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:

Tony

Elle

Tricia

Sarah
Here are some pictures of some of them when they were little; can you guess who is who?

A

B
Even they were young once!

You may not meet the team but they are there working with your foster carers to insure that you are looked after and are happy and safe.

Answers... Tony – C, Elle – B, Sarah - A

**Why do I have to be looked after by foster carers?**

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, or that they may have hurt you.

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 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 really 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.

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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can I still see my own family whilst I live here?</td>
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<td>Can I bring my own things with me?</td>
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<td>Can I watch the TV programmes I like?</td>
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<td>What time do you expect me to go to bed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<td>Can I go out on my own?</td>
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<td>What time is dinner?</td>
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<td>Can I help myself to food if I am hungry?</td>
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<td>Can my friends come round?</td>
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<td>Do you have a computer? Can I use it?</td>
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<td>Will I still go to the same school?</td>
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<td>What should I do if I need something?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What happens if I do something wrong?</td>
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<td>Do you allow mobile phones?</td>
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<td>Will I get pocket money? How much?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there any major house rules that I should know?</td>
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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.

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 be assigned to a 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.
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!

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 Vanner 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 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 at any one time, there are over 40,000 children and young people 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, for example:

- Nelson Mandela-the Leader of South Africa
• Eddie Murphy-actor and comedian

• Oprah Winfrey-chat show hostess

• Pierce Brosnan-James Bond actor

• Kerry Katona-pop star
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.

Who Cares? Trust, visit Who Cares Town:
http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk

Info For Care Kids:
This is a fun and interactive website to visit and it will give you advice on being in care
http://www.info4carekids.org.uk/

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:
Tel: 0800 1111
Website: www.childline.org.uk

Voice for the Child In Care:
Contact these people for anything to do with being fostered.
Tel: 0808 8005792
Website: www.voiceyp.org
**Eastern Fostering Services:**
Unit 1E, The Gattinetts
Hadleigh Road
East Bergholt
Suffolk
CO7 6QT
Tel: 01206 299775

**Ofsted:**
Ofsted checks all of the work that EFS and its fostering families do. Contact them on:
Tel: 0300 123 1231 or text to 60085
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Post: Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

**More Useful Information!**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Telephone number/email address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFS Social worker</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Carer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other important people to you</td>
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