



greater london  
fostering.



# A child's guide to fostering

Hello! I'm  
Fergal!



Hello! I'm  
Halil!



Fergal and Halil are here to welcome you to GLF. Follow them through this guide to find out all about GLF.

# Welcome to GLF!

This is a guide to tell you all about Greater London Fostering, your foster carers and the other people who are here to help care for you and keep you safe.

GLF is a fostering agency. This means that we have lots of foster carers who can offer a loving home to children who cannot live with their own family. GLF is a family itself, and we welcome you to our community.

Fostering means going to live with a 'foster family' when it is not the right time to live at home with your own family. Fostering is sometimes called 'going into foster care' or 'being looked after'. Being in foster care does not mean that your family does not love you. There are many reasons why children and young people come into care.

**It is also a place for you to tell us about you!**



Your social worker will talk to you about why you are in care. You can ask them any questions you have.

# Things to look forward to at GLF

Everyone at GLF cares and wants to make sure that you feel happy with your foster family. We have lots of events that you can come along to, and if you join in our fun competitions, you will receive a certificate and may even win a prize!



At GLF, we have lots of fun, and we want you to get involved and have fun too. We organise lots of events during the school holidays – we've been to Christmas pantomimes, the seaside, Legoland, high ropes and lots more.

## Meet James



James organises and goes to all the events at GLF, so make sure you say hi to him!

Everyone at GLF is here to support you and help you reach your full potential and goals. You can talk to any of us, we're very friendly!



# Your supervising social worker

SSW

Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am your foster family's supervisor.

It is my job to make sure you are happy in your foster family, and if there is anything you or your foster carer needs help with, you can talk to me.

A few things about me...

I love –

I don't like -

*Do you have any questions for me?*

Team Manager

Hello! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am one of GLF's Team Managers.

It is my job to make sure that your foster family's supervisor is able to give you the support so you are happy and can reach your goals in life.

You can always contact me at GLF if you want to. The GLF number is 0208 3478741.



If you ever feel sad or just want someone to talk to, you can talk to your foster family's supervisor.

# All about me

We want to know all about you. Draw a picture or stick a photo of yourself in the middle of the page. Then answer the questions.

My name is

My age is

My language is

When I grow up I  
want to be a

My religion or  
belief is

My ethnicity is

My birthday is

My school is

I like to wear

We think it is important for your foster family  
to help you grow as a person, follow your  
beliefs and do great things in the future!



# My favourite things

We want to make sure you are happy during your time with GLF.

**Tell us about your favourite things!**

Books

Toys

Animals

Sport

TV  
programmes

Weather

Clothes

Songs

Games



Have a think about new things you would like to try - maybe a new sport or read a new book. They might end up being a new favourite!



# Food and Drink

Draw pictures or write about the food and drink that you like best and the things you do not like.

Food and drink that is yummy:



Food and drink that I don't like:



It can be fun trying new foods and drinks. You might have the chance to try something new with your foster family!



# My family and friends

It is very important to remember that you are still part of your own family and they still love you.



Draw a picture of the people in your family and your friends.



Every day, in every way, you are getting better and better. Remind yourself of this, every day!



# Positive Aspirations

Aspiration is another word for ambition, or goal. Being in care doesn't mean you can't have dreams. A lot of children who have been in foster care have done things like gone to university, become dancers, or even worked for the BBC!

## **Footballer Marcus Rashford says...**

*"Your dreams are the most important things as a child, do not let go of them...Although the world is a bit crazy at the moment, don't lose sight of what is important to you".*

At GLF, YOU are the most important person. Therefore, it's important that we hear your voice. If you have any ideas for GLF, tell us! The Children's Council is one way for you to have a say about the things that really matter in your life.

Tell us about your achievements, whatever they are, so that we can celebrate with you! We love sending out certificates!

**Do something awesome today!**

Everyone has dreams and goals that we want to achieve. Believe in yourself and your abilities, and you can reach those dreams.

**We believe in you!**



# Positive Aspirations

We believe that you can be who you want to be, do what you want to do. Tell us a bit more about what you like doing, so we can help you reach your goals and dreams.

At school my favourite subject is.....

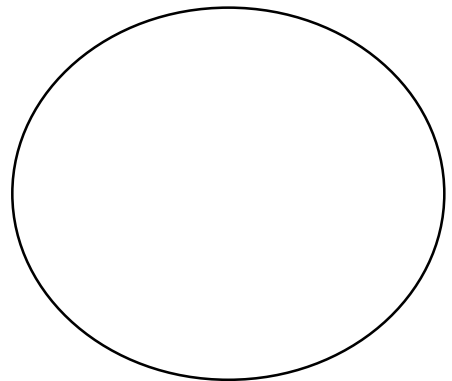
At school I am good at.....

My favourite after school club is.....

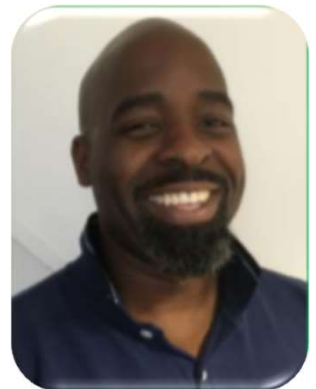
When I grow up I want to be a

.....

(Draw a picture in the circle)



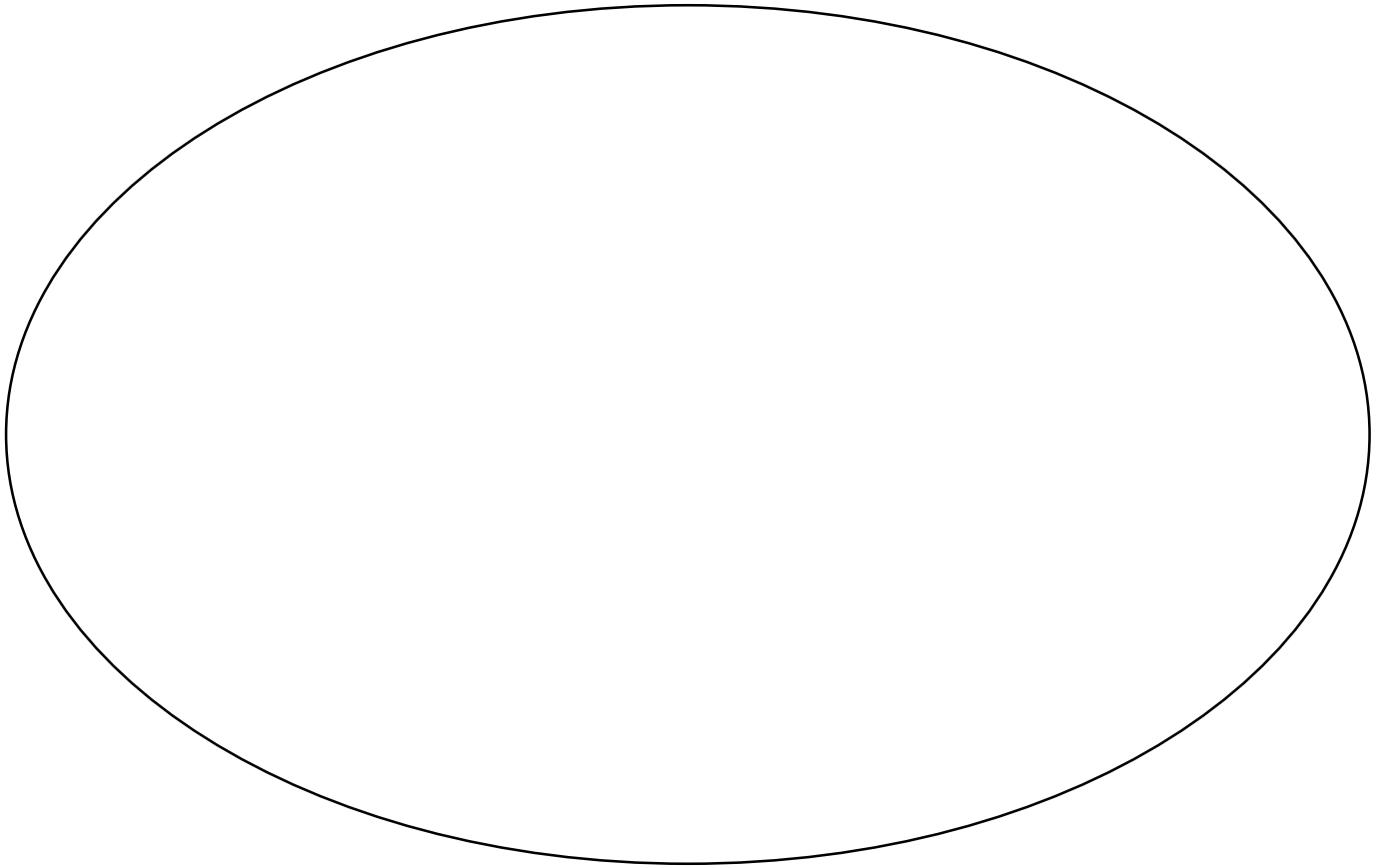
I'm Cleon, your Advocate. I'm here to make sure the things you say and feel are heard by your foster carer and GLF. I'm here to listen to YOU! You can get in touch with me by calling GLF on 020 83478741.



Your uniqueness is epic and worth celebrating. GLF will help you to be the person you want to be.

# My foster family

Draw a picture of everyone who lives in your foster family (don't forget to draw yourself in the picture too!)



My foster carers' names are.....

Other people who live with them.....

They live at .....

Your foster family will be there for you when you need them. If you need help with something, you can talk to them.



# My foster family

## **What should my foster carers do?**

There are lots of things that foster carers do for you. This includes:

- Treat you with respect
- Support your education
- Encourage you to say how you feel about what happens and help you get your voice heard
- Help you to reach your goals– whether you want to be a doctor, astronaut or teacher!
- Support you to follow your religion or beliefs and celebrate religious holidays and festivals
- Support you in developing as an individual
- Treat you as part of their family

## **What will my foster carers expect me to do?**

- Show respect to everybody
- Go to school
- Join in with family meals
- Stick to your curfews
- Follow the house rules.

When you are in foster care, everyone is looking out for you. This means that you should be treated fairly and supported to be who you want to be. Your foster family and everyone at GLF will make sure you have the things you need - go to school to learn, see a doctor when you are unwell, go to the dentist to check your teeth.



Your foster family will love and respect you, just as they would like you to love and respect them.

# Dos and Don'ts

When you go to live with your foster family, they may have some house rules. Rules are important as they make sure everyone is safe. Use the space below to write down these rules, so you don't forget them.

I must

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

I must not .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Every achievement starts with the decision to try. If you never try, you never know – so, try something new today!



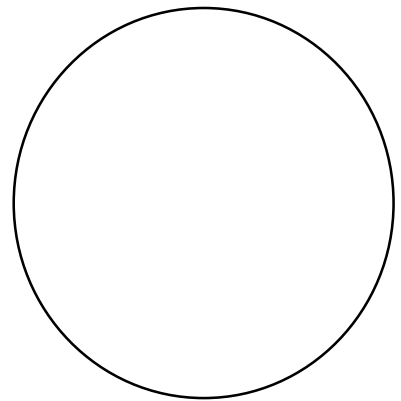
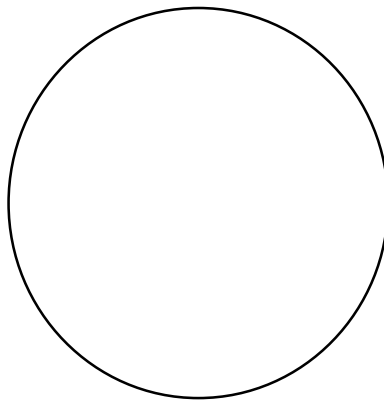
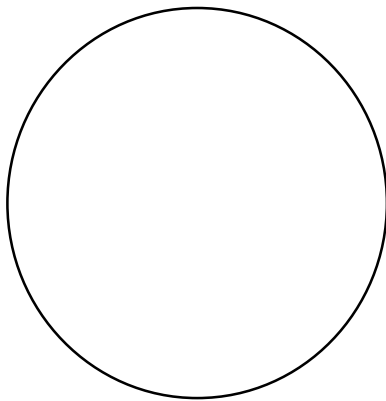


# Pocket Money

When you are in foster care you will get pocket money. You will be told how much has been agreed by your social worker and foster carer. Your foster carer will help you to decide how to spend your money.

**How much will you get each week for pocket money? .....**

It can be fun to think about what you would spend your pocket money on. It is good to save some of your money to buy a big thing. Draw or write three things that you would like to save for.



There is lots of information in this guide. Don't worry if you don't understand any of it, your social worker will be able to help you.

# Your care plan

When you are in foster care, everyone who is in your life needs to know what needs to be done for you to be well looked after and happy. This is your care plan. There will be meetings to make sure that everyone is helping you, and if anything needs to be changed.

## Write the names of each person:

My name is .....

My foster carers are.....

My social worker is .....

My foster carers' supervisor at GLF is .....

My Independent Reviewing Officer is .....

If you are not happy with something when you are in care, you can talk to any of these people. You are the most important person and we want you to be happy.

## Here are some examples of why you might want to talk to someone at GLF:

- You are being treated badly or unfairly by a GLF worker or carer
- You are not being listened to or are not taken seriously
- You are not getting what you need, for example to do with your education, health, social life, or money
- You are being punished unfairly
- You are being treated badly because of things like your ethnicity, religion, race, disability or age.

If you feel like your needs aren't being met when you are in care, it's important to tell someone, so we can help you.



# What if I'm unhappy?

At GLF, children are at the heart of what we do. You being happy, is what matters to us. Sometimes though, you might not feel happy. If you are feeling sad, you can talk to anyone you have already talked about in this guide – your foster carer, their supervisor, your social worker, a teacher, anyone you feel safe with.

If you feel like you're not being listened to, you can also talk to Marcella Denis at GLF. Her job is to make sure that all problems are dealt with properly and quickly. You can write to her at:



Greater London Fostering  
20-22 Gipsy Hill  
London  
SE19 1NL

Or if you want you can phone her on: 020 8347 8741 or her mobile - 07920 054 187. You can email her on [marcella.denis@greaterlondonfostering.org](mailto:marcella.denis@greaterlondonfostering.org)

If you are still not happy with things, you can contact Marcella again and ask her to organise an Independent investigation of your complaint. This is where a person, who does not work for GLF, or with your social worker, looks at your complaint, and the way it was dealt with, to see if any mistakes were made. If, when you hear the results of this investigation, you are still not happy, you can ask to meet a group of people called the panel.

The social worker for your foster carer(s) will help to explain this stage of the process to you.



It's ok to feel sad, angry, anxious, lonely or scared right now. However you feel, you're not alone. Its good to talk about how you feel.

# Bullying

Bullying is when someone is deliberately hurtful to you over time and makes you feel sad and upset.

## **Bullies may hurt you with:**

- words - by doing things like calling you names, teasing you or spreading rumours about you
- unfriendly things - like ignoring you, hiding or taking your things, making threatening signs, making you do things that you do not want to do
- physical things - like hitting, kicking or scratching you, or breaking your things
- cyber things - like sending horrible e-mails or texts or putting horrible words or photos on Facebook or WhatsApp.

**If you think that you are being bullied at school, home or anywhere else, then you should speak to someone that you trust. This could be your foster carer, social worker, teacher or someone else.**

Write here who you would talk to if you were being bullied:

.....

.....

.....

.....

*“Any fool can make a lot of noise. But it takes a strong bull to go his own way and forget the things those bullies say.”*

– Walt Disney

Be brave and tell someone if you are being bullied.



## **OFSTED (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills)**

OFSTED makes sure companies that provide education or care services to children, do so at a high standard.

Every year, an inspector from OFSTED writes to foster children asking them if they are being well looked after.

You do not have to write back to the inspector, but it is a good idea for some children to tell the inspector what they think.

Contact number 0300 123 1231

The inspectors also write to foster carers and visit GLF's offices. If you wanted to, you could ask to speak to an inspector at GLF's offices or they could come and visit you.

You can get in touch with GLF's inspector by ringing: 0300 123 1231

You should ring this number if you are unhappy about something and nobody is helping you to sort the problem out.

The inspector's address is OFSTED Inspection Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD

You can also send an email to: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)



Don't be afraid to stand up and speak for yourself. If you feel that something is wrong, talk to someone.



## **Summary of Statement of Purpose**

What does Greater London Fostering agency do and how do we aim to do it? We have a statement of purpose that details all about our fostering agency. Here is a summary of our statement.

### **We believe that:**

- Children's needs are best met in a caring family with an individual programme of support
- Our foster carers will work with other people to plan for children's needs to support their education and health and provide a positive experience of their time in foster care
- Our foster carers will meet cultural and individual and care needs and promote contact between children and their families.

### **Standards of care:**

- Our foster carers have a supervisor who they can contact at any time. The supervisor who sees children regularly, gives them this Children's Guide and lets them know about their right to complain
- Foster homes must be clean and comfortable and children must have good food, clothes, toys, books and pocket money. Children must be kept safe inside and outside the home and whilst travelling.
- Children must be supported to develop a positive self-image with their cultural identity, religion, schooling, leisure activities and health needs all met. Where possible, they should be included in family holidays.
- Foster children should not be left alone. Any babysitters used must be DBS checked and vetted by the agency. Children should not be allowed to stay overnight at friends or do anything that has significant risk without a social worker or review meeting agreement.
- Foster carers should use positive parenting and reward good behaviour. They cannot use any punishment that is physical, cruel or unreasonable. They should only use restraint as a last resort where a child's safety is at risk or property will be seriously damaged.

### **Greater London Fostering facts:**

- GLF was set up in 1999
- In November 2020 we have 119 foster families and 135 foster children in placement.
- We offer lots of different kinds of placement; children can be with foster families on a short or long term basis. GLF will take a placement depending on whether they have suitable foster carers in the right area with enough space for a child and who are able to meet their individual needs.
- GLF record and investigate any complaints that are made and try to learn from any mistakes that arise.

### **Recruiting new foster carers:**

- People who want to become a foster carer are visited at home. If they might be suitable they attend a 2 day training course.
- They have a very careful assessment process, involving a number of people, to make sure that they have the skills and characteristics needed.
- The social worker leading the assessment gets to know the family well, talks to people who know them and does a range of checks into their background.
- Finally the application to become a foster carer is considered by a panel, which includes some independent people, who decide whether the assessment has been done thoroughly enough and recommend whether or not they should be approved.

## **Useful Phone numbers and websites**

If you need someone to talk to about any problem then you might find it useful to use one of the numbers or websites below:

### **ChildLine:**

ChildLine has an email address or you can chat to someone 1-2-1 online. It also has a 'Face to Face Support Service' for children in care who want to talk to someone, available in East London and Croydon.

Website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Contact Number: 0800 1111 - 24hrs

**This is a particular number for children in care - Contact Number: 0800 884444**

### **Samaritans:**

Around the clock, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Contact Number: 116 123

Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### **Bullying UK:**

Contact Number: 0208 8000 2222

Website: [www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

### **Talk to Frank:**

A charity which provides advice and help around drugs

Website: [www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)

Contact Number: 0300 1236600

### **Kidscape:**

This website has information and helpful advice if you are being bullied.

Website: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

Contact Email: [info@kidscape.org.uk](mailto:info@kidscape.org.uk)

### **Gendered Intelligence for transgender young people:**

Website: [www.genderedintelligence.co.uk](http://www.genderedintelligence.co.uk)

It's ok to not feel happy all the time. It can help to talk to someone if you are sad, worried or feel lonely.



**You can always contact Greater London Fostering:**

Telephone Number: 020 8 3478741

Email: [info@greaterlondonfostering.org](mailto:info@greaterlondonfostering.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Greaterlondonfostering/>

Website: <http://www.greaterlondonfostering.org>

**National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS):**

An advocate will give you support if you do not feel you can talk to people around you. They will give you information and advice and speak up on your behalf.

Email for help: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)

Contact Number: 0800 808 1001

**Children's Commissioner:**

Advice and help for children in care or living away from home

Website: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/get-in-touch/](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/get-in-touch/)

Contact Number: Freephone 0800 528 0731

Email for help: [help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:help.team@childrenscommissioner.gsi.gov.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/childrenscommissionersoffice](https://www.facebook.com/childrenscommissionersoffice)

**Your Independent Reviewing Officer:**

If you wish to speak to your independent reviewing officer, the best way to contact them is to ask for their contact details from your foster carer, your local authority social worker, or the Greater London Fostering social worker who works with your foster carer.



Remind yourself every day that you are you, and there is no better person to be.

## General Data Protection Regulation

GLF are provided with and collate information about you in order to find you a foster family and to support your wellbeing and progress whilst in our care.

Once you leave our care, copies of this information are returned to your Local Authority. However, GLF will retain copies of your file for 20 years or up until your 25th birthday, whichever is sooner, to allow you access to your records, whereupon they will be deleted.

Should you prefer these records to be deleted before this date, you may contact us at any point after your 18th birthday.

You have a lot to be proud of. Believe in yourself and you can do anything!



# Children's Guide Reply Slip

Your Name:.....

Has your foster family's supervisor gone through this guide with you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Was this guide helpful? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you know who you can talk to if you need someone to talk to? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you know who to contact if you need anything?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have any questions about being in foster care?

.....

.....

.....

We want to make sure your voice is always heard so if you have any ideas for GLF when you are with us, write them here or talk to your foster family's supervisor, any time!

.....

.....

.....



Everything will be ok. We hope you have lots of fun with your foster carers and GLF!