

*Welcome to*  
*Tutis Foster Care*  
*A Young Persons Guide to*  
*Fostering*



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## Welcome to Tutis Foster Care

Hi, this booklet is to tell you about Tutis Foster Care. We are a small fostering agency based in Cumbria. It is our responsibility to ensure you are well cared for during your stay with us. Within the agency we recruit, assess, train and support Foster Carers to look after children and young people.

Tutis Foster Care has been asked to find you a home, while you are unable to live with your family. We understand that this is a difficult time for you, and it is scary to go to a new place and meet people for the first time. Hopefully this Children's Guide will help you to settle in and tell you about things you may wish to know.

If you want to know about anything that is not in this booklet you can ask your Foster Carers, your Social Worker, your Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker or anyone from Tutis Foster Care.



## What Does Being in Foster Care Mean?

Foster Care is a way of providing a family life for young people who cannot live with their own parents. All over the world foster families open their hearts to children in need and share their family life with them. Foster Care is often used to provide temporary care while parents get help to sort out their problems, or to help children or young people through a difficult period of their lives. Often children will return home once the problems that caused them to come into foster care have been resolved, and it is clear that their parents are able to look after them safely. Others may stay in long-term foster care, some may be adopted and others will move on to live independently.



*It is important to know that young people live with Foster Carers for different reasons. It is not because you have done anything wrong.*

Your Foster Carers want you to feel welcome - if there is something you need, you are okay to ask for it

*Your Foster Carers are:*

*They live at:*

*Their phone number is:*

*They have children called:*

*They have animals called:*



*Food for thought.....*

*Some famous people who spent time in foster care.....*



**Kerry Katona, Queen of the Jungle and former Atomic Kitten star, went into care when she was 13 because her mum wasn't able to**



**Eddie Murphy, US Actor and comedian and his brother were placed in foster carer after their father died and their**



**Seal is a world-famous singer and was a popular solo artist in the 1990s.**



**Marilyn Monroe spent time in various**



**Malcolm X was one of the most prominent black nationalist**

## What kind of people are Foster Carers - what do they do?

A Foster Carer is an adult who has made the decision to share their home with children and young people. They want to care for children who can't remain at home. When a person applies to become a Foster Carer, it is a long process and many questions are asked by the Social Worker. They want to know what it is about the person that makes them think they will be a good Foster Carer. A number of checks are undertaken to ensure that children and young people will be safe and well cared for.

Living with a Foster Carer means that you will live with their family in their home. You will have your own bedroom and enough storage for your belongings. You will only share a bedroom if one of your siblings is with you and it is thought the right thing to do. Whilst staying with Foster Carers you should expect to be well looked after and receive a high standard of care. If this is not the case, you will have the opportunity to tell someone from Tutis Foster Care.

Tutis Foster Care expects its Foster Carers to be positive role models and to treat young people as they would their own child, including advocating for all

aspects of your developments - this includes educational attainment and physical and emotional well-being. Tutis Foster Care would like your new home to work and we want you to feel valued and able to reach your full potential.



Foster Carers come from a range of backgrounds. Some live with their husband or wife, some with their partner (they might be a gay couple) and some are not in a relationship. Foster Carers come from different cultures and religions. It is our job at Tutis to match you with carers who we think you are suited to.



We realise that although we all have similarities, we are all unique in our own way and you should be treated as an individual.

We realise that young people develop at different rates, have different intellectual ability – this may be because they have been to lots of different schools or missed school due to problems in the past. Everyone has strengths in some things and weaknesses in others.....it may be that you love drama or art; it may be that you can sing; or write poetry; it may be that you are good at making things or can use a computer better than most adults; it may be that you can bake or are good with animals; it may be that you can apply perfect make-up or dance well; it may be that you are very funny at times and make people laugh. Whatever you are good at, we will try and help you develop this and better understand that everyone is good at something – it is a case of trying new things and being relaxed and a little bit confident.

## Who's Who in Foster Care?

### Local Authority Social Worker

This person works for the Local Authority Children's Services department and will work with you and sometimes your family. They will want to know what you feel about being looked after and should help you express your views and feelings. They help plan what is happening in your life. Their name and number is:

### Foster Carers Social Worker

All Foster Carers will have their own Tutis Foster Care Social Worker. This person supports your Foster Carer to provide an environment for you to be able to achieve your full potential. They are also an important person in your life and will keep in touch. Their name and numbers is:

### Independent Reviewing Officer

You will be visited by your IRO and will have the chance to speak with them privately about any issues relating to your care, or service that you are receiving from the local authority or your Foster Carers. Your IRO will attend and take the lead at your Review meetings - these are about your Care Plan whilst you are living away from your family. Your IRO's name and number is :

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### Guardian

This person is appointed by the Court when there are Care Proceedings taking place, to decide whether children can live with their parents or not. They will visit you at your foster placement and will ask you your views about life with your family and what you want to happen for your future. They will then tell the Judge what your views are and will also say what they think will be best for you. Your Guardian's details are:

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Will I see my family?

Just because you live in a foster home does not automatically mean you will lose touch with your family. We want young people to stay in touch with their family, if it is safe to do so. Some of the reasons you would not see your family would be if it was felt unsafe, or we could not get in touch with them. Your Social Worker will arrange contact - this can be in person or over the telephone.

If you see your family members face to face it may be supervised by someone, to ensure your safety and wellbeing. Sometimes people get upset if they can't see their family, or if they don't know what plans are being made. Everyone understands that you want to know what plans are being made. We will try to find out what is happening as soon as we possibly can.



## What happens with my School?

If you are aged under sixteen, it is the law that you must have an education. You can leave school on the last Friday in June if you'll be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. You then must do one of the following until you're 18:

- Stay in full-time education e.g. at a college
- An apprenticeship or traineeship
- Work or volunteer (for 20 hours or more a week) while in part-time education or training

Part of your Foster Carers role is to support you getting to and from school or college.

If you remain local to your school we will do our best to support you to attend the same school, if it is thought to be in your best interest. If for any reason you are unable to attend the same school, arrangements will be made for you to attend another school.

## Am I allowed to stay over at other people's houses?

You are allowed to have sleepovers at friend's houses with permission from your Foster Carer. Your carer will need to speak to your friends' parents, to check the arrangements.

## Who decides what I can and can't do?

When you first move to the Foster Carers home, a meeting will take place with the Foster Carer, your Social Worker and a Social Worker from Tutis, to say what you can and can't do. They will also discuss things like bedtimes etc. If you are old enough to take part in this meeting, this will be arranged.

Your parents will be kept up to date on how you are and they, also, have some say in what you can and can't do.

It may be that you help out with some chores around the foster home and keep your bedroom tidy.

We will do our best to make sure you are safe and happy, but sometimes decisions have to be made that you don't want or don't like. If you think of any questions you want answered, write them down and ask whoever you are comfortable with to try and find out the answers. **NEVER BE AFRAID OR EMBARRASSED TO ASK QUESTIONS.**

## What about everyday things like Money, Clothes and Health?

When you live with a Foster Carer, you will live in a clean, warm and safe home, where you will be provided with clothes to wear, school uniform and things for school. You will be given weekly pocket money and you will also have money saved for you. You will have your own bed and somewhere to keep your personal belongings. Like most families, Foster Carers have some rules you will be asked to follow. Most of them will be about keeping you safe. While you are living with a Foster Carer you will have a health assessment each year, to ensure you are physically and emotionally well. Health is very important - eating fruit and vegetables, regular exercise and positive relationships can keep you healthy. If you smoke, we can support you to stop smoking and if you are involved in alcohol or drug usage, we have experience in assisting young people with this. As well as a doctor, your Foster Carer will also ensure that you are registered with an optician and a dentist. It may be that other professionals are involved if you have a particular condition, or have been feeling low. If you are not feeling well or are worried about something, talk to your Foster Carer or Social Worker so that they can do something to help. As you grow older there will be discussions around lots of things that you will need advice on. Things like teenage problems. Some subjects may be difficult areas to discuss, but it is important to remember that everyone goes through adolescence and hormone changes.....this can cause you to be a little moody at times.....we understand!

If you want to know more about how your body is changing or how you are feeling about your sexuality, you can talk to your Foster Carer or Social Worker. There are lots of websites available, such as:

[www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org)

## Will I have my own space?

We understand that it is important for you to have the right to privacy and personal space. You will have your own space and people are expected to knock before entering your room. Your room will be a safe place to keep your belongings and a place where you can spend time alone when you want to. However, we do not want you to spend too much time alone and isolate yourself.

It will be expected that you do not enter other people's bedrooms without knocking.

## Can I do Activities?

It will be expected that your Foster Carers arrange sports or recreational activities for you – it is good to have hobbies and interests. You may want to learn to play an instrument, or learn a new skill.

You may be allowed to play on consoles, but this will be time limited.

You will be invited on holiday with your Foster Carers.



## Our Records

While you are living with our Foster Carers, Tutis Foster Care will keep notes and records about you. These will be stored safely so that only people who have permission can access them. If you want to know what is on your file, then you can ask to see it. We may not be able to show you information we have on other people, such as your birth family, or any information which was written by someone else unless they have agreed that it can be shown to you. The information will be kept safe and only workers involved with you will have access. Inspectors from Ofsted will be able to look at the information, to ensure that you are being cared for properly.

## Culture, Religion and Identity



While living with your Foster Carers you will be encouraged to develop your self-esteem and have a positive attitude about yourself.

If you would like to attend your local place of worship, this can be arranged through speaking with your Foster Carer.

If you have certain dietary requirements, like vegetarian or halal, speak to your Foster Carer and they will buy the type of food

that you like to eat.

We also realise that sometimes it is difficult to get information about your culture, your ethnic community or religion. Your Foster Carer will help you to get in touch with organisations or people who are from the same racial or cultural background as yourself.



If you feel like you would like support with any of the things we have mentioned, please talk to us so we can help you.

Life Story Work is carried out – the end result is a book that tells you about your life at home, why you came into care, schools you have attended and likes and dislikes etc. It is there to help you understand your situation and ask questions.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER WE KNOW HOW HARD IT IS TO BE SEPARATED FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND WE WANT TO DO ALL WE CAN TO HELP YOU THROUGH THIS PERIOD.**

## Your Rights

We understand that people can get upset when they don't know what plans are being made. We want you to know that we will try to find out and let you know what is happening as soon as we are able.

We want you to be able to tell us when you feel upset or

down. 

We will do our best to help you to feel better about

things. 

You will be asked to join Tutis Foster Care's Young People's Group – here you can meet other children who can't live at home, for various reasons. You will also be able to join other groups that Children's Services run, like Participation Groups. For young people who want to learn more about young people in care, you can become involved with the Who Cares? Trust - *The Who Cares? Trust is a voice for children in care.*

We believe that a healthy mind needs a healthy body, so to keep you in tip top physical condition we will encourage you to keep fit.



Also what's extremely important is to have fun with friends.

Children who live with Foster Carers have RIGHTS.

You have the right to:

TO be safe      A private life  
 Enjoy      HEALTHY care      Advice  
 education  
 respect      treated fairly  
 BE HEARD      Information      religion  
 culture



There are several things that the law says that Children's Services must do.

The following is taken from:

The Children's Commissioner's website, for more information visit:-

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>

- Ensure that you are safe and well cared for.
- Make sure that you have an up to date Care Plan that you understand and includes your views, wishes and feelings. A Care Plan is a document that says how your needs will be met while you are in care, who will be responsible for this and what the long term plans are for your care. You should be given a copy of your Care Plan and someone should sit down with you to explain it and make sure you understand what it says.
- Provide you with an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). An IRO is responsible for making sure that the Local Authority is doing their best to take care of you. An IRO will chair your LAC Reviews and should work with you to ensure that these meetings are productive and include your views, wishes and feelings. You should be given the chance to chair your own reviews, if you wish.
- Complete a Placement Plan whenever you move to a new placement. This plan should say who has to do what to make sure you are taken care of and have everything you need in your placement. Plans for your education and health needs should also be completed and regularly reviewed.
- Take in to account your religion, ethnic and racial background, culture and language when making decisions about you. You have the right to maintain

ties to the things that are important to you and your identity.

- Help you have contact with important people in your life, including parents, siblings, extended family members and close friends.
- Visit you in your placement regularly and offer to speak with you alone if you would like.
- Provide you with an independent Advocate if you would like one, as well as information on how to make a formal complaint.
- Give you information on how to access your records and documents that include information about you.

## Complaints

We know that sometimes there will be things about your care that you are not happy with. Usually this can be sorted out by having a chat with your Foster Carer or Social Worker. In some instances, though, you might want to make a complaint.

**At Tutis Foster Care we take complaints seriously and will look into any concerns you have.**

If you have a complaint, either phone us or fill in the back sheet of this booklet. Your complaint should be sent to our Registered Manager, who will write to you to say your complaint has been received and who is to deal with the matter. You will receive this response within five working days. Then someone will arrange to see you and discuss your complaint within five working days.



Your complaint will be recorded on your file; you can ask to see this.

If you are not happy with what we have done, let us know and the Responsible Individual will get involved and ask an independent person to investigate. This is someone who does not work for Tutis Foster Care.

Once these people have finished talking to everyone they will make recommendations on how your complaint can be resolved. You will be kept updated.

If your complaint is about the Managers in Tutis Foster Care you can contact Ofsted – 0300 123 1231. Ofsted are there to make sure children are being properly cared for.

If you want to speak to Tutis Foster Care staff, the number is: 01946 65686

Also, for children who live away from home and need advice or assistance, you can call the Children's Commissioner's Team on the free phone number 0800 528 0731 or email -

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

## Useful Contacts

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### Ofsted National Business Unit

Piccadilly Gate

Store Street

Manchester

M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231

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

### The Office of the Children's Commissioner

Sanctuary Buildings

20 Great Smith Street

London

SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0800 528 0731 - Freephone 020 7783 8330

Email:

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

### NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

### Childline

0800 1111

### Coram Voice

0808 800 5792. The helpline is open from 9.30 am - 6.00 pm Monday to Friday.

### NYAS

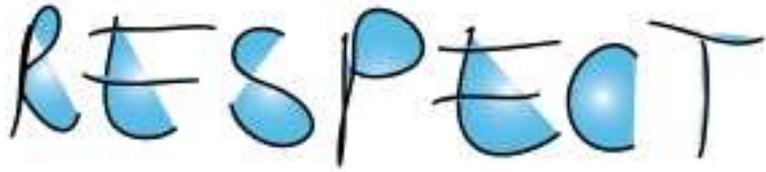
NYAS is a UK charity providing socio-legal services to children and young people

0808 808 1001

### Who Cares! Trust

020 7017 8901

Please try not to worry about things on your own, there will always be someone somewhere to listen, help and offer advice. We want you to be happy and all at Tutis should always show you:



RESPECT



Use this page to write down any changes of Social Worker or other Worker details and any other changes of information that you want to keep.

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You can make a note of your National Insurance Number here:

.....



Do you have any questions?

A large, rounded rectangular area with a red border, containing 25 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Please return this page to the Tutis Supervising Social Worker



