

Evergreen Foster Care

This guide
belongs to



Welcome to Evergreen



This handbook is to provide you with information about living in your new home. We understand that you may find this hard so we wanted to answer as many questions as we can.

We will help you to read the handbook, and you can make a list of any other questions you may have.

This handbook comes in other versions

You can write your questions here

Contents



1. What we do?
2. Who will help you?
3. Your family and friends
4. Your foster carers
5. Your rights



Who are we?

1. What we do?

Evergreen Foster Care was set up in 2019. Clare and the other owners want to help children and young people who struggle in foster care, and who wish to live in a family again.

I feel that many children and young people want to live in a family, but they need foster carers who give them what they need, and carers who keep them safe.

We look for foster carers who offer children and young people a long term home. They need to be fun, firm but fair, and they must enjoy going on days out and holidays. Many of our children and young people want carers who can drive, so this is what we search for!

What we do?

We have a document called a 'Statement of Purpose' that explains what we do. You can ask to see a copy if you wish to, but this children's guide is a shorter version.

We will work with your social worker to ensure that you feel happy and part of any decisions that are made.

We want you to feel listened to, and to feel reassured that you will be safe and cared for.

Evergreen Foster Care is registered with an organisation called Ofsted who inspect us every three years to make sure we are doing everything properly.

Our foster carers only care for one child or young person at a time, and this is to give children and young people lots of attention and time. You may have more than one set of carers who you spend some weekends and school holidays with, or you may have sleepovers with friends or family members of your foster carers. This is so you have as many people in your life as possible, so that when you leave foster care, you will have lots of support when you are an adult.





What is a co-carer?

When children and young people leave their children's homes or foster carers at 18 years old, they often say that they don't have enough support and feel lonely.

By having a second set of carers (known as co-carers), children and young people in Evergreen can feel reassured that they will have plenty of help and support in the future.

We ask our all of foster carers to keep the relationships and connections going with children and young people when they become 18 years old, so they will continue to feel part of their families.

If you have a co-carer, they will usually pick you up on a Friday after school and take you back to your main carers on a Sunday night around 6pm.

This could be every other weekend, and some days during the school holidays.

Some children and young people have regular sleepovers at family members of their main fostering families too.



Will I get to know them before I sleep over?

Like when you meet your main carers, you will be given plenty of time to get to know your co-carer. You will see a video, and they will come and spend time with you so they can get to know what you like or don't like. You will have your own bedroom here as well.



Both sets of carers will work together so you can get the best possible care.

Many of our children and young people think this is like going on a mini-holiday. You can plan special activities with your co-carers, and have plenty of one-to-one attention.

Some of our children and young people that have come from a children's home say that this gives them a break and time to re-charge their batteries.





Evergreen Foster Care

What we do?

Every child and young person has the right to

- be treated as an individual and given special attention
- to be cared for by people who can understand their needs
- have fun
- to be treated equally
- receive respect and understanding regarding cultural, religious and spiritual beliefs
- receive an education which increases their life prospects
- receive the best health care
- be safe, feel loved and always know that “someone cares”
- be informed about all important decisions that affect them, and to have a say
- have privacy for themselves and their belongings
- can think independently and make their own safe choices
- complain about anything they feel is unfair or unjust, and to have that complaint listened and responded to
- receive therapeutic help.

We aim to ensure that every child that lives with our foster carers, get the best care possible.





Evergreen Foster Care

What we do?

Every child and young people has the right to

- understand their fostering journey (Lifestory)
- have access to extra help with preparing for their independence (ASDAN)
- have carers that respect and care for them
- understand their own emotions and feelings
- have the support to ask questions that are important to them
- adults who advocate for them and to work through any questions they have about their birth families
- access a range of clubs and activities so they can make friends and flourish
- go to school in a safe place
- express their own identity and to have a sense of belonging
- be accepted for who they are



2. Who will help you? What is an Independent Review Officer IRO?

Your Review meetings are chaired by your Independent Reviewing Officer. Their main job is to make sure that your care plan, which is all about you and where you live, meets your needs.



What else will they do?

They organise your meetings and send out the invites
They will encourage you to express your views, wishes and feelings
They will ensure that people do what they say they will do



Your IRO is called:

Their telephone number is:

Other useful information

You should know your IRO and how to contact them

If your IRO leaves, they must introduce you to your new IRO

It is important that your IRO knows how you feel and what you would like to happen

If you are in care (or "looked after" by the local authority, they must appoint an IRO for you

If you have brothers or sisters in care, they too will have the same IRO

Your IRO's job is also to make sure that the Local Authority (who your social worker works for) knows when everything is going well but also to find out if there is anything they can help you with.

Who will help you?

You will have two social workers.
One is from the local authority, and one is from Evergreen Foster Care.

Both social workers will work together to make sure you have everything that you need.

You will also be given an Evergreen family support worker who will spend time with you at least every 6 weeks, and they may help you to prepare for independence or help you to understand your life experiences.

Reviews

Reviews are meetings that happen on a regular basis (usually every 6 months). These meetings are all about you, so it is important that you take part if you want, and your foster carers will encourage you to express your wishes and feelings so you are heard.



Who else will help you?



What does your local authority social worker do?

- They will come and visit you and your foster family
- They help to make the plans for your care, health and education
- They arrange for you to spend time with your family and friends
- They help to support you if you are unhappy about something
- They will ask to see your bedroom sometimes

What does the Evergreen social worker and family support worker do?

- They make sure your foster carers are looking after you properly
- They make sure your foster carers have all the help and support they need
- They will talk to you to make sure you are happy and well cared for
- They will visit you and speak to you in private

Your social worker & Evergreen's social worker

My local authority social worker is:

Their telephone number is:

My Evergreen social worker is:

Their telephone number is:

My Evergreen support worker is:

Their telephone number is:



Who else will help you?

Messages from some our team

"My name is Clare, and I am one of the owners and current Registered Manager at Evergreen.

I set up Evergreen because I used to manage a large children's home. Some children like living in a children's home, but others want to feel part of a family so if we can find the right match I look for foster carers who 'won't give up' and who want to offer a loving home - for a long time!

I believe that if foster carers can understand the best ways to support children who have had a difficult time growing up, children can get to feel part of a family (if this is what they want).

In my spare time, I like walking my little cockapoo dog called Pepper, she's really cute and can do lots of tricks.

I am proud of Evergreen, the staff team, children and foster carers, and I am looking forward to finding foster families for many more children in the future.

You can call me any time on: 07368 586813"



"My name is Alison and I'm a Manager at Evergreen. It is important for me to work for people that care and go the extra mile.

All the staff are lovely; they help each other out and really care about what they do. The foster carers are also really lovely.

Everyone works hard to make sure all our young people feel safe, are well cared for and have the opportunity to reach their goals in life.

My role is to oversee everything that we do and make sure we are doing everything right.

I like working with people, that's why I do what I do and I love helping foster carers to help the children and young people who are living with them.

I have two children of my own, a daughter and a son and I have two small dogs - you might meet them one day.

I love horse riding, even though it makes my legs ache, and I love walking my dogs.

I like chocolate, especially aero mint!!!

I also like cooking and surprisingly I don't burn anything very often.

I like to think that I'm a friendly person with a good sense of humour. It's important to smile.

You can me any time on: 07359 093784"



Messages from our team



"My name is Maddy, and I am Evergreen's Therapist. I have been with Evergreen since September 2022 and I really enjoy my job.

The parts of the job I love the most is when I work with the children to support them to understand themselves at a deeper level. For example, supporting with identifying thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Another part of the role I love is when I see the carers and children show their own personal growth and achieve their own goals in support sessions.

I believe that everyone carries a bag of stones that can weigh them down at times and I hope to create a safe space where these stones can be explored.

I love to go to the theatre to watch musicals and plays. I love to relax by building Lego, my personal favourites are Star Wars sets or sets based on Disney films. I try to catch up with all the Star Wars series. I also love to cuddle with my two pets. I have a cat and a dog.

You can me any time on: 07359 488904"

"Hello, my name is Sara. I am one of the Supervising Social Workers at Evergreen.

I find my work to be very rewarding; I love seeing the positive progress that the children have made with our carers and the difference they have made in their lives, providing them with a loving family home with lots of positive experiences and opportunities. I feel fortunate to be a part of this journey and supporting them along the way.

Outside of work, I love to go on holidays. My favourite places to go are anywhere where there are white beaches, and the weather is warm.

I would also describe myself as family orientated, meaning I love spending time with my family and friends. I love to go out to meals and go on activities with them. I also enjoy getting fit and spending time with my dog Bobby.

You can me any time on: 07369 225651"



3. Your family & friends

Your family will be told by your social worker about your new foster carers

Your family will know how you are doing and how you are feeling

Don't be afraid to talk to your foster carers about your family. Your foster carers will want to know all about your family because they know how important they are to you.

There may be some family members who you do not want to see, or family members that you are not comfortable to have information about you. This is fine, and we will support your decisions.

Visits and telephone calls will be agreed with your social worker.

You should be provided with access to a phone so you can make calls in private (if everyone agrees this is in your best interests)

Face-to-face family time will be organised if your social worker thinks this is best for you. This might be supported by another adult like a support worker or your foster carer, or you might see your family alone.

Write down anything you want your family to know or not know about your new home.

Who is important to you?

What questions do you have about your family?

Do you want to see anyone that you don't see at the moment?

You might also want to keep in touch with friends and family through social media.

Your social worker will agree if you can use social media apps, and if so, how can you do this safely.

Your family & friends



Can I have a mobile phone?

Yes, if you are old enough and you can show that you can be sensible with a mobile phone.

Your foster carer may have some rules around your phone but these will be clear and fair. Your foster carers will want to make sure that you are safe on your mobile phone.

Can I have sleepovers at my friend's houses?

Friendships are very important and your foster carers will encourage these relationships where they can.

Your foster carers and social worker will want to know that you are safe and who you are playing with. This is the same as regular parents. Overnight stays will require permission from your social worker and foster carer.

Your family & friends

Can my brothers and sisters see my new house?

Your foster carers understand how important your brothers and sisters are to you and they will help you to see them as much as possible.

If your social worker thinks this is good for everyone, you will be able to plan lots of lovely activities together, including them coming to see your new home.

Will I still go to the same school?

If you are doing well at your school, and your foster carers can get you there, you will stay at the same school.

If it will take too long, or you are struggling at school, your social worker might look for a closer school.

We will always ask you about this before any decisions are made.

Can I still go to my favourite clubs?

You might not be able to go to your usual clubs if it will take a long time to get there, but your foster carers will look at local clubs like football teams or dance schools and you can go there as often as you like.



4. Your foster carers

Our foster carers are hand-picked for you!!!!

You will have time to get to know them before you move in and you can see a video of them and the whole family - you can even sleep over before moving in.

We want you to feel as comfortable as possible.

Your foster carers will take the time to get to know you properly.

It might take a few weeks for you to feel ready, and that's fine!



Can I bring my stuff?

You can take anything you want to your new home and you can do this in stages as you are getting to know your foster carers. Your belongings will be well looked after and kept safe. This includes photographs of your family and friends.

Will I have my own bedroom?

We will make sure you have your own room. This will be your own space and no one else can come in without your permission.

You will be expected to keep this clean and tidy but your foster carers will help you with this.

We will ask you what you like in your bedroom, so that we can make it nice for you!



How will they know how to look after me properly?

We make sure that your foster carers know all about you before you move in, and they will ask you what you like to do, or what you need help with.

We are a special type of foster care service that helps children who have struggled in foster care before.

We meet your foster carers every 2 weeks, and we will come and visit you at home.

Your foster carers will have to complete regular training so they keep learning how to help you.

Our foster carers are used to helping children who struggle, so they will have everything that they need to keep you safe and secure.

We want this to work out, so we will keep a close eye on how you are ALL getting on - Evergreen is like being part of ONE BIG FAMILY!

Other useful info!

What time do I go to bed?

These are agreed beforehand so that they are fair and that you get enough sleep, but our carer guide says these are good bedtimes-

Age 5 - 7:45pm
Age 6 - 8:00pm
Age 7 - 8:15pm
Age 8 - 8:30pm
Age 9 - 8:45pm
Age 10 - 9:00pm
Age 11 - 9:15pm
Age 12 - 9:30pm
Age 13 - 9:45pm
Age 14 - 10:00pm
Age 15+ - 10:15pm

Can I have pets?

Most of our foster carers already have pets like dogs and cats but if you already have a pet that you would like to bring, we will do our best.



What do I call my foster carers?

We like you to call your foster carers by their first name. Some children want to call their foster carers mum & dad but that is up to you and your carers.

Pocket Money

All children and young people in Evergreen Foster Care receive the same amount.

£2.50 plus £5.50 for positive behaviour which is linked to points.

Any of the £5.50 pocket money not earned will go into your savings.

We will save you an extra £10 for your future.

Your foster carers will also give you extra pocket money and tokens for super behaviour but this agreed with Evergreen so that it can be fair and clear.

Sometimes your local authority will ask us to give you a slightly different amount.

Activities & Clothing

You will get a minimum of £15 per week for new clothes and a minimum of £30 per week for activities and clubs.

Your foster carers might not give you this directly but you should feel that you have enough of everything.

If you don't feel that way, you can discuss this with your social worker, or you can complain to Evergreen.

Your foster carers will get extra payments towards Christmas and birthday presents.

Your foster carers are expected to take you on holiday each year.

Other things to know!



**“Sometimes I struggle and I can do things that I don’t really mean.
How will my foster carers help me?”**

We understand that no one is perfect, and everyone can make mistakes - even adults!

We want to help you to be a kind person, and for you to understand that actions can have consequences.

If you get something wrong, your foster carers might ask you do an extra task around the house, or they might tell you that you can’t go on an activity.

This should be fair, and your carers will help you to understand why they have done this.

If you don’t feel the consequences are fair, you can call a member of staff at Evergreen or ask to speak to your own social worker.

what should foster carers do?



Foster carers should do everything that a good parent should do.

They should stick to the rules, keep you safe, and love and care for you.

Foster carers should show you how to be kind, safe and to have respect for others.

They should encourage you to eat healthy foods and take part in regular exercise. If you have a special diet due to religious or cultural needs, or you are a vegetarian or vegan, they should make sure you have what you need.

If you aren’t happy with your foster carers, there are plenty of people to talk to.



Other things to know!



Routines & Rules

Routines and rules are important so that everyone knows what to expect.

They also help us to feel safe and secure.

We will help your foster carers to set out their house routines and rules like -

- everyone should sit together to eat meals
- children should keep their room tidy
- no-one should swear or use bad language
- hugs and affection are lovely, but everyone should ask for permission
- rules should be fair and consistent
- everyone must knock on bedrooms doors before entering
- your carers' bedroom is their own personal space, just like your bedroom is your own space
- every member of the household is treated with respect, and everyone helps to look after household items
- everyone wears clothes around the house
- children can have a visual timetable to help them to understand what is happening 'now & next'
- carers should not 'drag on' consequences and they should help you to 'start again' if you have had a bad day
- your social worker might want your carers' help to keep you safe on the internet. This will be clear for you to understand, and will be reviewed regularly.
- children should feel able to say if they are not happy with anything; they shouldn't feel afraid to speak up.





5. Your rights

All adults should listen and treat you with kindness and respect even when you have done something that they are not happy with.



If you have a serious concern, you call or text Clare on:
07968 586 813
at any time and she will investigate and reply to you within 28 days.

You can ask to speak to your social worker, teacher, a member of the Evergreen team or your IRO.

If you do not want to speak to any of these people, we can request a person called an Independent Advocate. This person is nothing to do with us or social services.

You can also contact Ofsted if you do not like the way we have handled your complaint
Their phone number is 0300 123 1231

Other useful numbers



Rachel de Souza is the Children's Commissioner for England. She has a legal duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England with a particular focus on children and young people with difficulties or challenges in their lives, and in particular those living away from home, in or leaving care, or receiving social care services.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner is:
Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London. SW1P 3BT.
Tel: 02077388330 or a direct line for children in care: 08005280731



www.childrenscomissioner.gov.uk

NSPCC (National Society
for the Prevention of
Cruelty to Children)

FREE PHONE 0808 800
5000
TEXT 88858

The Children's Rights Director -
Dr Roger Morgan

Telephone: 0800 528 0731
Address: Office of the Children's Right
Director, Ofsted, Aviation House, 125
Kingsway, London. WC2B 6SE

