

# Children's Guide & Welcome Pack



This Guide Belongs  
to: \_\_\_\_\_

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**If you need to have a copy of this pack in a different format, for example because of a disability or if English is not your first language, please contact the office or ask your foster carer to contact them on your behalf and we will produce a pack to meet your specific requirements.**

# Welcome!

**Dear**

**This is a special pack just for you. It tells you about The Children's Family Trust and about the people who care for you.**

**There is lots of information about The CFT and how we can help and support you, and telephone numbers for other people you may like to speak to, such as your Social Worker. With a whole section all about you, so we know what you like, what you don't like, people in your life, what you are proud of and any worries or questions you may have.**

**Remember, you can talk to your own Social Worker, your Foster Carers, or anyone at The Children's Family Trust, we are here to help.**

**Best Wishes, from**

**Everyone at The Children's Family Trust.**

# All about me...



**My Name:**

**The date I was born:**

**Where I am living now:**

**My postcode:**

**I live with:**

**Their contact number is:**

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**What people like and admire about me:**

# My favourite...

**Things to do**

**Food and Drink**

**Friends and People**

**Pets and Animals**

# Things that are important to me...

**Think about the things that are personally important to you both now and in the future.**

# Things that are important to me...

**Think about the things that are personally important to you both now and in the future. Things you might want to include are things that make you happy, relationships with others, activities you enjoy, your religious beliefs and anything else.**

# Things I'm Proud Of...

**This can include any achievements you have received at home or at school, new things you have tried, or anything that you are proud of in your life.**







# My future...

My thoughts

**What I would like to do in my life:**

**How and where I would like to live:**

**Money and Finances:**

**School:**

**Things I might need some help with:**

# Review Meetings

## What is a Review?

These are also called 'Looked After Children's Reviews' and sometimes LAC Reviews. They are meetings where people involved in looking after you can get together and talk about how you are feeling about your placement and make arrangements about how you will be cared for.

## Who will be there?

There will always be one person from Social Services and they will be in charge of the meeting. This is called 'chairing the meeting'. Other people who will usually be invited include your Foster Carers, your Social Worker, and the Supervising Social Worker from The CFT. Your Mum and/or Dad, class teacher, and Independent Visitor (if you have one) may also be invited. If you are worried about anyone being there, you should tell your Social Worker.

## What will be talked about?

The placement – how you feel about being in foster care, how you get on with your foster family, and whether you should stay with them.

Contact – who you are in contact with, and how often you see and hear from them. Also whether there is someone you are not seeing and who you'd like to see.

Your health – how you are and whether any changes need to be made to improve your health.

Your education - how you are doing at school and if you need any extra help at school or with any homework.

Your activities and leisure – what you do in your spare time and if there is anything you'd like to do.

### What can I do to prepare for this meeting?

You might like to make some notes about what you'd like to say and then share your thoughts with people at the meeting.

### What happens after?

The information discussed is put together into a 'care plan' to help make the most of your time in foster care.

### What is a 'Care Plan'?

This details everything decided at your reviews. Everyone who is caring for you gets a copy. This means they know what they have to do to look after you in the best way they can.

### Will my 'Care Plan' change?

Your Social Workers will be watching to see that you are getting the best that they can arrange for you. This includes seeing how you settle with your foster family and whether you feel that you should stay with them or move on. They will also be looking to see if the contacts you have with other people are the contacts you still want to have or if there are other people you now want to be in contact with. This means that your review meetings have to be held regularly and must be updated if needed.

Your first review meeting will be after you have been with your foster family for four weeks.

The next review will be three months later.

After that, there will be more reviews every six months.

What if I have something to say in between times?

You can speak with your Foster Carers, Social Worker, The CFT's Supervising Social Worker, teacher, or Independent Visitor (if you have one).

If you'd rather not speak to any of them, then contact one of the outside agencies listed in the 'useful contacts' part of this pack.

# Seeing your own records

**Your Foster Carer, Supervising Social Worker and your own Social Worker need to write things about you so they can track your progress.**

**For instance your Foster Carer will write a daily record detailing anything important that happened to you that day. This is called a 'log'. They might also write down if you were ill, saw the doctor or went to the dentist. They might also write down how well you are doing at school or any afterschool activities you participated in. You can read what has been written about you in these logs, and if you want you can also write your own comments.**

**If you wish to see these daily logs, your Foster Carer, your Social Worker or The CFT's Supervising Social Worker will help you view these.**

# People in my life

## My family

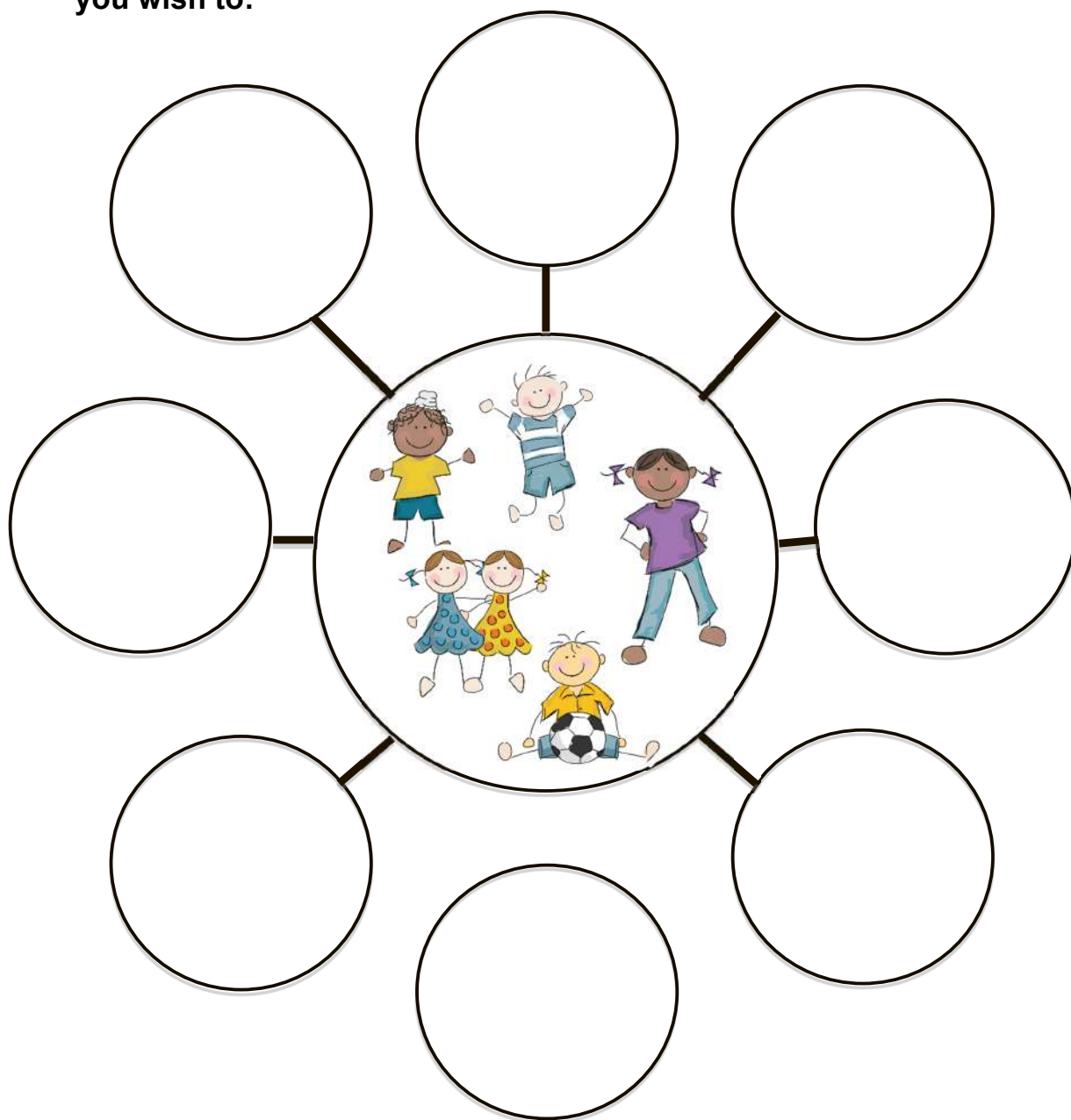
Here you can write down your family members, who they are and how to contact them if you wish to:



# People in my life

## My friends

Here you can write down your friends and how to contact them if you wish to:





# People in my life

## People who support me

**Your Social Worker is:**

**Their email address is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

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**Your Foster Carer's Supervising Social Worker is:**

**Their email address is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

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**The Children's Family Trust Registered Manager is:**

**Their email address is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

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**The Children's Family Trust address is:  
REGIONAL OFFICE ADDRESS HERE**

**Telephone Number:**

**Email:**

# The Children's Family Trust

## What we do – Our Statement of Purpose

**This is where we write down what we do for children placed with our Foster Carers.**

**We like children to feel happy, safe, helped and listened to and want:**

- **You to live in a house that is safe and comfortable.**
- **You to be happy and have things such as nice food and clean clothes.**
- **You to go to school and to be happy there, but if you are not happy you can speak to your Carer.**
- **You to get to see a doctor or a dentist when you want or need to.**
- **You to be listened to. Please talk to your Carer, your Social Worker or anyone from The Children's Family Trust, if you want to say something about your care.**
- **You to be able to speak up when you are unhappy.**

# More Support

**Your Independent Reviewing Officer is:**

**Their email address is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

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**The Children's Commissioner for England address is:**

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

**Their website is: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)**

**Their telephone number is: 0800 528 0731**

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**Other People:**

**Their email is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

**Other People:**

**Their email is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

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**Other People:**

**Their email is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

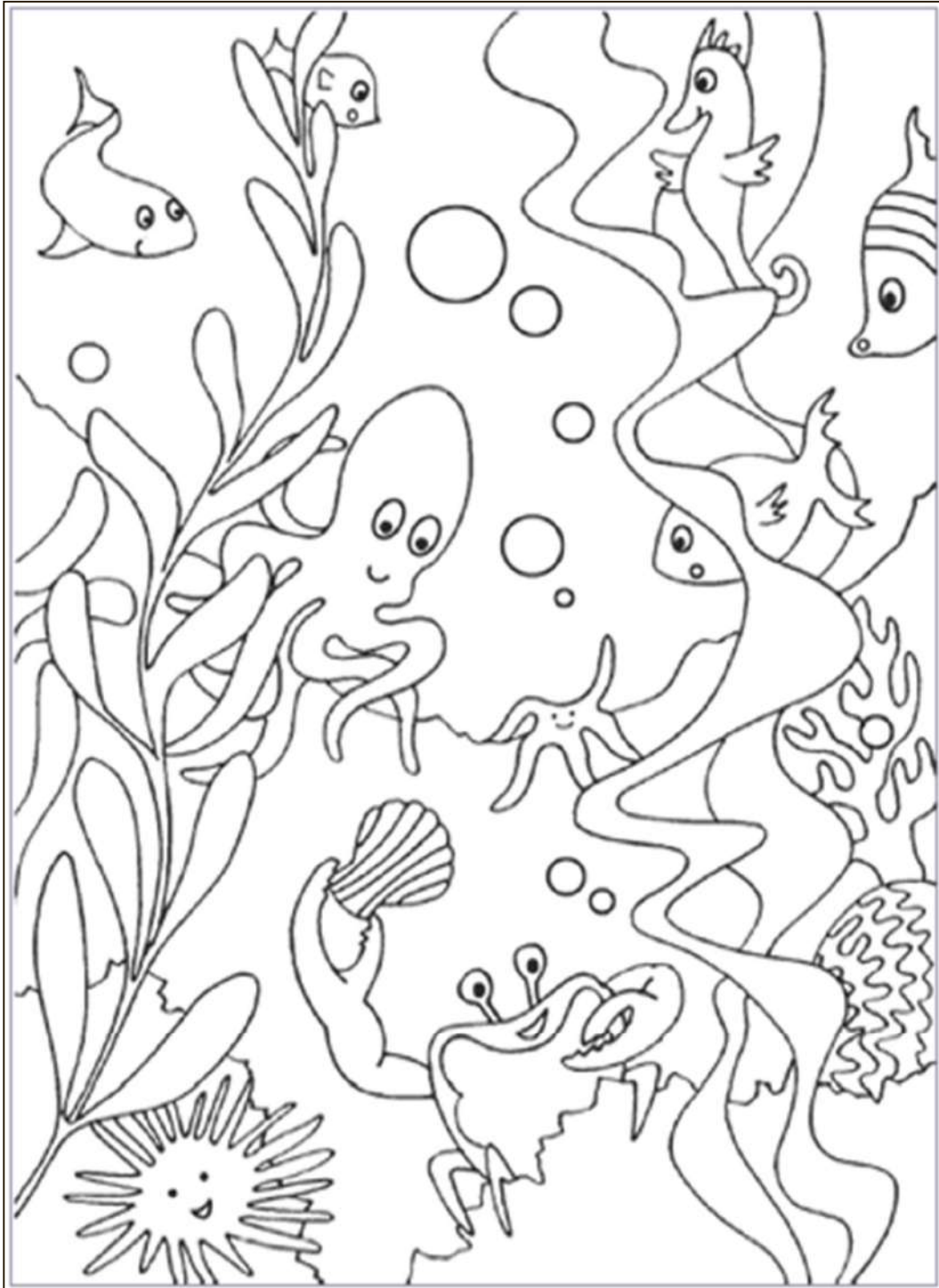
**Other People:**

**Their email is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

# Fun Stuff

Colour in this underwater scene.



# People you may come across

## The Children's Guardian

### What is this?

Children's Guardians are people who know a lot about what children need. They work with children and families when there are care proceedings in court.

### Why might a Guardian want to see me?

Don't worry, this is not because you have done anything wrong. A Judge or Magistrate at a court may need to decide who you will live with and who you will see as well as other things, and they may ask a Children's Guardian to see everyone involved and write a report.

### Getting to know your Guardian

The Children's Guardian will come to see you and will tell you his/her name, address at work and telephone number. The Guardian can help you write this in your pack. Your Guardian may bring your Solicitor to see you. Talk to your Guardian, your Solicitor or your Social Worker if you are unhappy about your Guardian. A change may be possible.

### Seeing your Children's Guardian

You can choose to talk to your Children's Guardian on your own. You can talk to your Children's Guardian with your Solicitor or tell your Guardian if you want someone else to be there.

If you have a brother or a sister who is with you, they can see the Children's Guardian. You can see your Children's Guardian all together or on your own.

### Talking to your Children's Guardian

The Guardian will listen to you about who you want to live with and who you want to see and anything else you want to tell the Guardian. He/she will also talk to your family and to other people important to you. Tell the Guardian if there is someone special who you would like them to meet. Write it down in the note pad in the back of your pack to remind you.

### **Keeping in Touch**

Talk to your Guardian about their coming to see you to tell you what is happening. Tell them if you are unhappy that you are not seeing someone who you would like to see or maybe telephone.

### **What happens next?**

The Children's Guardian will write a report for the Judge or Magistrate. Other people involved with you at the court will be given the report too. This will include your parents. You can see the report, if you want to, so talk to the Guardian about this.

### **At Court.**

There will be meetings at the court. The Guardian will say what you want to happen but will also say what is best for you. Sometimes this is not the same as what you want.

You can discuss going to court with the Children's Guardian. Sometimes children do not want to go to court. The Children's Guardian will talk to you about this. You can ask your Solicitor too.

### **Who will tell me the decision?**

It is the Children's Guardian's job to make sure that someone will come and tell you what decision has been made at the court. Children have said that they want their Guardian or Solicitor to do this and to say goodbye to them.

### **What if I am unhappy with my Guardian?**

If you are unhappy with your Guardian then talk to your Solicitor, Social Worker, or contact your local Children's Rights Officer/Advocate.

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**If you have a Guardian, you can write their details here:**

**Your Guardian's name is:**

**Their address is:**

**Their email address is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

# People you may come across

## Solicitor

### **What is a Solicitor?**

A Solicitor is a person who knows about the law to do with children. Your solicitor is somebody who will work for you, and will help you understand what is happening if there are care proceedings in a court. Not everyone will have a solicitor.

### **Why have I got a solicitor?**

The people at court – the Judge or the Magistrate – need to decide who you will live as well as other things. Your solicitor will help you by talking with you about this and telling the Judge or magistrate your wishes. Don't worry, this doesn't mean you've done anything wrong.

### **Who is my Solicitor?**

The people working at the court, or your Children's Guardian, will choose your Solicitor. Talk to your Solicitor, Children's Guardian or Social Worker if you are unhappy about who your Solicitor is. A change may be possible.

### **Getting to know your Solicitor.**

Your Solicitor will come to visit you. They will tell you their name, address at work and telephone number. They can help you write it in this guide.

### **Seeing your Solicitor**

You can choose to talk to your Solicitor on your own. You may have things you want to say without anyone else there. You can ask your Children's Guardian to be present or maybe someone else. Talk to your Solicitor about this.

If you have a brother or sister living with you then usually they can have the same Solicitor. You can see your Solicitor all together or on your own.

### **Talking to your solicitor.**

Your Solicitor will want to listen to you about what you want, who you want to live with, and who you want to see.

### **What if I do not understand?**

If you don't understand what your Solicitor is saying or what is going on, then don't be frightened about asking them to explain, or to ask the Children's guardian. They are there to help you.

### **Keeping in touch.**

You can ask your solicitor to write to you to tell you what is going on. Your Solicitor will come and visit you. Tell your Solicitor if there is someone you would like to see.

### **What happens next?**

Your wishes will be written down in your Children's Guardian's report for all of those involved with you at court to read. This includes your parents. You can ask your Solicitor what has been written.

### **At court.**

There will be meetings at the court and the Judge and Magistrate will listen to what everyone has to say. They will make a decision. This may not always be what you want, but it will be what they think is best for you.

Sometimes children choose to go to see the court. Sometimes children choose not to go. Tell your Solicitor if you want to go and see the court.

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**If you have a Solicitor, you can write their details here:**

**Your Guardian's name is:**

**Their address is:**

**Their email address is:**

**Their telephone number is:**



# People you may come across

## Independent Visitors

### What is an Independent Visitor?

Independent Visitors are ordinary people who offer their time to children and young people so that you can talk to someone independently if you want too. They can also assist you with any problems you may be having.

They are called 'independent' because they are not employed by Social Services. This means that they are not Social Workers. They are not paid, they volunteer to visit and talk to you about how you are getting on. If you want them to tell your Social Worker about anything that is worrying you they will do so.

### Who can have an Independent Visitor?

If you are in care and rarely see your parents or other members of your family, then you can have an Independent Visitor to visit and befriend you.

### What will an Independent Visitor do?

Your Independent Visitor, like any other friend, will visit you regularly. You will both decide together what you will do on these visits. If you wish, your Independent Visitor could also speak on your behalf, for example at a review.

### How do I get an Independent Visitor?

If you do not already have an Independent Visitor and feel that you would like one then talk to your Social Worker or Foster Carer about this.

### Having an Independent Visitor.

Having an Independent Visitor will be your choice and wherever possible the local authority will match your needs, interests and background to an independent worker. The first few visits will be a sort of 'trial period' to see if you and your visitor get on, then you can agree how often and for how long the visitor will come to see you and how you will spend your time together when he/she visits.

**Your Independent Visitors name is:**  
**Their contact details are:**

# People you may come across

## Other

You can write down the details of other people and how to contact them if you wish.

**Their name is:**

**Their name is:**

**Their contact details are:**

**Their contact details are:**

**Their name is:**

**Their name is:**

**Their contact details are:**

**Their contact details are:**

**Their name is:**

**Their name is:**

**Their contact details are:**

**Their contact details are:**

**Their name is:**

**Their name is:**

**Their contact details are:**

**Their contact details are:**

# Fun Stuff

Try and find all the words in the word-search below.

C	E	F	T	B	W	Y	C	R	T	A	V	R	W	O	H	J	Q	N	B
S	H	U	H	I	O	C	A	R	E	P	L	A	N	P	B	C	R	S	A
T	G	I	A	U	Q	M	P	S	T	A	L	E	R	T	Y	E	N	W	Y
G	U	O	L	W	A	U	F	O	S	T	E	R	C	A	R	E	R	A	H
H	R	Y	E	D	X	J	H	U	C	I	W	T	L	I	C	P	C	C	D
U	E	R	I	G	R	R	A	R	H	S	O	H	O	R	O	O	A	A	F
N	V	F	S	H	F	E	P	T	I	A	R	S	A	U	M	H	C	S	T
M	I	T	O	E	G	E	N	L	L	F	K	O	V	P	F	T	H	C	B
I	E	B	C	R	E	D	P	S	D	E	S	F	E	C	P	S	I	H	N
K	W	N	I	T	R	R	Y	O	F	C	A	O	T	E	O	Y	E	O	J
S	K	M	A	V	H	T	F	O	R	A	E	W	I	S	R	U	V	O	I
D	L	C	L	Y	T	O	O	H	E	O	M	A	E	N	T	R	E	L	M
F	A	R	W	B	U	E	M	C	N	S	R	I	R	O	R	T	Y	G	K
R	E	E	O	U	B	R	S	E	S	O	F	E	L	I	U	R	G	H	F
E	C	A	R	N	A	D	T	S	F	W	E	H	M	Y	N	E	D	T	T
G	R	S	K	I	C	A	R	E	O	R	D	E	R	T	T	W	T	P	C
T	D	I	E	M	S	C	E	E	A	Y	R	W	E	N	N	R	A	O	A
H	F	J	R	O	F	D	R	M	S	U	P	P	O	R	T	O	U	K	E
C	A	K	O	L	C	A	H	O	M	L	E	E	A	E	E	L	B	S	I
A	W	F	H	E	A	L	T	H	Y	I	V	I	T	T	R	F	N	I	T

Foster Carer

Social Worker

Childrens Family Trust

Care Order

Care Plan

School

Home

Support

# My Appointments

Here you can write any important appointments or meetings that you may have coming up.

**Date:**  
**Time:**  
**Location:**  
**Why:**  
**Contact:**  
**Job Title:**  
**Next Appointment:**

**Date:**  
**Time:**  
**Location:**  
**Why:**  
**Contact:**  
**Job Title:**  
**Next Appointment:**

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**Date:**  
**Time:**  
**Location:**  
**Why:**  
**Contact:**  
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**Next Appointment:**

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**Time:**  
**Location:**  
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**Date:**  
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**Location:**  
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**Contact:**  
**Job Title:**  
**Next Appointment:**

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**Date:**  
**Time:**  
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**Next Appointment:**

**Date:**  
**Time:**  
**Location:**  
**Why:**  
**Contact:**  
**Job Title:**  
**Next Appointment:**

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**Date:**  
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**Next Appointment:**

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**Date:**  
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**Contact:**  
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**Date:**  
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**Why:**  
**Contact:**  
**Job Title:**  
**Next Appointment:**

**Date:**  
**Time:**  
**Location:**  
**Why:**  
**Contact:**  
**Job Title:**  
**Next Appointment:**

# Useful Contacts – Help & Support

There are a number of organisations that support children and young people in foster care. Here are the contact details of some of them that might be helpful to you

If you need to contact your CFT Supervising Social Worker you can contact: **The Children's Family Trust – Office Number Here**

**If you need help you can also contact:**

**The Children's Commissioner for England**  
**Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BT**  
**Telephone: 0800 528 0731**  
**Website: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)**

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**ChildLine**

**Telephone: 0800 1111 (this is a free number)**  
**Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) where you can access message board, 1-2-1 chat and email.**

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**National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS)**

**Telephone: 0808 808 1001 (this is a free number)**  
**Open 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm Saturday.**  
**Website: [www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net) Email: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)**  
The service offers information, advice and an advocate (someone who can talk on your behalf) for young people. They can help you with choices or help you to say what you want, for example in meetings.

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**Ofsted**

**Telephone: 0300 123 1231 Text line: 60085**  
**Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)**  
Ofsted inspect and regulate things like school, fostering services and children's services. If you are concerned or have a serious complaint then you may wish to contact them.

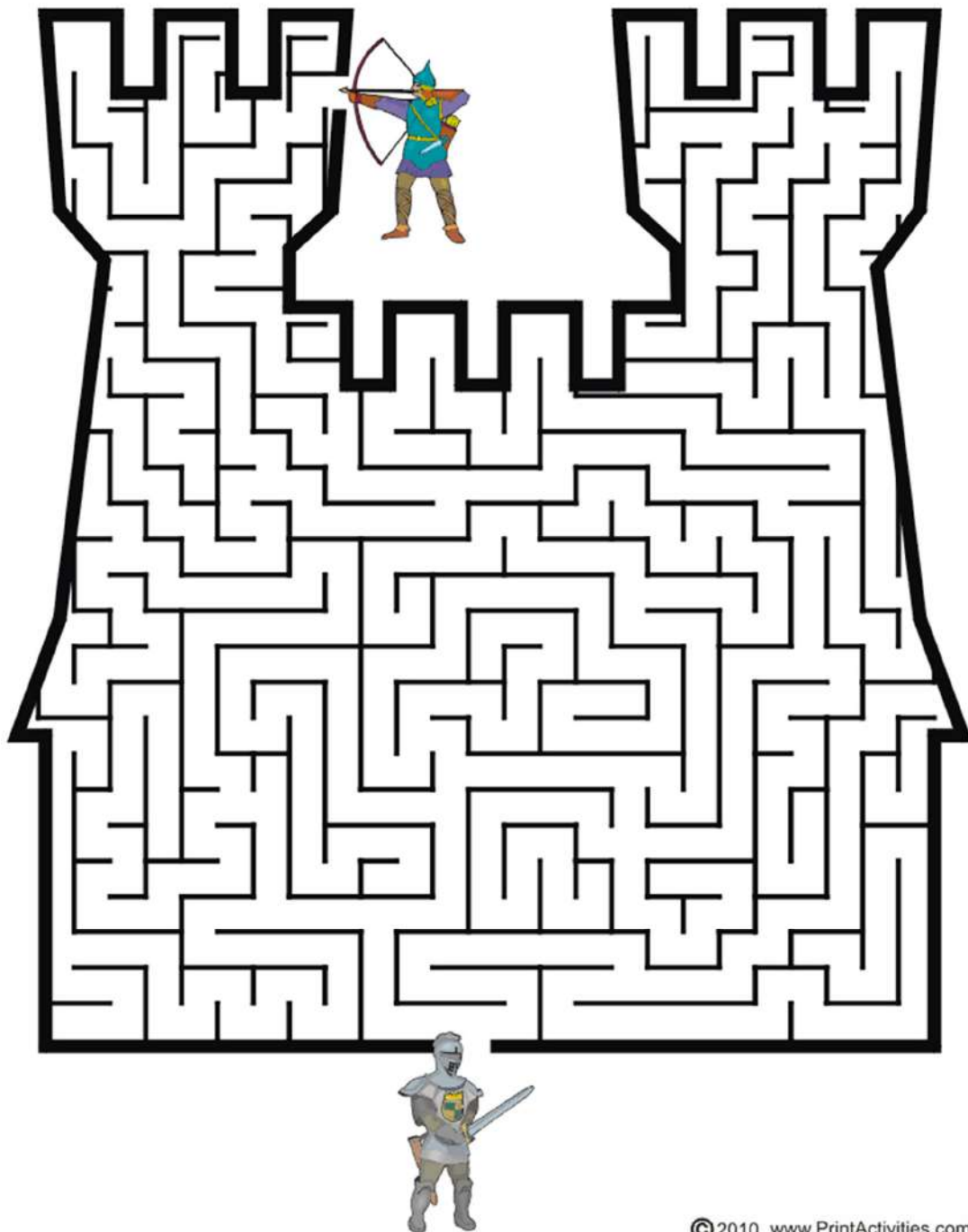
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**Get Connected**

**Telephone: 0800 808 4994 (this is a free number – Open 1pm-11pm)**  
**Website: [www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk)**  
**Email: [help@getconnected.org.uk](mailto:help@getconnected.org.uk)**  
A confidential website that helps young people find sources of help.

# Fun Stuff

Help the knight through the castle, to the archer at the top.



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# Your Health

Keeping healthy is important and you will go to the doctor's and the dentist on a regular basis. If you feel unwell or would like to speak to them about your health at any time you can record their details below.

**Your Doctor's name is:**

**Their address is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

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**Your Dentist's name is:**

**Their address is:**

**Their telephone number is:**

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Keeping your mind healthy is also very important. If you are feeling upset or unhappy and would like to speak to someone, please speak to your Foster Carers, your Social Worker or the Supervising Social Worker at The CFT.

You might have someone to help you with your mental health like a counsellor or a CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service).

**Your worker's name is:**

**Their address is:**

**Their Telephone number is:**



# Your Rights

These pages tell you what you have the right to do at certain ages while you are growing up. Your Foster Carer can explain more about these.

## At any age you can...

- Take flying lessons (but time won't be logged until you are 14)
- Enter a bingo club as long as you don't take part
- Give evidence in court
- Get your Health, Education and Social Services records as long as the information will not cause serious harm to your physical or mental health – or that of another person. (Your Foster Carer and The CFT hold information about you that you can access if you wish. Please speak to your Foster Carer who will discuss with you how this is done).

## At 5 you must...

- Pay a child's fare on most trains, buses and tubes
- Receive full-time education

## At 7 you can...

- Open and withdraw money from a National Savings account or Trustee Savings bank account

## At 12 you can...

- Be trained to perform dangerous circus acts
- Put your signature on a passport

## At 14 you can...

- Get 'light' work (less than two hours on a school day or a Sunday and not before 7am or after 7pm. In holidays you can work up to five hours a day but no more than 25 hours a week),
- Apply for Justices' Licence to perform publicly abroad (sing, play music, perform, play sport or work as a model)

# Your Rights

These pages tell you what you have the right to do at certain ages while you are growing up. Your Foster Carer can explain more about these.

## At 16 you can...

- Join – with consent – the Army, Navy or Air Force
- Join most trade unions
- Apply for a licence to drive a moped or 'invalid carriage'. If you are disabled you can drive a car.
- Buy a lottery ticket and bet on football pools
- Receive your entitlement to free full-time education in schools, sixth form colleges and city technology colleges until you are 19
- Receive time off for study and training until you are 17 if you are in work and have not reached training 'level 2'.

## At 17 you can...

- Drive a car or tractor, hold a private pilot's licence to fly an aeroplane, helicopter, gyroplane, balloon or airship

## At 18 you can...

- Own land, buy a house or flat, apply for a mortgage, vote, buy and drink alcohol in a bar, get paid the minimum wage, buy fireworks, get a commercial pilots licence, get married without consent, take part in a performance of hypnotism and have a tattoo or a piercing
- If you are adopted you can apply for a copy of your original birth certificate from the Registrar General
- You cannot be adopted after 18.

## At 21 you can...

- Adopt a child,
- Drive a large bus or lorry,
- Become an MP, local councillor or local mayor.

# Your Human Rights

**Under the Human Rights Act 1988, you have the right to all of the following things (you can have your Children's Guardian, Foster Carer or Social Worker read through these things with you) -**

- **Right to life,**
- **To live free of torture and degrading treatment and punishment,**
- **Freedom from slavery and forced labour,**
- **The right to liberty and security,**
- **Right to a fair hearing,**
- **No punishment without lawful authority,**
- **Respect for private and family life, your home and correspondence,**
- **Freedom of thought and religious belief,**
- **Freedom of expression,**
- **Freedom of assembly and association,**
- **Right to marry and have a family, when you are over 16 – with consent,**
- **The right to education.**

**The CFT will ensure that all of your rights are upheld.**

**If you feel that your Human Rights are being compromised, you can make a complaint (*See the section on complaints*).**

# Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunities

**Everybody has the right to be treated equally and The CFT is committed to making sure that this happens, no matter what your colour, creed, gender, cultural difference, sexual orientation, age or physical and mental ability.**

**The Children's Family Trust believes that everybody should be treated fairly and equally whoever they are.**

**If you think that you have been treated unfairly by anybody just because you are a boy or a girl or just because of your colour, religion, culture, disability or sexual orientation, then it is important that you let an adult know. This could be your Foster Carer, your Social Worker or the Supervising Social Worker who visits your foster home. You can also make a complaint or send in an SOS card (other parts of this Welcome Pack tell you more about how to complain and how to use the SOS cards).**

**Also, if your Foster Carer or another adult thinks that you are treating somebody else unfairly then they will need to talk to you about this to try and sort things out.**

# Complaints

## Who can I make a complaint against?

You can make a complaint about anybody from The CFT, your Foster Carer, another child, your Social Worker, or any other person you feel has not treated you well. You can also complain about Social Services, its systems, or decisions that you feel are wrong.

## Who do I complain to?

You may have already got some information from your Social Worker about how to complain. If not, you can complain by speaking to your Foster Carers or to anyone else at The CFT such as the Supervising Social Worker who visits your foster home.

If you prefer, you can ring the Registered Manager on *Regional Telephone* or you can write to them at *Regional Office Address Here*

We will record it in a 'Complaints Register' and will deal with your complaint as soon as possible.

## What happens next?

If your complaint is serious we may need to pass it on to Social Services, or sometimes the Police. We hope to solve most problems quickly ourselves.

When we receive your complaint we will contact you, and arrange to come and see you within 7 days to talk about it. If it is something that we feel could be sorted out by talking, we will need to find out the other person's point of view as well. If your complaint is about a decision, we will arrange a meeting with all concerned, to try and sort out your complaint, though it may not always be possible to change decisions.

We will always try to make sure that your complaint is sorted out within 28 days of you making it. We will try to sort it sooner but we may have to talk to lots of people and organise some meetings so that is why it might take up to 28 days. Someone will ring you, each week to let you know what is happening.

# Complaints

## How do I get more information?

If you would like more information on how to make a complaint, please ask your Supervising Social Worker, or anyone else at The CFT.

REMEMBER, WE WILL ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR COMPLAINT AND TRY TO SORT THINGS OUT FOR YOU.

Talk to your Foster Carers first, but if it's something you can't talk to them about, talk to your Social Worker or your CFT Supervising Social Worker or telephone us direct. You will find in your pack some useful phone numbers, but just to make sure you can get in touch with us quickly if you need to, our number is *Number here*

## What if I need more help?

If you are not happy with the way that your complaint has been handled by the Local Authority or by The CFT, there is a list of outside agencies that can help you in the Useful Contact Details section at the front of this pack.

NO ONE WILL PUNISH YOU OR THINK BADLY OF YOU IF YOU MAKE A COMPLAINT. WE WANT TO HELP YOU PUT THINGS RIGHT.

# Complaints Form

You may need help to fill in this form. If so, you can ask any adult that you feel comfortable with to help you with this.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your Foster Carers Name \_\_\_\_\_

The person my complaint is about \_\_\_\_\_

My complaint is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The name of the person who helped me fill in this form is: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Today's date is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send your completed form to us at the address on the back page of this pack.**





# S.O.S Cards

## **What are SOS Cards?**

In this section we have provided some SOS cards. These are post cards that already have our address and a stamp on them. Simply pop one into any post box if you want to contact us without anyone else knowing.

## **When should I use them?**

If you have any concerns or problems about how you are being looked after and don't want to talk to your Foster Carers about it, and can't get to a telephone to call us, then use one of these cards instead.

## **How do I use them, and what happens?**

These cards already have your name on them. All you have to do is pop one into a post box. When we get it, we will see your name and know that it is you that has sent it. We will get in contact straight away to listen to what has upset you and what you would like to have happen next.

## **What if I am not happy about what happens?**

You can speak with your Social Worker or one of the help lines listed at the back of this pack.

# Advocacy

You can find what this word means in the back of your guide.

**If you feel that no one can help you make a complaint The CFT will find you an advocate. You have the right to have an advocate at any age.**

## **An advocate can:**

- Help you sort out what you think and what you want.
- Help you express your wishes and feelings.
- Tell people on your behalf what you think and want.
- Give you advice and information.
- Help you talk to others without getting in an argument.

## **Advocacy is not about:**

- Persuading you to agree to anything you don't feel happy with.
- Deciding what other people think is best for you.
- An alternative to the complaints procedure, but it may include helping you make a complaint.
- Trying to change everything, but it might mean telling your Carers, Social Worker or The CFT things they should think about changing for you.
- Taking the responsibility for your care away from your Carers, your Social Worker and The CFT.

# Fun Stuff

Colour in this rainforest animal scene.



# Words and Meanings

## **Adjourn**

To put off the decision, or the hearing until another time.

## **Advocate**

A person, usually an adult, who helps you say what you want (see Representation).

## **Agreed**

The people responsible for your care will decide together what is in your best interests, but they must also ask you what you think. They will then say “we agreed”.

## **Appeal**

To ask another person or court to look at the decision made.

## **Application**

A written request e.g. social services could make an application to court.

## **Attending Court**

Sometimes people need to go to court. If you need to go to court then an adult will always be with you. If you need to go to court then someone may take you to visit the court before, when it is empty so that you can see what it looks like, or someone may come to see you to tell you about what will happen there.

## **Barrister**

A person who has been trained in the law. They spend a lot of their time at court speaking in court hearings.

## **CAFCASS**

The Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service. They are responsible for managing the Children’s Guardian service (see Children’s Guardian)

## **Care Order**

Usually made in favour of the Local Authority Social Services Department. If a care order is made about you then they can make decisions about who you will live with and whom you will see.

### **Carer**

Your parents or other family member who look after you. Foster Carers are people who are chosen by social workers to look after you.

### **Children's Guardian**

The Guardian is an independent person trained in social work to investigate issues and work with children, young people, their families and others when there is a case at court.

### **Children's Rights Officer**

An advocate who can help you to say what you want and help you to speak in meetings.

### **Civil Court**

Case can be heard in a civil or criminal court. In a criminal court someone is accused of doing something wrong. In a civil court, such as a Family Court, Judges and Magistrates hear cases where there are disagreements between a family and the Social Services department about the care of children. The court will be asked to decide what is best for the child.

### **Clerk to the court**

A person trained in the law who will give legal advice on the case at Court.

### **Competent**

This is a word often used to explain whether you are mature enough to understand what is going on. In a court, if you are competent then you can tell a solicitor what you want him or her to say (it's called 'giving instructions').

### **Confidential / Keeping a Confidence**

You can tell your solicitor not to pass on certain information if you want it kept private. Other people, such as your Foster Carer or Social Worker, cannot always agree to do this.

### **Conflict**

This is another word for disagreement.

### **Contact Order**

An order about seeing or keeping in contact with someone.

### **Contested**

A case at court will be contested when the people involved, that is the Local Authority Social Services Department, your parents or you cannot agree (see hearing).

### **Court Usher**

A person at court who tells you when your hearing is going to start and which court room you will be in.

### **Criminal**

See 'Civil Court'.

### **Decisions at court**

It is the job of the Judge or Magistrate to decide what is best for you.

### **Directions**

See 'Hearings'

### **Discharge an order**

End an existing order. It is also possible to vary (change) an existing order.

### **District Judge / Judge**

Legal professional who works in the Family Proceedings Court and higher courts such as the County Court and High Court.

### **Duration of Proceedings**

The length of time the case is at court.

### **Evidence**

When people tell the Judge or Magistrate at court about a particular matter.

### **Family Proceedings Court**

Is the name of the court where social services matters are dealt with. Some cases are transferred to higher courts such as the County or High Court if they are complicated or take a long time.

### **Goodbye Visit**

The Children's Guardian or your solicitor will visit you at the end of your case to say 'goodbye' as their job is over.

### **Guardian Report**

The report written by the Children's Guardian for the Judge or Magistrate as well as those involved with you at court.

## **Hearings – Direction, Interim, Full, Final**

A Court hearing is when all the people involved with you meet at the court building to talk about what is best for you. If they can't agree then a Judge or Magistrate will decide what is best for you.

Direction hearings are short meetings to decide who has to do what and when so as to be ready for the next full hearing when everyone attends. An interim hearing usually happens to decide something that affects you immediately, for instance who you should stay with or who you should see. It is called an interim hearing because it is in between the first and final hearing.

Sometimes the court will make an interim (short term) order at an interim hearing that lasts until the final decision is made.

The final hearing is a last hearing with everyone present when the Judge or Magistrate makes the final decision as to what should happen for you. So that everyone understands what the court want to happen for you it will make an 'order' that everyone has to obey.

## **Independent**

The guardian is independent of, that is, separate to, all others involved in the court case. All Judges and Magistrates are independent too.

## **Instruct / Take instructions**

This is when you tell the Solicitor who is working for you what you want to happen and what you want them to do.

## **Judge**

A legally qualified person who sits at court hearing cases and decides what will happen next.

## **The Law Society**

An organisation that regulates what a solicitor can do.

## **Local Authority**

Those responsible for the Social Services department and their social workers.

## **Local Authority Care Plan**

Social workers involved with asking the court to make an order about you will write down details of their plans about what they think is best for you in the future. This will include who they want you to live with, and who they want you to see or be in touch with.

### **Looked After**

A term used to refer to children and young people who are in the care of their Local Authority Social Services Department.

### **Legal**

To do with the law.

### **Magistrate**

A person who is not legally trained like a Judge but who has some legal knowledge and hears cases in the Magistrates' Court and Family Proceedings Court.

### **No Order**

The Judge or Magistrate hearing a case can decide at the final hearing that there should not be any order.

### **Order**

The Judge or Magistrate makes an order from a range of different orders allowed in the Children Act. The order made may be the one asked for or, may be different. For example Social Services may make an application for a 'Care Order' but the Judge or Magistrate may decide that a 'Residence Order' is the best thing to do.

### **Parental Responsibility**

The person or people with parental responsibility can make decisions about you – such as who you live with and what school you will attend – and can agree to medical treatment on your behalf. A Local Authority can be given parental responsibility for you under a care order but your parents will still have it.

### **Private Law**

This is about things such as divorce. Sometimes parents fall out and separate, and ask the court to decide what is best.

### **Proceedings**

Refers to the whole case and the hearings at court.

### **Public Law**

Cases where others, usually Social Services, are concerned about you being at risk of harm and ask the courts to make a decision about your care. Although these cases are called 'public law' they are held in private.

### **Recommendation**

The Children's Guardian will write a report for those at court to read. At the end of the report will be recommendations, which are written suggestions, about what should happen.



## **Report**

A written statement.

## **Representation / Legal Representation**

People directly involved in court cases are called 'parties' and need to have a solicitor to help them to understand what is happening at court and to speak up for them (represent them) at court. This is called having someone to represent you legally.

## **Review**

To look at something again. To review whether the arrangements made for you, such as where you might live, are still the right things for you or if anything needs to change.

## **Secure Accommodation Order**

This order usually refers to a small number of young people who are over 14 years of age. An application for a secure accommodation order is made if there is concern about the young person's behaviour, either toward themselves or to others, or if they are continually running away, and if they are at risk of harm. The order will say how long the young people has to stay at the named secure unit. The court can make the first order for no more than 3 months, and repeat orders for 6 months.

## **Secure Unit**

A place where young people stay under a secure accommodation order. They are locked in to stop them running away and being at risk of harm, or harming themselves.

## **Sitting**

A term used when a Judge or Magistrate is in court hearing a case.

## **Social Worker / Social Services**

People trained to know about the welfare of children and families.

## **Solicitor**

A person trained in the law and who speaks up for you in court and in meetings.

## **Solicitor's Advice**

A solicitor giving legal information and his/her opinions about the case to his/her client, which could be you or someone else.

## **Statements**

Someone involved in the case can give a statement about their views. It is usually written down, signed by them and sent to the court.

## **Subject to Proceedings**

The child named in the application is the subject of the case at court.

### **Supervising Social Worker**

A Social worker who works for The Children's Family Trust and whose job it is to support your Foster Carer/s and to be there for you as well.

### **Supervision Order**

The Local Authority has the power to supervise your care even though you remain living with your parents or another carer.

### **Timetable / Timetabling**

Decisions are made at the court about when hearings should take place and when those involved have to do things, such as send in reports for other to read. Part of the job of the Children's Guardian is to make sure there is no unnecessary delay.

### **Transfer the case**

To move the case to another Family Proceedings Court. There may have been a request to move a case to a different area. The case may move area because the Judge or Magistrate cannot hear the case and a new Judge or Magistrate is needed, or the present court may be too busy to hear the case. The case may be transferred to a court at a different level such as moving the case up to the County Court, or to the High Court, because it is a complex case.

### **Wishes and Feelings**

The phrase usually relates to your wishes about things such as who you want to live with. The Children's Guardian must record your wishes and feelings in their report. If you are an older child and disagree with the recommendations made by the Guardian then the Solicitor must make sure the Judge or Magistrate knows your wishes and feelings.

# Feedback Form

This pack is reviewed and updated regularly. If you have an idea for something that you think might be helpful, that is not currently included in the pack, you can use this sheet to let us know and we will try and include it in the future.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_

What else would you like in this guide? \_\_\_\_\_

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What did you not find useful? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please send your completed form to us at the address on the back page of this pack.**



The Children's Family Trust  
Regional Office Address Here



Telephone:  
Email:  
[www.thecft.org.uk](http://www.thecft.org.uk)