

family fostercare

Older Children's Guide to Foster Care





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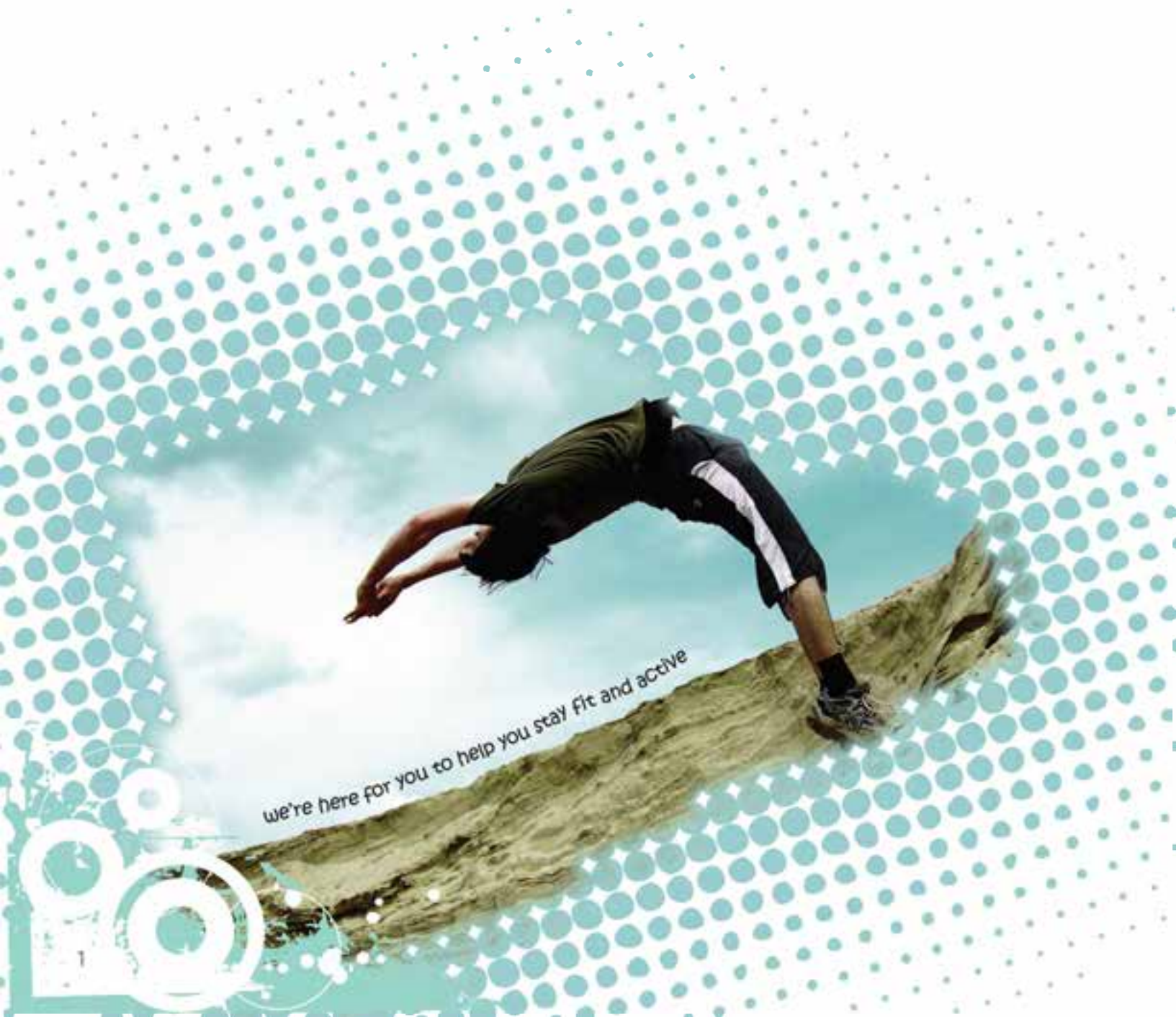
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HELLO AND WELCOME TO FAMILY FOSTERCARE

We hope this booklet will help you find out about us and the people who want to help you while you are here. It tells you about who you can talk to while you are here if you are unhappy or have any questions, and it will tell you all about us.

If you want to know about anything that is not in this book you can ask your foster carers, your social worker, your foster carer's supervising social worker or anyone from Family Fostercare.



WHAT IS FOSTERING?

Foster carers look after children who need somewhere to live for a while that is not with their own family. Sometimes children stay for a few days; sometimes longer.

Do you know how long you are going to stay with your foster carers? The Placement Planning Meeting when you first arrive or held 5 days after you have been with your foster carers should indicate how long you may have to stay. If you ask us we will tell you as much as we can. You should know your longer term plans by your 4 months review. By then you will have a Permanence Plan if you cannot return home just yet.

we're here for you to help you build good friendships



WHAT DO WE DO?

Our aim is to create the best opportunities for you. We think this means:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue lines and a vertical red margin line on the left side. The paper is oriented vertically, and the lines are evenly spaced. There are no markings or text on the page.

We're here for you to listen to you and to help you express yourself

YOUR FOSTER CARERS

Your foster carers want you to feel welcome. They will make sure you have the things you need because they want the best for you.

Your foster carers are:

They live at:

Their phone number is:

They have children called:

They have pets called:

Other people in the house are called:



YOUR FOSTER CARER SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER

Your foster carers have their own social worker to help them, this person is called a supervising social worker. You will probably see the supervising social worker quite often because they will visit you and your foster carer regularly. The supervising social worker will be talking to your social worker and to people concerned with your health and your education. This is so that everyone knows what is happening and what you need.

If you have any questions or just want to have a chat, you can ask the supervising social worker when you see them - or you can call them if you like.

Your foster carer’s supervising social worker is:

Their contact details are:

we're here to help you stay on track



WHEN CAN I SEE MY FAMILY AGAIN?

This is a very important question but the answer is not the same for everyone.

Your social worker will talk to you and your family about arrangements for you to see them.

Your foster carers will help with this as much as they can. If possible we will arrange for you and your family to visit the foster carers before the placement starts.

Sometimes you might be able to see some of your family even if you can't see everyone at once. We do understand that you will want to keep in touch with your family and friends and unless there are exceptional circumstances you have the right to see them and/or speak to them. Your foster carers will let you phone and have a visit whenever your social worker and your family say this is ok.

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.

*we're here for you to help you to keep in touch
with the people that matter to you*

EDUCATION

Foster carers value education very highly; as a result foster carers will encourage you to go to school and to do your very best. You may be able to stay at your school until plans have been made for you; sometimes you may have to change your school but this will only happen with your wishes and feelings being taken into consideration.

Foster carers will attend school open evenings and school social events with you.

my favourite subjects at school are

school subjects I struggle with are

school friends names and numbers

we're here for you to help you make the most of your education

Banksy street art



FOOD SHOPPING

Your foster carer may go shopping daily, weekly or sometimes monthly. You can ask for your favourite food and also help with the shopping if you so wish.

You can have a drink anytime you choose - but remember not to eat or drink all of your favourite things in one go!

My favourite meals and drinks

I don't like

Make a list here of food and drinks you cannot have because of your religion, culture or dietary needs

ACTIVITIES AND HOLIDAYS

General leisure activities within and outside the home will be encouraged, arranged and supported by foster carers.

If you have any interests, sports or hobbies such as Parkour (free running), BMX, skateboarding or longboarding, roller skating, ice skating, biking, scootering, kick boxing, tag rugby, football, street dancing, theatre groups, collecting models, magazines, horse riding, judo, these will be actively encouraged and supported.

If you are a member of a youth club or any regular club, for example swimming, football, dance, team or out of school club, these too will be encouraged.

You cannot have time off school for holidays but we will encourage you to go on organised school trips.



WILL I BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING I WANT?

Probably not!

When you arrive at your foster carers your social worker, foster carer and the supervising social worker (foster carer's social worker) will write what is called a Safer Caring Plan with you.

Your foster carers have to promise to keep you safe. That means they might not always let you do what you want to. Everywhere has rules. There are rules about how we treat each other, rules about listening to each other, rules about keeping safe and taking care. Sometimes there are rules about not going in other people's rooms or about looking after the home. There could be rules like no shoes in the lounge or no running around at teatime. This is because these make things better for everyone. Older kids will have different rules to younger children especially rules about going out and what time you come in.

Having rules doesn't mean your foster carers don't want you to have fun, because they do. They just want to keep you safe as well.

Like older children and teenagers you may want to stay overnight with your friends. You are allowed to do this. Your foster carer does not need to get permission for you to stay overnight with a friend but they do need to visit the house and meet the parent(s) of your friend to check them out. This is sensible isn't it? You must not stay away overnight without permission as you will cause everyone a lot of worry and you will be reported to the police as missing.

You will be able to bring friends home just as other children do and you may be able to have a friend overnight to stay. This will have to be discussed with your foster carer and the parents of your friend.

You will be able to choose your own clothes and hair style. But you cannot have body piercing or tattoos without approval of your parent(s) or social worker.

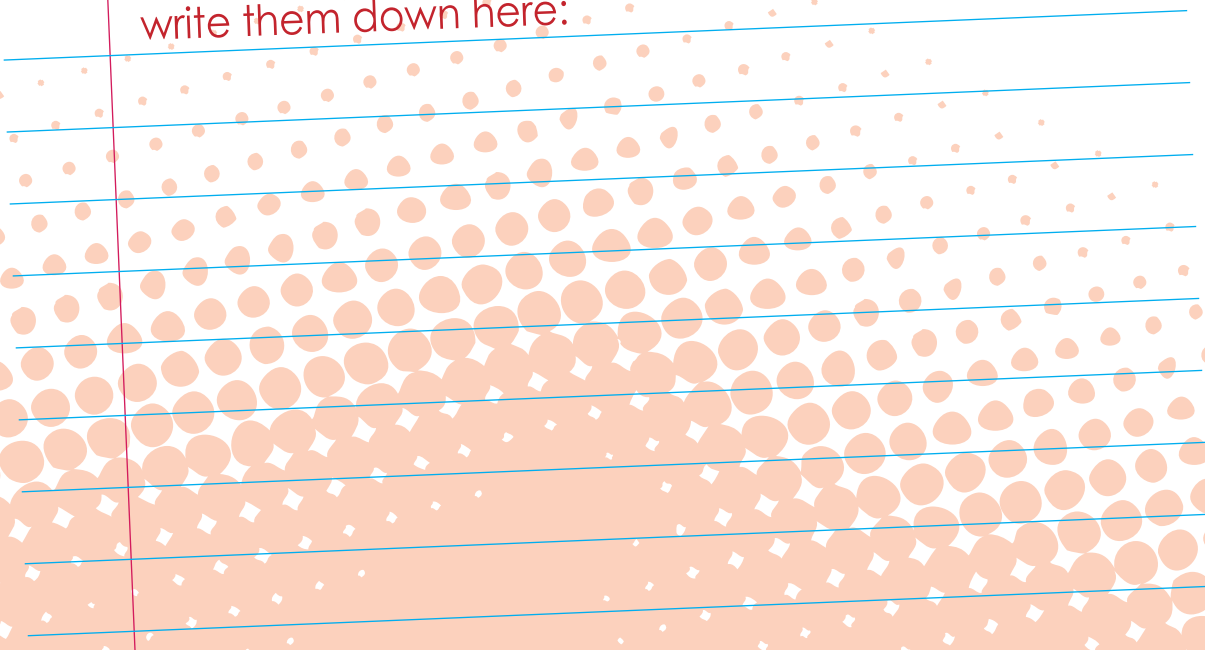
Going Out

Depending on your age you may not have to be supervised when going out on an activity. However, foster carers would like to know where you are going and what time you intend to return. Foster carers will often go out with you to keep you safe.

Coming In Times

These will be arranged with your foster carers. Later times can be arranged for particular activities.

What rules do your carers have? You could write them down here:



BULLYING

Bullying includes such things as: threats, name calling, pinching, hitting, pulling hair or other types of physical intimidation or action which deliberately upsets you.

There are many types of bully and many types of bullying. At the back of this book there are some contact details in case you are bullied or know someone who is being bullied. Young people recently told us that cyber bullying scares them the most - we have contact details for cyber bullying too.

If you feel that you are being bullied at school please talk to a teacher you like. If you feel that you are being bullied, you can also tell your foster carer, supervising social worker or social worker. They can really help you. There are also other agencies that might be able to help such as Childline. You can call Childline on on: 0800 1111. There are more names and contact numbers of people who can help you with any problems or worries you may have at the end of this booklet.



SMOKING

Smoking is bad for your health and can present a fire risk. However, if you are an habitual smoker this will be discussed at the Placement Planning Meeting, so that you understand what rules will apply to your smoking. You will be offered information about giving up smoking and we will try to help you with this.

DRUGS

If you have experimented in taking drugs or are being put under pressure to try drugs then you can talk to your foster carer, social worker, supervising social worker or teacher.

You can also Google: www.talktofrank.com

There is a A to Z list of substances that explains appearance and use, effects, chances of getting hooked, health risks and UK law. It also includes helpful information about peer pressure.



SEXUAL HEALTH & SEXUALITY

If you want to know more about how your body is changing and/or how you are feeling about your sexuality you can talk to your foster carer, social worker, supervising social worker or teacher, or if you want to you can Google the following websites:

If you want to you can Google these websites:

kidshealth.org

www.plannedparenthood.org/info-for-teens

Live Well - NHS Choices

we're here to help you through confusing times



ALLOWANCES

You are entitled to pocket money - the amount will be agreed between you, your foster carer, supervising social worker and your social worker.

You are entitled to a clothing allowance - the amount changes according to how old you are. Your foster carer and social worker will discuss these allowances with you.

You can write down your allowances here

My clothing allowance is

My Religious Festivals and Birthday allowance is

My pocket money allowance is

You will have a bank account opened for you by your foster carers.

How about writing down your bank account details here?

My bank is

**My bank
account number**

**My account
sort code**

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Here are some of the questions children ask about being in foster care. If you have other questions please ask us and we will tell you as much as we can. Don't forget that your social worker will be visiting you and you can ask them things too.

what about school?

If you are already in school, your teachers, social worker, foster carers and supervising social worker will try to work out if it is best for you to move school or stay at your old one.

If you don't go to school at the moment they will look at the reason why, and work out how to solve any problems, so that you can return. You might be pleased about this or you might not - but everyone needs education.

If you haven't been to school for a while this could make you feel a bit nervous. We will help you with this.

Remember, school isn't just about lessons; school can help you to make new friends or give you the chance to take part in activities after school.

what do I call my foster carers?

This is something you can talk about with your foster carers because they know that it can feel strange living with new people. They certainly won't expect you to call them mum and dad, but you can decide with them what works best.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

will I have my own bedroom?

Whilst living in your foster carer's house, you will be given your own room. If you have brothers and sisters you may share a bedroom if it is felt this is appropriate. You will be responsible for helping to keep your own room tidy.

You can use your bedroom to be on your own and have your own space and personal possessions. However, there will still be times when foster carers will need to go in your room. Before entering, foster carers will knock on the door. You should not go into other people's bedrooms.

Music and television in bedrooms needs to be kept at a noise level which does not disturb other people.

what happens if you do something wrong?

During your stay in foster care it may be felt necessary to use some form of consequences due to your not so good behaviour.

This may take the form of grounding, telling off, the stopping of leisure activities, additional household chores and sanctions for deliberate damage..

More information about this will be shared with you at your Placement Planning Meeting.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

how do I stay healthy?

Whilst living at your foster carer's house we will encourage personal hygiene. This will range from having regular baths/showers to brushing your teeth. Where possible we will try to continue with your own family doctor so that if you are unwell we can get advice for you. However, if you are living a long way from your family home, we may need to change your doctor. If this is the case the foster carers will arrange another doctor for you.

Our eyesight is very important to us. We need to have regular checks, so foster carers will make eye appointments and attend with you. If you have to wear glasses foster carers will help you choose some fashionable glasses.

Whilst we are growing up we need to have certain immunisations and visits to the dentist to keep us healthy, foster carers will arrange these for you. Your foster carers will also help you to eat healthily so that you are fit and well and do not become overweight.

what about my worries?

what if I don't like their rules?

what if I don't like their children?

what if I don't like my social worker?

can my friends come round?

will I have to move again?

they know I don't like beans, right?

?

how much pocket money will I get?

Your foster carers will not mind if you ask them about these sorts of things. If you would rather talk to someone else you can contact your social worker, the supervising social worker or any of the staff at Family Fostercare.

YOUR RIGHTS

You are very special and you have a very special 'other' name and this is called a 'looked after child'.

A looked after child has lots of good things for them. There are certain ways looked after children are treated no matter what; this is called your 'rights'. You have the right to:

Information *never to be shouted at*
LISTENED TO
NEVER TO BE HIT TO NOT BE AFRAID
to see your friends and family (if it's safe to)
EDUCATION
SECURE HEALTH CARE warmth
sleep FOOD
NEVER CALLED NAMES
NEVER TO BE SMACKED
ADVICE to grow religion
PROTECTED TO NOT BE BULLIED
culture SAFE to Achieve TREATED FAIRLY
MEDICINE
ANY SPECIAL HELP YOU NEED
NOT TO BE MISTREATED

You must let your social worker or someone else know if you think someone is taking away any of your rights. At the back of this book is a list of people and organisations you can contact for help.

COMPLAINTS

You can tell us any time you want to if you have a complaint, wish or suggestion to make about either the care you are receiving from your foster carer or from Family Fostercare. For example, you might want to tell us that you:

- are unhappy about decisions we have made about your care
- think that no-one is listening to you
- feel that you are not being treated properly by our staff, your social work or foster carers
- want to access the records on you held by Family Fostercare

You can ask a friend to help you make a complaint, or you can ask our Director of Services, Donna Turner to find an adult to help you. This person is called an 'advocate' and they will help you to explain your complaint. You can get in touch with Donna Turner by:

→ **phone on 07958 085309**
 → **email to donnaturner@familyfostercare.co.uk**

We respond to all complaints as quickly as possible, following a three-stage process:

Stage One: A manager or member of staff will try to sort out your complaint within 10 working days. If we need more time we will ask your permission.

Stage Two: If you are not happy with the response you can ask for your complaint to be investigated. We will ask an independent person to do this, and the investigation should not take more than 25 working days.

Stage Three: If you still think that your complaint has not been sorted out you can appeal to a review panel. This is a group of three independent people. They will listen to your complaint and tell us what they think.

If you're not happy with what we say, your Local Authority can appoint an independent advocate for you from Action for Children. If you are not happy with the way we have dealt with your complaint you can appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman or contact the DfE or Ofsted.

CONTACT NUMBERS

If you want to talk to somebody completely separate from fostering or your own social worker, there are lots of other people who may be able to help. Call one of these numbers below or alternatively email or visit the website.

	☎	🌐 / ✉
Childline	0800 11 11	www.childline.org.uk
NSPCC	0808 800 5000	
National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)	0808 808 1001	help@nyas.net
Children's Society	0300 303 7000	www.childrenssociety.org.uk
Bullying UK		www.bullying.co.uk
Kidscape	020 7730 3300	www.kidscape.org.uk/childrenteens
☎		
National Aids Helpline -	0800 567 123	
Drinkline -	0800 9178 282	
Brook Advisory Centre -	0808 802 1234	
SupportLine -	01708 765 200	
Children's Rights Office -	0800 528 0731	
Samaritans -	0845 7909 090	
Sexwise -	0800 282 930	
Youth Access -	020 8772 9900	

MORE CONTACTS

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) are the people who inspect all fostering services to make sure that we are looking after children properly. If you think we are not doing the best for you, they will listen to you and try to help.

Ofsted

Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0300 123 1231 (Monday - Friday, 8am - 6pm)

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Web: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Department for Education (DfE)

Tel: 0370 000 2288 Web: www.education.gov.uk

Action For Children, Children's Rights Services - Vera Beining

Tel: 020 7254 9408 / 07764 253677

Email: vera.beining@actionforchildren.org.uk / LondonIV@actionforchildren.org.uk

The Children's Rights Director for England

Ofsted, Aviation House, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE

Tel: 0800 528 0731 (freephone) (email through website) www.rights4me.org

The Children's Commissioner for England

Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0800 528 0731 Email: help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH

Tel: 0300 061 0614 Web: www.lgo.org.uk

Your independent reviewing officer is:

Their contact number is:

MY NOTES

You can use this page to write your own notes...
or you can just doodle on it if you prefer!

Lined area for notes or doodling.





older children's guide to fostercare (version 2.0)

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**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**