


# Young Person's Guide Northern Ireland



01527 556480

[contactus@thefca.co.uk](mailto:contactus@thefca.co.uk)

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## Using this Guide

This guide is to help you find out a bit about being in foster care and Foster Care Associates. Please don't worry if this is all a bit too much to think about: keep this and come back to it when you need to, as it has a lot of very useful information.

# Welcome

**Welcome to Foster Care Associates (FCA). We hope you are getting to know your foster family and that you will feel safe and enjoy your time with FCA.**

## What is FCA?

FCA was set up for children and young people who need to be fostered. We find people who want to be foster parents and train and support them.

## Who works at FCA?

As well as foster parents we have different members of staff and you can find out about them and what they do in this guide.

## What is fostering?

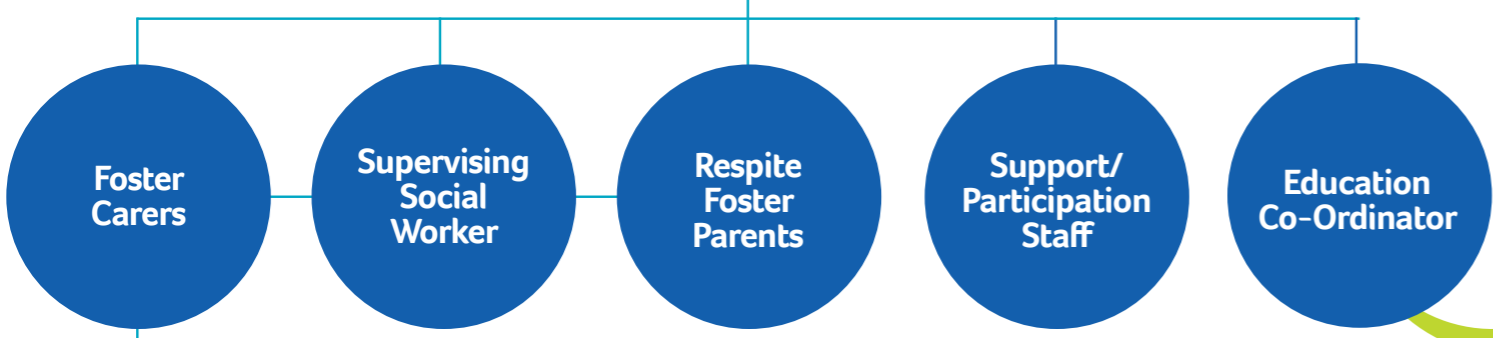
Fostering is a way of offering children and young people a home while their own family is unable to look after them. Fostering can be a temporary arrangement, and many fostered children return to their own families. Children who cannot return home but still want to stay in touch with their families often live in long-term foster care and have continued support from their local authority or health and social care trust. Foster parents never have parental responsibility for a child that they care for.



# FCA Services: How We Can Help

As well as training and supporting your foster parents, FCA provides other people you may hear about.

**YOU**



Find out more about them on the next page.

### IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE JUST ASK!

There are also some other people who are not employed by FCA, but who are there to help you – have a look at the next few pages for info.

## So what do these people do?

### Supervising Social Worker

- Supervise and support your foster parent.
- Visit regularly.
- See your bedroom and will check you are happy cared for and well looked after.

### Respite foster parent

- Provide a break for you and your carer if needed.

### Support/Participation Staff

- Help you to get involved in activities.
- Help you to achieve new things and develop new skills.
- Help you to have your opinion heard.
- Keep you informed of what is happening in FCA.
- Organise events for you to attend.

### Therapist

- Sometimes you may not be able to fully explain how what has happened in the past may have affected you. Therapists can help foster parents and social workers to understand. They give them ideas to help.
- Sometimes FCA may provide a therapist for you but this is more likely to be provided by somebody outside FCA.

### Education Co-Ordinator

- Support you to make good choices about school
- Provide education support at any stage
- Support with preparing for leaving school and what you decide to do next
- Help your foster carers to make sure school are giving you the best opportunities
- Organise education projects for you to take part in
- Visiting school to support you there

### FCA SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER:

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TEL:

.....

EMAIL:

.....



Other people outside FCA who you will hear about and are there to help you

# Trust/HSE Social Worker

Their job is to get to know you, plan how you're going to be looked after and make sure you're being cared for properly.



## Your Trust/HSE Social Worker will:

- Talk to you and your foster parents and make a plan for how they will care for you (placement plan).
- Tell you and your foster parents what decisions they can make for you without asking permission.
- Tell you how to make a complaint if you're unhappy and get someone to speak up for you if you would like.
- Arrange meetings about how you're getting on.
- Talk to you and make plans about the future with you.



- From your home area
- Must listen to you
- Let them know what you think
- Visit you at least every six weeks for the first year of your placement.

### YOUR SOCIAL WORKER:

TEL:

EMAIL:

# Advocate

**The law says that social workers and other adults should listen to your wishes and feelings about your care.**

If you are unhappy about something to do with your care or education you have a right to an advocate.

They are there just for you – they will act and speak on your behalf

Some young people are happy to speak up for themselves – others find it harder.

They can help you with: your social worker, contact with your family, bullying, being suddenly moved from your foster home, or help you in meetings.

**The services below run an advocacy helpline for looked after children and care leavers in Northern Ireland and will help you find an advocate.**

**Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People**

Belfast - 028 9031 1616

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

**NIACRO**

Belfast - 028 9032 0157

Portadown - 028 3833 1168

Derry/Londonderry - 028 7127 1459

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

# Independent Visitor

**If you have limited or no family contact, the law says that you are entitled to have an independent visitor.**

**What is an independent visitor?**

A reliable independent person who can visit you regularly and get to know you. They can be a good adult role model.

**What can you do?**

They can go out with you and you can do activities together – this could be a coffee and chat, cinema trips or sports. They can attend your review meeting if you agree to this.

**For more information:**

Speak to your social worker or foster parent.

# Get involved with FCA

We want your voice to be heard so that we can make FCA better for everyone:

1. Give your feedback about events, staff and FCA.
2. Help us with interviews and training for staff and foster parents.
3. Come and get involved in activities.
4. Take part in children and young people's forums - have fun and tell us what you think.

Ask your Support / Participation Worker for more information



# Stay Safe

## Keeping Safe

Everyone at FCA will work to make sure you are safe and not harmed in any way, but if you are harmed or if there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, we will have to tell children's services or the police.

If you are being hurt or have been in the past and no one knows about it, speak to an adult you trust (foster parent, FCA social worker, teacher). They will listen to what you are saying and take it seriously. The person you tell will discuss what's happening next with you, but they will have to tell someone else to make sure you are safe and well.

## Bullying

Bullying can range from name calling to being hit. If you are being bullied in school, at home or anywhere (including cyber bullying online) tell your social worker, foster parent or another adult you can trust.

## Information

While you are with FCA, we will keep information about you, and your local authority will also keep files about you. You have a right to see the information (apart from some confidential information). Speak to your foster parent or FCA social worker if you want to know more.



# Internet & Mobile Safety

[WWW.THINKUKNOW.CO.UK](http://WWW.THINKUKNOW.CO.UK)

The internet and mobile phones can be great for loads of reasons, but sometimes the internet and social media can be misused and harmful. Take care how you use the internet.

If you are worried about who you are talking to, report them, never agree to meet someone in real life if you have met them online.

Think before you post

Only connect with friends

Keep your settings private

Don't share your password

Don't be hurtful towards others

Be kind to others

## Memory Box

You will receive a memory box (if you haven't already) that you can use to keep a record of your time with FCA and somewhere to keep your sentimental items.

There are lots of things you can put in your memory box, some ideas are:

- PHOTOS
- USED TICKETS (E.G. CINEMA TICKETS)
- PAINTINGS/DRAWINGS
- CELEBRATION CARDS
- INVITATIONS
- CERTIFICATES
- LETTERS
- MEDAL/AWARD

In fact any relevant items that are suitable can be placed in the box and looked back on when you are older to remind you of your time with FCA and your foster parents.



# Education Without Compromise

We believe that a good education is one of the most important things to help you have a positive future.

- We will always be ambitious about your education and try to help you reach your full potential.
- We will provide you with opportunities to develop your skills and to think about your future and possible jobs and careers.
- We will try to arrange extra support for you when you need it.
- We will support your foster parents to help you get the best from your education.
- We will expect your foster parents to attend education meetings with you and make sure your views are heard.
- We will provide your foster parents with information and training to make sure that they are up to date on all educational matters.

# If you are unhappy

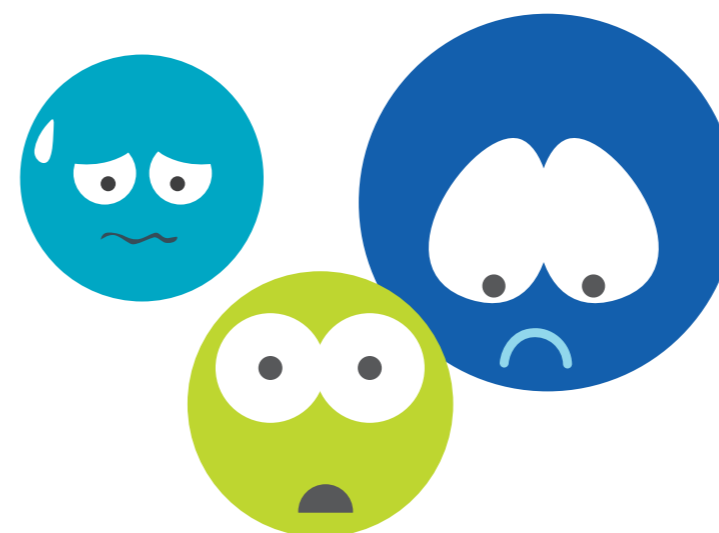
Sometimes it can be difficult living in a foster family and there can be misunderstandings, difficulties and problems. Talking about why you are angry or upset can help sort things out.

If you are unhappy about things such as:

- Feeling as though you are being treated unfairly, or wrong decisions being made
- The rules of your home
- Not being listened to
- Problems at school

In these cases, tell someone else:

- foster parent
- social worker
- teacher
- friend
- advocate
- support worker



## How can we help?

If you feel unhappy about something related to your foster parents or FCA it is important to voice your concern. You may want to consider making a complaint.

Don't worry about making a complaint to FCA, it is your right and you won't get into trouble. We like to hear your concerns and complaints as this can sometimes help us to improve our services for young people.

To make a complaint, you can fill in a complaints form (if you haven't got one you can ask your foster parent or FCA social worker).

You can also ring 01527 556480 or email [contactus@thefca.co.uk](mailto:contactus@thefca.co.uk) to say you want to make a complaint.

They will advise you and help you find someone to support you if you wish. They will also tell you what to expect at any stage of your complaint.



# Useful Contacts

## Childline

Childline is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. You can contact a childline counsellor about anything – no problem is too big or too small.

Tel: 0800 1111, or go to [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk).

## Talk to Frank

Friendly, confidential drugs advice.

Tel: 0300 123 6600 or go to [talktofrank.com](http://talktofrank.com) or text 82111.

## Young Minds

A charity committed to improving the well-being and mental health of children and young people.

Go to [youngminds.org.uk](http://youngminds.org.uk).

## Brook

Free and confidential advice about sexual health and well-being for under 25s.

Go to [brook.org.uk](http://brook.org.uk).

## Aware NI (Mental Health)

Tel: 02890 357 820 or 02871 260 602  
[info@aware-ni.org](mailto:info@aware-ni.org)

## DAISY NI (Substance Misuse)

Tel: 0800 2545 123  
[daisy@ascert.biz](mailto:daisy@ascert.biz)

## Cara-Friend (LGBTQ+)

Tel: 02890890202 or 0287128 3030  
[youthsupport@cara-friend.org.uk](mailto:youthsupport@cara-friend.org.uk)

## Common Youth (Sexual Health/Contraception)

Tel: 02890328866 or 02870342178  
[hello@commonyouth.com](mailto:hello@commonyouth.com)

## Lifeline (Crisis Response)

Tel: 0808 808 8000

## NSPCC

Tel: 0800 1111

### OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS:

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# Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose tells you about FCA so you and other people will be able to read it and find out more about us and what we do.

The statement of purpose tells you about:

- The people who work for us
- How we find foster parents and how we train and support them to look after children and young people
- What help and support we can offer you
- What to do if you're unhappy with any part of your care and how you can make a complaint.

Most of this information is in this guide, but if you want to know more you can ask your foster parents for a copy of the Statement of Purpose.







**01527 556 480**

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