simply talking.

My social worker's name is

Their telephone number is

The Mosaic social worker's name is

Their telephone number is

My therapist's name is

Their telephone number is



You have come to Mosaic so that we can offer you a supportive foster placement with people who can help you develop your full potential.

Meetings

There will be lots of meetings taking place when you come to Mosaic, these will include an initial Placement Meeting, regular LAC (Looked After Child) reviews, CDSMs (Case Discussion/Safeguarding Meetings) & PEPs (Personal Education Plan) meetings. You will have the opportunity to join many of these meetings to put your views across, but can choose not to be present should you prefer. Your opinions and wishes can be put forward on your behalf.

Care Plan

This series of meetings will enable the creation of a very detailed and special care plan on how we can best care for you. This plan is designed just for you and will put actions into place that will help us, you and your foster family in resolving any problems and difficulties. These will include where you will go to school, who will take you to the doctors if you are ill, how much independence you can have and how often you will see your family.

Your care plan will be regularly reviewed by Mosaic and will involve your foster carer, social worker, therapist, teacher and YOU!

If you are worried or don't understand something in your care plan, talk to your social worker and he/she will explain things to you.



What to do if you are unhappy or have a problem!

Everything that has happened to you and all the changes in your life might make it a bit confusing to understand what is going on. No one will mind you asking them to explain exactly what is happening and why.

Don't bottle up your feelings. Always speak to someone you trust (maybe a teacher, social worker, your foster carer(s) or therapist) about how you are feeling, whether you are sad, angry, confused – or happy! It is important that Mosaic know how you are feeling so that we can make the right plans for you.

Your Independent Reviewing Officer (or IRO) chairs your review meetings. He or she is responsible for making sure that your local authority, social worker and Mosaic Foster Care are all doing what the law says they should and are listening to your views, wishes and opinions. Your foster carer(s), social worker or therapist can all help you to get in contact with your IRO if you wish to speak to them.

If you are worried or want to make a complaint and can't tell your social worker, foster carer(s) or teacher, you may want an advocate. This is someone independent who you can talk to, to get your views across, for example in a meeting or to make a complaint about how you are being cared for.

You also have the right to talk directly to Ofsted. This is an organization that checks the work of fostering agencies in England and Wales. You will find their number and those of other organisations who you can call to get help or advice at the end of this guide.



Working Together

The success of your placement here at Mosaic will depend upon how well we work together. Below are some basic rules that Mosaic have, what we will do for you and what we expect from you ...

- .. We will try very hard to help you overcome your difficulties and to meet your needs whilst you are with us.
- .. We will help you manage stress, worry and difficult feelings & changes in your life.
- .. We will provide you with an education and opportunities for recreational activities.
- .. We will work with your foster family, you and all other agencies involved with your care.
- .. Where possible, we will help you stay in contact with your family and friends.
- .. We will keep you safe.
- .. We will encourage you lead a healthy lifestyle.

In turn, we will expect YOU to ..

- .. Try very hard to be involved actively in your Care Plan and reviews.
- .. To be respectful to all our staff and foster carers.
- .. To go to school.
- .. To never harm anyone either verbally or physically.
- .. To understand that if your behaviour is violent or worrying or you are absent without permission, we may involve the Police. It is our responsibility to keep you safe and free from harm.
- .. To be open and honest about anything that worries you.
- .. Tell someone if you feel like running away.
- .. To stick to the rules and plans we have agreed for you.
- .. To accept that if you misbehave there will be consequences which may affect your privileges.



Skills for Independence

If you are a teenager, your foster carer(s) will help you to develop the life skills and knowledge you will need when you leave foster care. This is so that you are prepared for independent living and able to support yourself as an adult.

These are the types of things your foster carer(s) will help you to prepare for:

- .. Moving into your own accommodation.
- .. Managing a household, such as paying bills, understanding insurance, cooking, cleaning, using household appliances, keeping your home safe etc.
- .. Getting a job, how to prepare for a job interview, applying for apprenticeships, college or university.
- .. Looking after yourself, including your health and maintaining positive relationships.
- .. Managing your money, banking, loans etc.
- .. Using local transport, applying for student travel cards, learning to drive if you wish to!



Useful websites & telephone numbers:

Childline: www.childline.org.uk - 0800 1111

Frank: www.talktofrank.com - 0300 123 6600 or text 82111

Children's Commissioner: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk - 0207 783 8330

Ofsted: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk - 0300 123 1231

National Youth Advocacy Service: www.nyas.net - 0808 808 1001

Samaritans: www.samaritans.org - 08457 909090

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