

## Contents

Using this guide	Page 2
Welcome to Foster Care Associates (	FCA) Page 3
FCA services: How we can help	Page 4
Other people outside FCA	Page 6
Getting involved with FCA	Page 10
Stay safe	Page 11
Memory box	Page 13
Education without compromise	Page 14
If you're unhappy	Page 15
Useful contacts	Page 16
Statement of purpose	Page 17
Children's commisioner	Page 18

### **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?

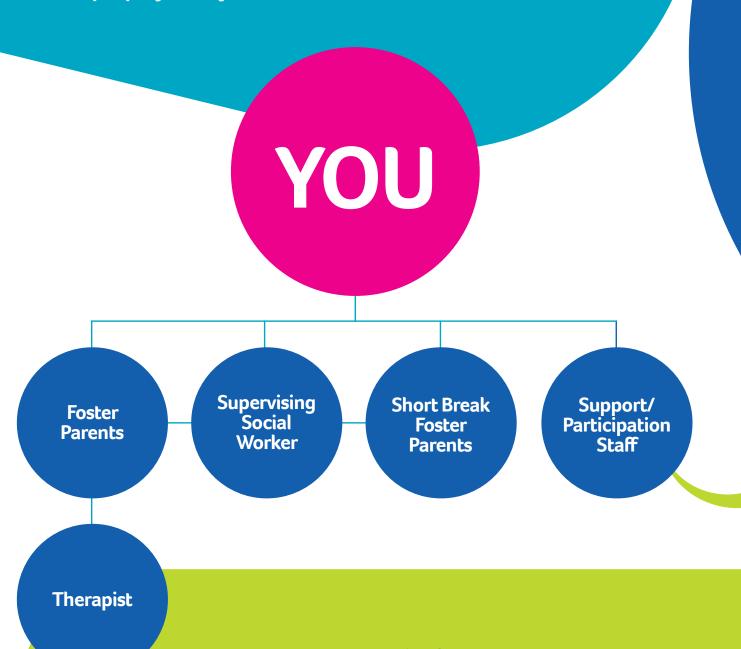
Fostering is a way of offering children and young people a home while their own family is unable to look after them. Fostering can be a temporary arrangement, and many fostered children return to their own families. Children who cannot return home but still want to stay in touch with their families often 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.

Fostering also offers a supportive and safe environment to parents with a young child or baby. Foster parents provide guidance and help you develop your skills so you can best care for your child.



## FCA Services: How We Can Help

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





Find out more about them on the next page.

### 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.

### **Short Break 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.

### FCA SUPERVISING SOCIAL WORKER:

TEL:

**EMAIL:** 

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.

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

## Social Worker

### Your 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.

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.

- 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.





## Advocate

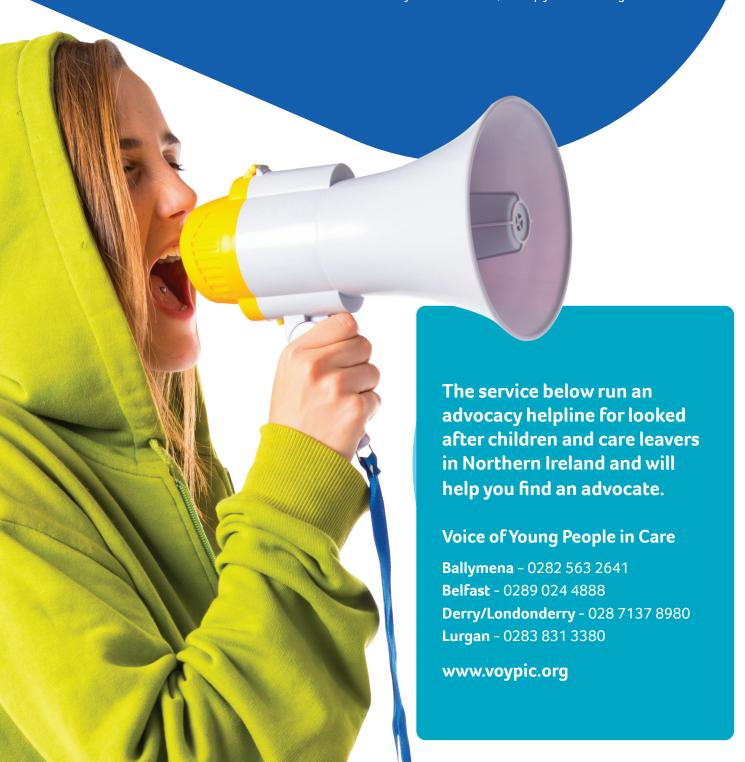
The law says that social workers and other adults should listen to your wishes and feelings about your care.

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.





A Guardian ad Litem (GAL) have a legal role and are appointed by the court in case proceedings.

They work with children and young people in family court cases and make sure that your voices are heard and decisions are taken in your best interests.

What is a Children's Court Guardian and what do they do?

A Children's Court Guardian (Guardian) is a social worker who visits children and young people for a Judge who works in Court.

The Judge asks the Guardian to find out all about YOU. The Guardian will find out about where you live, what you like and where you go to school. They will speak to all the important people in your life.

After the Guardian has met with you they will tell the Judge about your wishes and feelings and your views. The Guardian will also tell the Judge about what they think is best.

The Judge will then decide what is best for you after listening to what you have said and hearing what other people in your life say. What is a Guardian? | Children's Court Guardian Agency For Northern Ireland

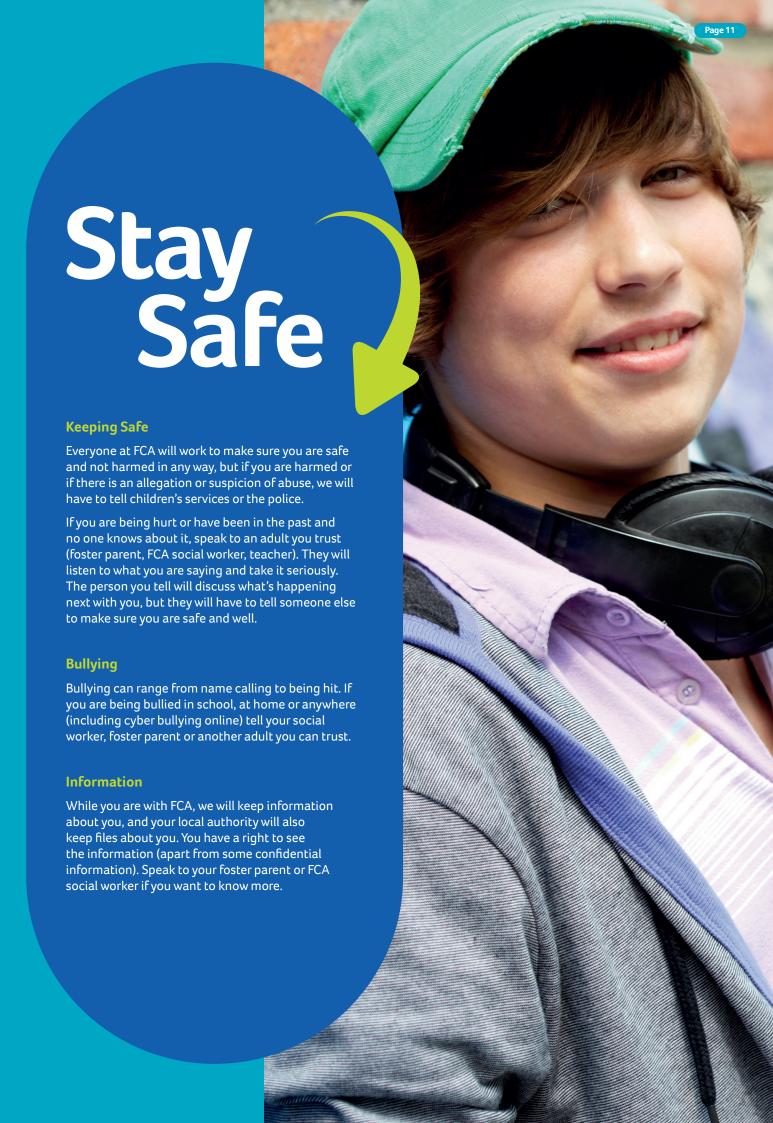
# Get involved with FCA

### 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.
- 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







# Internet & Mobile Safety

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





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.
- We have an Education Coordinator on our team whom young people can contact. They provide support in school and offer advice on anything education-related, including future planning and exams.

## If you are unhappy

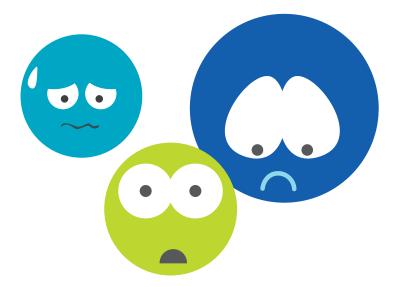
Sometimes it can be difficult living in a foster family and there can be misunderstandings, difficulties and problems. Talking about why you are angry or upset can help sort things out.

#### 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 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**

### **Common Youth**

Common Youth offer free, confidential sexual health and wellbeing services in Northern Ireland to under 25's.

Tel: 028 9032 8866 or go to commonyouth.com

### **VOYPIC**

Supporting children and young people with a lived experience of care in Northern Ireland.

www.voypic.org

### **CYPSP Youth Wellness Web**

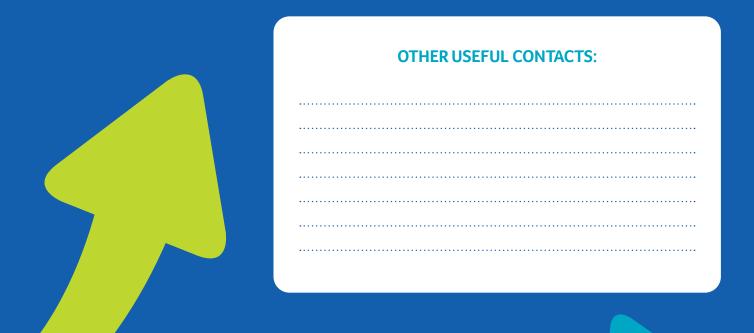
The Youth Wellness Web has been co-designed by young people for young people for easy access to different resources and services that can really help you.

Go to cypsp.hscni.net/youth-wellness-web/

### **Rainbow Project**

The Rainbow Project is a LGBTQIA+ Charity based in Northern Ireland, providing health and wellbeing services for our community.

Go to www.rainbow-project.org



## 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.

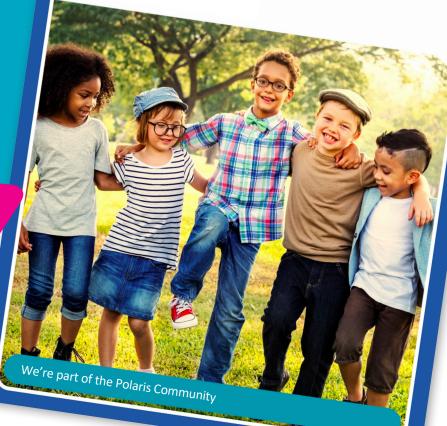
The statement of purpose tells you about:

- 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.



Statement of Purpose Northern Ireland Region





## Children's Commissioner

They work on behalf of all children and young people to improve their lives. They provide an advice helpline for children who live away from home.

Tel: 028 903 11616



## Notes



01527 556 480 contactus@thefca.co.uk